

OPTIMISING ADMISSION CRITERIA FOR INPATIENT REHABILITATION: POPULATION-BASED INSIGHTS FROM MALTA

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Background and Aims

This population study aims to analyse referral patterns and admission decisions at Karin Grech Hospital, Malta's sole inpatient rehabilitation facility, while also comparing the findings to corresponding local data from 2018 to identify emerging trends. To identify key shifts in acceptance rates and patient profiles, and thereby provide evidence to enhance in-patient rehabilitation selection frameworks and guide international rehabilitation strategies.

Methods

A retrospective, population-based analysis was conducted on all in-patient rehabilitation referrals in Malta between July 1, 2022, and December 31, 2023. Referral outcomes, acceptance rates, and primary admission diagnoses were examined. Referrals from the acute care hospital, Mater Dei, to Karen Grech Rehabilitation Hospital for in-patient rehabilitation were analysed. Patients who were admitted to Mater Dei Hospital for acute care and referred to in-patient rehabilitation during July 1, 2022, and December 31, 2023, were included.

Results

407 referrals were placed. 64% (n=261) were accepted—a notable rise from 47% in 2018. Non-acceptance was recorded in 96 cases, while 50 patients were discharged or deceased before review. The average length of stay at Karen Grech Rehabilitation Hospital increased to 69.74 days from 59.1 days in 2018. Cerebrovascular accidents were the leading cause of referral (22.36%), while post-oncological rehabilitation referrals were the least common (1.22%).

Conclusion

As a population-based analysis of national in-patient rehabilitation data, this study provides insights into optimising admission criteria to enhance efficiency and outcomes. These findings may serve as a framework for rehabilitation policies worldwide. Future research should investigate barriers influencing discharge and long-term rehabilitation success.

Keywords: Rehabilitation, Length of Stay, Hospital