

The psychiatric emergency service in the Netherlands



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Abstract

Every region in The Netherlands has got an emergency service.

This is a team of people that immediately goes to see the psychiatric patient after an instruction of for instance the general practitioner or the police. This special team works 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The patient is then visited by members of the team, a social worker accompanied by a psychiatrist, or the patient will go to the ambulant unit (the polyclinic) directly.

This is a very effective procedure, because behind the two people that visit the psychiatric patient, is a whole team of people who have the opportunity to start an ambulant treatment the day after. Through this team we have the opportunity to treat patients intensively without a needed admission in the clinic. The basis of this team are social-nurse-therapists who are very skilled. These people take lead in the treatment and have a psychiatrist as a back-up. Suicidal patients are through a special procedure included in a clinic upon a juridical decision. If it is expected that the patient is dangerous, the police will accompany the emergency teams. If psychiatric medication is needed, the treatment will start directly. Other forms of treatment are psychotherapy, a short treatment by conducting 5 meetings with the patient, or intensive ambulant treatment.

In my opinion it is a very good example of how ambulant treatment of psychiatric patients works and is effective for everybody involved.

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