

Oral presentation

The "Forced to help" study: study design, methods and epidemiological data

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from WPA Thematic Conference. Coercive Treatment in Psychiatry: A Comprehensive Review
Dresden, Germany. 6–8 June 2007

Published: 19 December 2007

BMC Psychiatry 2007, 7(Suppl 1):S104 doi:10.1186/1471-244X-7-S1-S104

This abstract is available from: <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-244X/7/S1/S104>

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Background

The aim of the study was to examine coercive treatment in Swedish child and adolescent psychiatry from different scientific perspectives. The study was done in a multidisciplinary group comprised of researchers and PhD-students from child and adolescent psychiatry, law, philosophy, education and sociology. In this presentation, the design of the study will be presented and also some preliminary epidemiological data.

Methods

Epidemiological data from the period 2000 – 2004 was collected from all clinics in Sweden. Hospital records concerning all involuntarily admitted persons less than 18 years of age during one year were also collected from all clinics in Sweden.

Results

We found a tendency towards more coercive care during recent years. At least 150 children and adolescents were involuntarily admitted annually. The variation between counties was considerable. In some counties, adolescents on coercive treatment were treated together with adults. Girls were involuntarily admitted twice as often as boys. The most frequent diagnoses were psychosis, anorexia nervosa, self-destructive behavior and drug abuse.

Conclusion

Coercive treatment seems to be more frequent in recent years, but the variation is large between different counties. Contrary to adults, girls are more frequently treated involuntarily than boys. Further analysis of data is necessary to get a more comprehensive picture of the reasons for coercion of under aged persons.