

An Audit of Ultimately Unsuccessful Referrals for Involuntary Admission to the Lakeview Unit of Naas General Hospital during 2019

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Background

- The Mental Health Act 2001 outlines the procedure and criteria for referral of persons for involuntary admission.
- Following application and recommendation, the person referred is examined by a consultant psychiatrist.
- If appropriate, they are admitted involuntarily under an admission order.
- Not all referrals for involuntary admission are followed by admission order.
- Involuntarily admission is only appropriate if the person is suffering from a Mental Disorder which
 - (a) Poses a serious likelihood of the person causing immediate and serious harm to self or others or
 - (b)(i) Failure to admit would likely lead to serious deterioration or prevent treatment administration, and
 - (ii) Detention and treatment would likely be beneficial.
- It's unlawful to detain a person solely because they are
 - (1) Suffering from a personality disorder, (2) Socially deviant, or (3) Addicted to drugs/intoxicants.
- Admission orders aren't completed if the person doesn't meet these criteria, referral forms are incorrect, or the person agrees to voluntary admission.

This audit aimed to:

1. Determine the rate at which admission orders were not completed following referral for involuntary admission to the Lakeview Unit during 2019.
2. Assess and quantify the reasons for not completing admission orders following such referrals.
3. Record whether these referrals were made during or outside of normal working hours.
4. Record whether these referrals had recommendations made by the patient's own GP or an on-call GP.

Method

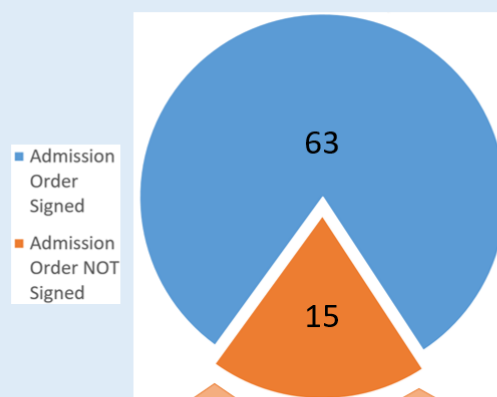
Clinical records of patients referred for involuntary admission during 2019 were reviewed retrospectively.

- Cases where admission orders weren't completed were identified and the reason for not completing the admission order was recorded
- Additionally, the time at which the referral was made, and the application and recommendation sources were recorded

Findings/Results

- 78 referrals for involuntary admission were received.
- In 19% of cases (n=15) an admission order was not signed by the examining consultant psychiatrist.
- In 60% (n=9) of these 15 cases the person was recorded to not be suffering from a mental disorder meeting criteria for involuntary admission.
- In 27% (n=4) of these cases the person presented with a personality disorder.
- In 73% (n=11) of cases the person presented with a substance use related illness.
- In 13% (n=2) of cases the person agreed to voluntary admission.
- In 93% of these cases (n=14) the application source was the Gardai.
- 100% (n=13) of cases had recommendations made by another GP (i.e. not the patient's own GP).
- 73% (n=11) of referrals were made outside of normal working hours.

78 Referrals of Involuntary Admission



Reason for Not Completing Admission Order:

- 60%: No Mental Disorder meeting criteria for involuntary admission.
- 27%: Personality disorder.
- 73%: Substance use related illness.
- 13%: agreed to voluntary admission.

Details of Unsuccessful Referrals:

- 73%: Came out-of-hours
- 93%: Application from Gardai.
- 100%: Recommendations made by another GP (i.e. not the patient's own GP).

Conclusions

- It's not uncommon for persons presenting for involuntary admission to not have admission orders completed upon consultant examination.
- Our findings suggest that persons subject to ultimately unsuccessful referrals for involuntary admission most frequently present with:
 - Substance use related illness and/or
 - No identifiable mental disorder meeting criteria for detention under the MHA 2001.
- Unsuccessful referrals tended to come:
 1. Out of hours
 2. From the Gardai and
 3. From Out-of-hours GPs.
- This highlights the need for ongoing education of both the Gardai and GPs on the process of making applications and recommendations under the MHA.
- We delivered feedback and an education session on the use of the MHA to these parties in March 2021.
- We plan to re-audit in March 2022.