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CHARACTERIZATION OF AN INPATIENT WARD IN PORTUGAL: WHAT'S DIFFERENT FROM A DECADE AGO?

J. Fernandes, B. Barahona Corrêa, M. Talina

Departamento de Psiquiatria e Saúde Mental, Centro Hospitalar Lisboa Ocidental, Lisbon, Portugal

Inpatient wards have been changing over the last years because of a shift emphasizing community care. However, characterization of inpatient wards remains mandatory for evaluating the effectiveness of care.

Demographics, diagnosis classification, length of stay and destination after discharge were obtained for inpatients discharged during 2007 and compared with patients discharged in 1997.

Main results are as follows:

Variable	1997	2007	2007 vs 1997
Number of patients (beds)	346 (30)	403 (42)	+16.5%
Mean age, years (SD)	38.97 ± 14.33	38.97 ± 14.33	
Female sex	51.7%	49.1%	
Length of stay, days (SD)	22.17 ± 21.99	24.57 ± 17.66	+1.1%
Diagnosis: Schizophrenia, Personality Disorders, Afective Disorders, Drug Psychosis, Alcohol/Substance Dependence/Abuse	26.3%, 19.4%, 15.6%, 0.6%, 13.6%	30.1%, 8.7%, 31.1%, 2.9%, 1.6%	+14.4%, -55%, +99.4%, +483.3%, -88.4%
Follow up in community team	72.5%	65%	-10.3%
Discharge against medical advice/Abandonment	7.8%	2.5%	-68.2%

Differences in diagnosis appear to follow a trend, as depicted:

[Figure 1]

Affective disorders are currently the main diagnosis in our ward. Drug induced psychosis excess diagnoses may reveal increased substance abuse. Fewer admissions for substance abuse/dependence and personality disorders may reflect new specialized services for these patients. Introduction of the Mental Health Act in 1998, may explain the fewer patients discharged against medical advice/abandonments.