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MID-WESTERN
HEALTH BOARD

28 June 2002

To: Chairman & Each Member
Mid-Western Health Board

Report No:
Item No on Agenda

Report for Meeting of the Board to be held on Friday, 12th July, 2002.

Irish Psychiatric Hospitals and Units Census, 2001.

Dear Member,

The Health Research Board published the results of the fifth National Psychiatric Census in Ireland in May, 2002. Previous censuses were carried out in 1963, 1971, 1981 and 1991. The report shows the number of residents in Irish psychiatric hospitals and units has decreased significantly over the last 38 years. Throughout the report, allocation to Health Board Area is determined by the address from which a patient was admitted to hospital, rather than the area or location of the hospital where they were treated, except in the individual hospitals and units section which looks at the in-patient population on the night of the census.

1. NATIONAL FINDINGS

The census showed that there were 4,321 residents in in-patient psychiatric care on 31st March 2001, compared to 19,801 on the same date in 1963. This is a 78% reduction in resident patients over this period and a 47% reduction since the census in 1991. These changes are largely due to the death of older patients and their non-replacement by new long-stay patients. Another factor influencing this trend is the increased availability of community psychiatric services and additional general hospital psychiatric units being opened. In addition to the decrease in overall numbers in in-patient psychiatric care the duration of each episode of hospitalisation has decreased.

71% of patients resident in psychiatric hospitals and units on census night were 45 years of age or older, 38% were aged 65 years or over, while the 75 year and over age group had the highest rate of hospitalisation at 454.9 per 100,000 population¹. 69% of the resident population were single, a rate of 279.8 per 100,000 population (over half were male), followed by divorced persons at 255.4 and widowed persons at 177.3. Single males had the highest rate of hospitalisation, at 329.7, which was seven times that of married males (46.1) and twice that of widowed males (153.9). Likewise, the rate for single females (221.6) was almost four times that for married females (62.1). Both married and widowed females had higher hospitalisation rates (62.1 and 183.2) than married or widowed males (46.1 and 153.9 respectively).

The unskilled occupational group had the highest rate of hospitalisation at 314.3 per 100,000 population while own account worker had the lowest at 5.8 per 100,000. Agricultural workers had the second highest rate of hospitalisation at 252.8 followed by farmers at 111.8 per 100,000 population. Both agricultural workers and the unskilled group have consistently higher rates of

hospitalisation than other socio-economic groups in each successive census. It is worth noting that 50% of the occupations returned were classified as 'unknown', making it impossible to assign them to a socio-economic group.

39% of in-patients on census night had a diagnosis of Schizophrenia, a rate of 63.1 per 100,000 population. 17% of patients had a diagnosis of depressive disorders (a rate of 27.9), while mania accounted for 10% of patients (a rate of 15.7). 9% of the in-patient population had a diagnosis of mental handicap (a rate of 14.5). The male rate of hospitalisation for schizophrenia (79.7) was higher than that of females (47.1), while females had a higher rate of hospitalisation for depressive disorders (31.9 versus 23.8). The male rate of hospitalisation for alcoholic disorders (13.5) was almost three times that of the female rate (4.6).

54% of all resident patients were new long-stay, i.e. they had been in hospital for one year or more on census night, while 36% were old long-stay patients (in hospital for five years or more). 23% had been in hospital for up to four weeks, 14% had been in hospital for between one and three months, while a further 10% had been in hospital for between 3 months and one year. One quarter of those with alcohol disorders and one quarter of those with drug dependence had been in hospital for just under one week. In contrast one quarter of those with a diagnosis of depressive disorders had been hospitalised for one to three months. One fifth of those with schizophrenia and one fifth of those with other psychoses had been hospitalised for more than 25 years. 44% of mentally handicapped residents had been in hospital for 25 years or more on the night of the census.

83% of resident patients on census night were voluntary, a rate of 133.7 while 17% were non-voluntary, a rate of 26.7 per 100,000 population. 15% of non-voluntary patients had been hospitalised for 25 years or more and 31% of this group were over 75 years of age. 16% of non-voluntary patients had been hospitalised for one to three months while 13% had been hospitalised for three to twelve months.

The census showed that an increasing number of patients are now treated in general hospital psychiatric units as opposed to the older psychiatric hospitals – increasing from 3% in 1981, 4% in 1991 to 14% in 2001.

2. HEALTH BOARD AREAS

There were a number of differences in findings between Health Boards. The South Eastern Health Board had the highest rate of hospitalised residents (239.1 per 100,000 population), while the South Western Area Health Board had the lowest (99.1 per 100,000 population). The Mid-Western Health Board had the second highest rate of hospitalised residents (220.7). All Health Boards had a greater than 60% reduction in hospitalisation rates over the 30 year period 1971 – 2001. The North Western Health Board had the largest percentage reduction at 85%, followed by the North Eastern Health Board with a 79% reduction and the Western Health Board, which had a reduction of 77%, in rates over the 30 year period. The Mid-Western Health Board had a reduction of 67.8%, while the South Eastern Health Board had the smallest percentage reduction in rates over the same period at 61%.

There was a higher rate of hospitalisation for males in all health boards with the exception of the North Eastern Health Board, with rates ranging from 269.0 in the Mid-Western Health Board to 111.1 in the South Western Health Board. Hospitalisation rates were highest for the 75 year and over age group in all but four health boards ranging from 859.3 in the South Eastern Health Board to 230.5 in the South Western Health Board. The Mid-Western Health Board and Western Health Boards had higher rates for the 65 – 74 yrs age group while the North Western Health Board had higher rates for the 55-64 year age group.

Single persons had the highest rate of hospitalisation in six health boards, with rates ranging from 441.5 in the Mid-Western health Board to 243.3 in the north Eastern Health Board. Widowed persons had the highest rate of hospitalisation in the South Eastern health board at 312.9 per 100,000 population.

The unskilled group had the highest rate of hospitalisation in all health boards with the exception of the North Western and the Southern Health Boards with rates ranging from 583.0 in the Mid-Western Health Board to 123.2 per 100,000 population in the South Western Area Health Board. In the North Western Health Board lower professionals had the highest rate at 83.0, while in the Southern Health Board rates were highest for agricultural workers at 506.4 per 100,00 population.

Hospitalisation rates for schizophrenia were highest in all health board, with rates ranging from 95.9 in the Western Health Board to 33.0 in the South Western Area Health Board. Hospitalisation rates for mental handicap were highest in the Mid-Western Health Board at 42.6 and lowest in the East Coast Area Health Board at 2.0 per 100,000. The South Eastern Health Board had the highest rate of hospitalisation for depressive disorders at 41.3 while the Midland Health Board had the highest rate of hospitalisation for alcoholic disorders at 16.8 per 100,000.

The percentage of patients detained on an involuntary basis in psychiatric hospitals and units ranges from 23% in the North Western and Southern Health Boards to 11% in the South Eastern, reflecting differing provision and usage of community alternatives to in-patient care.

High Support Hostels

The 2001 census report included for the first time an enumeration of residents in high support hostels, i.e. hostels or community residences, providing 24 hour nursing care. The number of hostels by Health Board area ranged from 14 in the Northern Area Health Board to 3 in the East Coast Area Health Board.

There were 1,104 persons resident in 86 high support hostels in Ireland on the 31 March 2001, a rate of 41 per 100,000 population. 58% of these residents were male, a rate of 48.2 per 100,000.

18% of residents were in the Southern Health Board followed by 15% in the Northern Area Health Board and 14% in the North Western Health Board. 8.6% of residents were in the Mid-Western Health Board while 4% were in the East Coast Area Health Board.

The highest proportion of residents were aged 55-64 years (27%), 23% were aged 45-54 years, with a further 22% aged 65-74 years. 80% of residents were aged 45 years and over, 7% were less than 35 years, while 2% of hostel residents were under 25 years of age.

41% of persons had been resident for between one and five years, 28% had been resident for five to ten years while 11 % were resident for ten to twenty years. Over one fifth (22%) of resident in the Western Health Board had been in hostel care for ten years or more, compared to 5% in the North Western and 6% in the Southern Health Boards for the same length of time.

3. MID-WESTERN HEALTH BOARD FINDINGS

There were 518 patients resident in the Mid-Western Health Board area on the night of the census, representing a hospitalisation rate of 220.7 per 100,000. This was the second-highest rate among all Health Boards. Males had a higher hospitalisation rate (269.0) compared to females (172.2). This was the highest rate for males among all Health Boards and the second highest for females.

One third of the in-patient population in the Mid-Western Health Board were aged 65 years or over. Single persons had the highest rate of hospitalisation at 441.5, widowed persons had the second highest rate at 147.4. The unskilled group had the highest rate of hospitalisation at 583.0, followed by agricultural workers at 409.5 and non-manual workers at 220.5. Patients with schizophrenia had the highest rate of hospitalisation at 90.3, followed by mental handicap at 42.6 and depressive disorders at 23.9. The rate of hospitalisation for schizophrenia in the Mid-Western Health Board was the second highest among all health boards while that for mental handicap was the highest. 18% of patients resident in the Mid-Western Health Board on census night were non-voluntary. 24% of resident patients had been hospitalised for up to three months on census night, while 41% had been in hospital for 10 years or more. The average length of stay for patients (excluding those in hospital for one year or more) was 64.6 days.

MID-WESTERN HEALTH BOARD PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS AND ACUTE UNIT

(St. Joseph's Hospital, Limerick, Our Lady's Hospital, Ennis, and Unit 5B, Mid-Western Regional Hospital).

There were 422 in-patients on the night of the census in the Mid-Western Health Board psychiatric hospitals (St. Josephs Hospital, Limerick, and Our Lady's Hospital, Ennis) and Acute Unit (Unit 5B). There has been a steady decrease in the number of patients in hospital since the first census in 1963, i.e. 1577 ('63), 1499 ('71), 1375 ('81) and 696 ('91).

42% of in-patients on the night of the census were aged between 45 and 64 years, 36% were aged 65 years and over, while 20% were aged between 20 and 44 years. Overall 77% of in-patients were aged over 45 years.

34% of in-patients had a diagnosis of Schizophrenia, while 21% had a diagnosis of mental handicap. Breaking this down by Hospital/Unit, 45.2% of in-patients in Our Lady's Hospital had a diagnosis of schizophrenia, while 18.3% of in-patients had a diagnosis of mental handicap. In St. Josephs Hospital 47.3% of in-patient had a diagnosis of Schizophrenia, and 29.1% had a diagnosis of mental handicap. 14% of in-patients in the Acute Unit 5B on the night of the census had a diagnosis of schizophrenia.

33% of in-patient in St. Josephs Hospital, Limerick and Our Lady's Hospital, Ennis had a length of stay of 25 years or more, 19% had been in hospital between 1 and 5 years, while 14% had been in hospital between 5 and 10 years. In Our Lady's Hospital 77% of the in-patient population had a length of stay greater than 1 year, with 41% of these being in hospital for 25 years an over. In St. Josephs Hospital 89% of in-patient had been in hospital for more than 1 year, while 40% of these had been in hospital for 25 years or more.

In the Acute Unit 30% of in-patients on the night of the census had a length of stay of 2 – 4 weeks, 26% had been in hospital between 1 and 3 months, 16% between 1 and 2 weeks, 23% under 1 week, while 5% had been in hospital between 3 months and 1 year. Percentage occupancy on the night of the census was 98% (422 patients, 430 beds).

They were 96 residents in the 6 high support hostels in the Mid-Western Health Board area on the night of the census, 49 males and 47 females, a rate of 40.1 per 100,000 population.

Yours sincerely

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