



POSTER PRESENTATION

From a mental health dispensary to ULS do Nordeste

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From the 23rd EFPT Forum, Porto, Portugal. 22–27 June 2015.

Abstract

Introduction: Portuguese Legislation concerning Mental Health was first published in 1889. However, little changes have been made until 1945's Law 2006. Only since then, many structures aimed to psychiatric care have been created and, lately, reorganized. Our present Department of Psychiatry and Mental Health is an example of how Psychiatric Care has evolved in a countryside district.

Objectives: Our aim was to understand which local and national changes were relevant to build and maintain a Mental Health Department operating since its creation to the present.

Methods: To display the major changes on the national scene, objective data was collected from Legislation and historical documents. Though, it was an essential part of this work to interview former and actual workers of this institution who shared their memories of the last decades.

Results: Our Department of Psychiatry and Mental Health started operating as a Mental Health Dispensary in 1964. It ensured, since then, ambulatory psychiatric care to the population of Bragança's district. For many years, all patients hos-

pitalized in a psychiatric hospital were transferred to a Psychiatric Hospital or Asylum, further than a five hours trip to their homes. Later, influenced by sectorial psychiatry, a local Mental Health Centre was created, including a Psychiatric Clinic permitting for the first time the hospitalization of patients in their home district. Recently, in 1992, all local Centres have been included in General Hospitals. Consequently, Psychiatric Departments have been influenced by the recent changes in Hospital Management. Today, our Department is part of the Unidade Local de Saúde do Nordeste, a public institution administered by a private entity, composed by three hospitals and fourteen healthcare centres.

Discussion and Conclusions: Parallel to the evolution of Psychiatry worldwide, also here the social, political, cultural and scientific changes had a relevant role. And so, we witnessed the same difficulties, and developments. Nowadays, however, the lack of financial and, particularly, human resources remains a major issue.

Supplementary material: Complete presentation available at <http://ijcnmh.arc-publishing.org>

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Citation: Rodrigues et al. From a mental health dispensary to ULS do Nordeste. IJCNMH 2015;2(Suppl. 1):P2

Published: 20 June 2015



Open Access Publication Available at <http://ijcnmh.arc-publishing.org>

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