

Liaison Psychiatry in Baixo Alentejo, Portugal: Reality and Perspectives

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Abstract : Baixo Alentejo is a region of Portugal characterized by an aging population, geographic isolation, social deprivation and a lack of medical staff. It is one of the most problematic regions in regards to mental health, particularly due to the factors mentioned. The aim of this study is a presentation of liaison psychiatry in Hospital José Joaquim Fernandes; a sample of the work done, the current situation and future perspectives. The aim is to present a retrospective study of internal psychiatric emergencies from January 1st, 2016 to August 31st, 2016. Liaison psychiatry of Department of Psychiatry and Mental Health (Psychiatry Service) of ULSBA includes the following activities: internal psychiatry emergencies, HIV consultation (comprised in the general consultation) and liaison psychology (oncology and pain), consisting of a total of 111 internal psychiatry emergencies during the identified period. Gender distribution was uniform. The most prevalent age group was 71-80 years, and 66,6% of patients were 60 years old and over. The majority of the emergency observations was requested by hospital services of medicine (56,8%) and surgery (24,3%). The most frequent reasons for admission were: respiratory disease (18,0%); tumors (15,3%); other surgical and orthopedic pathology (14,5%) and stroke (11,7%). The most frequent psychiatric diagnoses were: neurotic and organic depression (24,3%); delirium (26,1%) and adjustment reaction (14,5%). Major psychiatric pathology (schizophrenia and affective disorders) was found in 10,8%. Antidepressive medication was prescribed in 37,8% patients; antipsychotics in 34,2%. In 9,9% of the cases, no psychotropic drug was prescribed, and 5,4% of patients received psychologic support. Regarding hospital discharge, 42,4% of patients were referred to the general practitioner or to the medical specialist; 22,5% to outpatient gerontopsychiatry; 17,1% to psychiatric outpatient and 14,4% deceased. A future perspective is to start liaison in areas of HIV and psycho oncology in multidisciplinary approach and to improve collaboration with colleagues of other specialties for refining psychiatric referrals.

Keywords : psychiatry, liaison, internal emergency, psychiatric referral

Conference Title : ICMH 2017 : International Conference on Mental Health

Conference Location : Berlin, Germany

Conference Dates : May 21-22, 2017