


Mental institutions and involuntary hospitalization of mentally ill patients

Marta Čivljak, MD

Historical background


- For most of the history “voices” of schizophrenia were conceptualized as: the words of the gods or other spirits; demonic possession
- In the 18th century – institutions which practiced “moral treatment” (saw God not Satan inside the insane)

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- Early 20th century society saw the insane were not criminals, and needed not criminal but “therapeutic” justice

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- In 1960s two word views clashed over mental patients:

Lawyers emphasized patient autonomy, the subjectivity of psychiatric diagnosis, inadequate large state institutions.

Psychiatrist treatment needs, insanity as mental disease

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- Deinstitutionalization in 70s (patients right model), almost 1/2 milion mental patients were “deinstitualized” over 30 years
 - In the 80s, psychiatry revolted.

Psychiatrist Paul Chodoff reviewed a decade of deinstitutionalization and concluded that it had failed, that some involuntary confinement is needed to help the mentally ill, and that civil liberties lawyers were often enemies of the insane.



Involuntary hospitalization


In Croatia the substantive and legal requirements for involuntary hospitalization were regulated by Health Care and Health Insurance Act. It is indicated only for two groups of diseases:

- Infection diseases and
- Mental diseases



Reasons for involuntary hospitalization have social and medical character :


- To protect society from mentally ill patient
- To protect mentally ill patient from society
- Treatment and therapy

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- Emergencies (temporary non-ambulatory treatment in a psychiatric hospital)
 - Decision by medical doctor
 - The decision could be enforced by the police
 - Hospitals are obliged to inform the court
 - Court decides whether the continued detention of the patient is justified or he should be discharged



Doctors decision/believes

- Patient appear to be mentally ill
- Mental illness requires immediate treatment
- It is necessary for the health or safety of the patient or for the protection of other people

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- The patient have refuse or is unable to consent to necessary treatment
 - There is no less restrictive way for the patient to receive adequate treatment.

The main cause for involuntary hospitalization


...should be the mentally ill person himself


- He is not aware of his illness
- Even when is aware of his illness, he believes that the problems he had are caused by other reasons
- He is aware, but he refuses treatment because of “labeling” and consequences.



Why should we be concerned about involuntary hospitalization?


- To detect and diagnose a mental illness, you have to depend almost entirely on what people tell you
- The main tool of diagnosis is an interview with a person, and how much you notice symptoms

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- Sometimes we don't listen to the people because the vision we have. We think they have to live as we think they have to...
 - What about the human rights of mental patients, especially their right to freedom?



How you make it in the way you
never go wrong?

Human being and human rights
has to be in the center

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- Human being is active participating subject (not object)
 - Professionals can give support, options, ideas, but never forget what human being is!