

SECOND HAND SMOKING (SHS) IN AN INPATIENT PSYCHIATRIC UNIT

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Introduction: In Greece, current legislation prohibits smoking in hospitals, but not in psychiatric units, that may be associated with significant Second Hand Smoking (SHS) adverse effects on nonsmoking patients/staff.

Objectives: To examine the extent of SHS, and investigate the attitude of the nursing staff regarding smoking in a psychiatric inpatients unit.

Aim:

1. To measure objectively indoor air pollution using PM_{2.5} in the Psychiatric Inpatient Unit of the University General Hospital of Heraklion, Crete (PIU/UOC).
2. To investigate the attitude of the nursing staff towards the smoking permission in psychiatric units.

Methods: Data on smoking were collected for all inpatients between Nov'12-Sept'12. Pollution levels in PIU/UOC due to SHS were recorded by using the TSI Sidepack device. Nursing staff from the psychiatric unit, and medical and surgical units completed a short Questionnaire including demographics, smoking habits and attitude about the existing legislation on smoking.

Results: Among 444 inpatients, 42% were non-smokers. Within the PIU/UOC, indoor pollution attributable to smoking, averaged 318 µg/m³(range: 82-730µg/m³). 295 nurses (mean age 39.6±7.5yrs) completed the questionnaire and only 31.2% disagreed with the existing legislation, whereas 64% responded that they wouldn't avoid working in a psychiatric unit because of smoking permission.

Conclusions: SHS concentrations within a psychiatric inpatient unit are comparable to those in bars, suggesting a detrimental effect on nonsmoking patients'/employees' health. These results suggest the need to increase awareness among nursing staff of the adverse effects of SHS and to implement measures to decrease SHS's impact on other patients/staff, i.e. nicotine patches.