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INVOLUNTARY TREATMENT OF ADOLESCENTS IN PSYCHIATRIC AND SOCIAL CARE

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Background: Little is known about use of coercion on minors in psychiatric care. Questions of coercion, self-determination and competence are more complicated in minors than in adults. Choice between psychiatric and child welfare care is not always clear.

Objective: To present findings in Finnish studies on involuntary treatment of adolescents.

Methods: Register data, medical file data and interviews with the young people, their parents, and professionals participating in decision-making are used in an ongoing series of studies.

Results: Involuntary psychiatric treatment and taking into care of adolescents has vastly increased since mid 1990's. Their use varies greatly within the same legislation. Involuntary care is more common in socially deprived areas. Involuntary treatment takes place justified by paternalistic motivations. Girls are more easily committed due to disruptive behaviours than boys.

Conclusion: Involuntary care of minors is a sizeable and ignored ethical problem.