

Anxiety and Depression in Psychiatric Patients and Mental Health Professionals During the COVID-19 pandemic

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Protocol

Background: The pandemic of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has led to the implementation of community containment measures including national lockdowns all over the world. One of the aims of these containment measures was the slowdown in the rate of new infections in order to avoid the of overload of hospitals and ensure the best of care of patients until new evidence-based treatments emerge. However, the effects of the containment measures on the mental health of patients and mental health professionals, in particular on anxiety and depression, have not been yet explored.

Method: We will conduct a prospective study in which 130 patients with mental health disorders and 60 mental health professionals who will be assessed at three consecutive time-points (April, June and September 2020) at the Psychiatric Hospital of Attica (PHA) in Athens, Greece. All participants will be administered the Beck Depression (BDI) and the Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) and a demographic and clinical questionnaire. The participants will belong to two groups: a) one group of patients hospitalized in the PHA or accommodated in community units for people with mental health problems (hostels, boarding houses or supported apartments) and b) one group of mental health staff caring for the above patients. The primary outcomes will be the investigation of the time X group interactions on the BDI and BAI scores. We hypothesize that there will be a different effect of time on the DDI and BAI scores for the two groups and that the mental health professionals would be more sensitive to the effects

of the containment measures on these scores. Secondary measures will be the effects of demographic and clinical variables on BDI and BAI total and item scores.