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PATIENT PROFILE AND ADVERSE INCIDENTS IN A SPECIALISED INPATIENT PSYCHOTHERAPY UNIT IN SOUTH AFRICA

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Abstract

Objectives: To describe the demographic and clinical profile of patients admitted to a specialised psychotherapy unit. Secondarily, to document adverse incidents and premature discharges, and examine possible associated variables.

Method: The study is a retrospective review of clinical records of patients admitted to the Tara hospital psychotherapy unit during 2007 and 2008.

Results: One hundred and eighty one patient files were reviewed. These patients were predominately white (80.7%), English speaking (63.5%) women (86.7%), with cluster B personality traits (74%). Mood disorders and substance use disorders were the most frequent Axis I diagnoses. There was high co-morbidity on both Axis I and Axis II.

Thirty four patients refused hospital treatment (RHT) after having been admitted and there were 22 adverse incidents. After multivariate analysis, adverse incidents were most strongly associated with self-harming behaviour prior to admission and a history of substance use. Only self-injury was found to be associated with RHT.

Conclusion: The study showed that the patients admitted to the Tara hospital psychotherapy unit did not reflect the demographics of the general Gauteng population. This confirms the need for further research regarding awareness and referral patterns of personality disorders with respect to the different ethnicities in South Africa. Adverse events during hospital admission may be reduced by establishing suitable protocols, or using an alternative setting for treatment of patients with self-injury.