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Usefulness of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in mental health research

Ramya Walsan

Graduate school of medicine, University of Wollongong, Australia,, ramya_valsan@yahoo.com

Nagesh Pai

Graduate Medical School, University of Wollongong, Australia, ramya_valsan@yahoo.com

Kerry Dawes

Graduate Medical School, University of Wollongong, Australia, ramya_valsan@yahoo.com

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Usefulness of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in mental health research

Ramya Walsan*, Nagesh Pai, Kerry Dawes

Abstract

Role of environment on mental health cannot be ignored. Computer based mapping technology called Geographical Information Systems (GIS) has presented mental health researchers with many new possibilities to explore these relationships. The main aim of this literature review is to identify the emerging applications of GIS in mental health research. The use of GIS in mental health has faltered compared to other health care sectors and has started gaining momentum only in the recent years. There is great scope for GIS to be applied in mental health epidemiology, evaluating inequalities in health care access, determining spatial variation in service utilisation and planning health care delivery and community integration. The technology is bound to find many more innovative applications in the mental health care sector in the coming years.

Key words: Mental health, computer based mapping, geographical information system

Ramya Walsan

Graduate school of medicine, University of Wollongong, Australia,
Email: ramya_walsan@yahoo.com

Nagesh Pai

Graduate Medical School, University of Wollongong, Australia,
Email:nagesh@uow.edu.au

Kerry Dawes

Graduate Medical School, University of Wollongong, Australia,

*Corresponding Author

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