



**MULTICULTURAL MENTAL
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Multicultural Mental Health Access Program Inc.

2 July 2003

Dr Patrick Laplagne
Research Manager
Productivity Commission
LB2, Collins St East
Melbourne
VIC 8003
Australia

Dear Dr. Laplagne,

Re: Disability Discrimination Act 1992 Inquiry

1. Mental illness is a physical illness and as such must be treated as any other health condition such as diabetes, asthma etc. With mental illness often it is a matter of controlling the problem through a variety of methods.
2. At present the mental health needs of NESB communities in South Australia have not been met. Current mental health reforms have cited the issue however very little (if any) has been done about it in any meaningful way.
3. Our clients regularly face problems with finding appropriate accommodation and linguistic and cultural barriers often cause problems with landlords, other tenants etc.
4. If NESB people have a mental health issue with another disability their access to mental health services / other services is severely limited.
5. The incidence of mental illness is significantly higher in NESB communities as compared to ESB.
6. If you are from NESB and have a mental illness you are more likely to be involuntary detained and admitted to hospital than the general population in Australia.
7. Often at many appointments NESB communities are not offered the services of an interpreter for a variety of reasons, which compromises the quality of care.
8. NESB communities are less likely to receive talking therapies.
9. They have shorter face to face contacts in the community.

10. NESB communities are often excluded from quantitative studies such as the National Survey of Mental Health and well-being.
11. Are less likely to receive treatment for their mental health problems and have their mental health.
12. Refugee claimants have even worse mental health status as a group separate from those refugee status has already been determined.
13. Utilisation of mainstream health / welfare and other services by NESB people is extremely poor. This highlights an enormous access and equity issue to this minority group.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this Disability Discrimination Act inquiry.

Yours Sincerely,

Arthur Moutakis

Program Manager