Mental health policy response to COVID-19: lessons learned
Marija Jakubauskiene

Methods:
A rapid clustered review of evidences reflecting mental health policy responses in the face of COVID-19 pandemics has been conducted.

Results:
COVID-19 pandemics is an indisputable emergency for health systems and challenge for mental health care. Major mental health policy response measures should be based on whole of society approach and include access to remote mental health service provision as well as emergency mental health and psychosocial services especially to vulnerable populations in order to strengthen social cohesion and social support. COVID-19 crisis, on the other hand, might also be considered as an opportunity to improve the scale and effectiveness of mental health services and increase funding to mental health care and psychosocial services. It raised concerns and stimulated discussion about the re-shifting institutional long term care more into community based service approach.

Conclusions:
Ensuring preparedness and planning of mental health service is an important for staying ahead of mental health impacts that will be long term, complex, and may take time to fully emerge. Further transdisciplinary research on mental health system, policy and COVID-19 epidemics prevention, preparedness, responses and impacts is needed.