

A PROSPECTIVE STUDY OF PATIENTS ABSCONDING FROM A PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL IN IRAN

F. Sheikhmoonesi¹, A. Kabirzadeh², S.T. Yahyavi¹, B. Mohseni Saravi²

¹Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences Research Center, Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences, ²Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences, Sari, Iran

Introduction: Absconding from a psychiatric ward (leaving without permission) is a costly event in many ways.

Objectives: Some risks of absconding include missed treatment which results in longer rehabilitation time or lack of treatment altogether.

Aim: To investigate the motivation and characteristics of patients absconding from a psychiatric ward in Iran.

Methods: A prospective study was conducted for patients who absconded from psychiatric ward in the period between July 2010 and July 2011. The variables were patients' age, gender, hospital stay, substance abuse, psychiatric diagnosis and site of absconding. All

patients were interviewed to assess their motivation for absconding.

Results: Over a one-year period of data collection 56 absconding events were recorded, with the incidence rate of 4.24%.

The mean age of absconders was 31+8.4 years, 47 (83.9%) absconders were males, 28 (50.9%) absconds happened through the park fence.

Bipolar mood disorder or schizophrenia was the diagnosis of 23 (41%) absconders. The mean number of days of hospitalization in patients who left the wards was 11 days. The main motivation to abscond was boredom from the ward environment and missing the family.

Conclusion: The risk of absconding is highest in the early days of admission especially in male, young patients with diagnosis of bipolar mood disorder or schizophrenia.