

Oral presentation

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The use of seclusion and restraint during 15 years – a nationwide study in Finland

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Background

Internationally, concerns over the use of seclusion and restraint in psychiatric care have increased over the past decades. In Finland, restriction of freedom and use of coercion in psychiatry are regulated by the Mental Health Act of 1991. After its implementation, the Act (revision 2002) has become more restrictive and specified in relation to using coercion. Objective: This study investigated the nationwide trends in the use of seclusion and restraint in Finland over a fifteen-year span (1990–2004) that was characterised by legislative changes.

Methods

The data was collected during a predetermined week in 1990, 1991, 1994, 1998, and 2004 using the National Hospital Discharge Register and a structured postal survey of Finnish psychiatric hospitals.

Results

Notwithstanding the legislative changes, the use of seclusion and restraint did not change in Finland during 15 years.

Conclusion

Ethical and clinical considerations are discussed.