

ALTERNATIVE WORK AND WORLD. CHRONICITY OF EMERGENCIES AND THE WORK IN CRISIS UNIT

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SUMMARY

We describe the legal framework within which we carry out consultations, otherwise called expertises, with view to considering involuntary admissions to hospital for the treatment of mental illness (here called confinements). We note that in our area only 40% of consultations lead to involuntary admissions to hospital, and we believe that this number is related to our consideration of alternative methods of care in the community. We suggest a multi-centric study to evaluate what specific skills are required to properly carry out these assessments and to establish the extent to which the increased workload of assessments is influencing the rate of involuntary admissions.

Key words: assessments - involuntary admissions

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Introduction

In the judicial district of Brussel-Hal-Vilvoorde, the psychiatric unit of the ED is mobilized within the framework of the law of June 26th 1990, related to the protection of the person of mentally-ill patients. This law provides patient's confinement for a maximal duration of 40 days in function of four criteria: mental illness - dangerousness - alternative of care - urgent measure.

Method / patients

We retrospectively analysed all the expertises requested by the public prosecutor's department (PPD) during 2007 and 2008.

Results

1. In 2007, there were 1980 expertises requested in all the judicial district, 1294 of them being authorized by the PPD and 737 resulting in confinement. Those figures significantly increased in 2008: 2336, 1758 and 858 respectively.

2. The percentage of confinement in our psychiatric unit was 40% (164 on 403 expertises). This low percentage can be explained by our traditional search for care alternative.

Discussion

Does the increasing request of expertises require specific skills and commitment of the team (multidisciplinarity, experienced psychiatrist...) to promote the correct application of the confinement (a.o. to ensure patient's right)?

Conclusion

Expertises constitute an increasing load of work in psychiatric crisis units. The quality of this work may influence the rate of confinements.

Perspective

A multi-centric study is necessary to validate this hypothesis.

References

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