

Effects of corona restrictions in a psychiatric hospital

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Background: The Corona-pandemic and resulting constraints have negatively affected patients suffering from psychiatric conditions. In particular, people in inpatient facilities might be at risk of experiencing more psychiatric symptoms because they are unable to receive visits or being restricted in their freedom.

Aim: To explore the relationship between Corona-restrictions and reported psychiatric symptoms among patients in a psychiatric hospital.

Methods: In total, 45 out of 54 patients (84,9%) filled out a survey-questionnaire in which they reported if certain psychiatric symptoms had increased during the obligated constraints. Two open-ended questions explored which particular restriction patients had experienced as most problematic and which recommendations they wanted to give to inpatient facilities.

Results: Overall, 84,5% of the inpatients suffered from the obligated constraints of the Corona-pandemic, although most of them reported to understand the necessity of these measures (71,1%). Patients reported increased complaints of both stress (N=27; 61,4%) and depression (N=24; 54,5%), in particular feelings of loneliness (N=25; 55,6%), helplessness (N=29; 64,4%) and boredom (N=34; 75,6%). Craving for substances and reported feelings of paranoia remained unaffected.

Conclusions: Increased feelings of loneliness, helplessness and boredom have been reported by psychiatric inpatients, due to the Corona related constraints. These outcomes may negatively affect patients' psychosocial wellbeing or quality of life. To prevent these negative outcomes, it seems important that all measures are being carefully explained, additional activities are being started and that the nursing staff is facilitated in both explaining and supporting psychiatric inpatients during this period.