A Comparison Of Older Longstay Psychiatric And Learning Disability Inpatients Using The Health Of The Nation Outcome Scales

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Abstract:

OBJECTIVE: With increasing longevity, the number of elderly patients with psychiatric or learning disabilities is likely to increase. The degree of overlap of symptoms and needs of these two groups of patients, which may allow for their care within the same service, was examined. DESIGN: Twenty-six longstay, elderly (> 65 years) psychiatric patients resident in psychogeriatric wards of a psychiatric hospital were compared with 23 longstay, elderly patients and 40 longstay patients aged 50-65 years, both resident in the wards of a specialist hospital for learning disabilities. The instrument used was the Health of the Nation Outcome Scales (HoNOS). RESULT: On the HoNOS, the elderly psychiatric patients scored significantly higher for problems with mood, relationships and occupation/activities. There were no significant differences for any of the scales rated between the 50-65 and > 65 years old patients with learning disabilities. The similarities between the three groups of patients would suggest that for some patients the same services may be utilized. This could reduce the cost of the care in the community and entail more economical use of the facilities and staff. The HoNOS proved to be a concise and simple instrument, which could become a useful tool in monitoring the outcome of healthcare in longstay patients.