

Title: **Inequalities in mental health by age groups in Spain**

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Abstract

An increasing number of studies reveal the deteriorating impact of the current economic downturn on mental health and suicidal behaviour in many developed countries. The effect appears to be stronger for men than for women. Employment status and disadvantaged social situation are shown to be especially relevant. However, job and income losses have not equally affected people belonging to different age groups. Therefore, it is plausible to assume that the crisis has exerted a differential impact on inequality in mental health by age. The role of the prime determinants explaining the observed differences need to be elucidated further. This work tries to shed some light on the evolution of inequalities in mental health by age groups in Spain. We use data coming from the National Health Interview Surveys of 2006, 2012 and 2017 and apply the methodology of concentration indices, commonly used in the study of health inequalities.

Our preliminary results show a profile of inverted U. The largest concentration indices are found for the middle-aged population cohorts, adults aged 35-44 and 45-54. The contributions of education and income surpass that of employment status, which cast some doubts on previous conjectures on unemployment as primary mechanism of transmission of social inequalities into mental health

inequalities of the adults during economic hardship. Gender differences are also explored.

Our findings may be a useful guide to policies aiming to better identify targets and to define actions to reduce the effect of inequalities that may cause or may arise from differences in mental health.