

QUALITY OF LIFE OF PEOPLE WITH SEVERE MENTAL ILLNESS: CHANGES ACROSS 20 MONTHS PERIOD

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Two mental health service users' associations from Bosnia and Herzegovina participated in the project „Empowerment of Mental Illness Service Users: Lifelong Learning, Integration and Action – EMILIA” that was implemented in eight European countries, with a duration of 54 months. 33 users diagnosed with either schizophrenia or bipolar disorder entered the study in Bosnia and Herzegovina. For twenty months they participated in learning programs devised to help them build specific skills and aid in income generation.

Users' quality of life was assessed using SF-36, as well as with self-reports and structured interviews to cover the qualitative approach. Data were taken at baseline, after 10, and after 20 months. 14 users did not complete the process for various reasons, but the 19 remaining users showed overall improvement in their quality of life.

Key words: Quality of Life (QOL), schizophrenia, chronic mental illness, bipolar disorder, SF-36