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QUALITY OF CARE IN LONGER TERM MENTAL HEALTH INSTITUTIONS IN PORTUGAL

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Introduction: Deinstitutionalisation of the mentally ill is an ongoing process in European countries. Quality of care in residential facilities, however, was seldom assessed in part due to the lack of adequate instruments.

Objectives: To assess the quality of care in Portuguese residential facilities for long term mental patients.

Methods: Quality of care in residential facilities was assessed with the toolkit developed by the DEMoBinc study using interviews with the units' managers, and the users.

Results: The 20 units assessed across Portugal were mainly located in the city; 13 were in a hospital setting and 7 in the community. Most of the units (90%) had no maximum length of stay, and 60% were mixed-gender; 85% of the users were not compulsory. Most of the units (60%) had no one-bedrooms, and their aim was rehabilitative in 40%, and rehabilitative plus providing support in 40%. The rate of patients with a bank account was 49.4%, 32.4% were in charge of their finances, while only 14.1% had voted.

In hospital vs. community units patients were more frequently men (80.5 vs. 53.8%) and older (51.1 ± 13.7 vs. 43.3 ± 9.6 , $p < .001$). In community units the treatment was more frequently explained (50 vs. 26.3%), patients' involvement was higher (40.4 vs. 19.5%), while mean GAF scores (64.9 vs. 60.2) did not differ.

Conclusions: Portuguese results show that in spite of the effort to create new facilities for the longer term mentally ill, a lot still has to be done to improve the quality of care they provide.