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MENTAL HEALTH LAW PROFILES

Mental health law profiles

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The series on mental health law returns to the Middle East with the two papers on Qatar and Jordan. In both these countries, compulsory psychiatric care and treatment have not been supported to date adequately by specific legislation. In both countries, families appear to be the fulcrum of and the primary support for the treatment of patients with mental illness. A main concern arising out of this, in the light of this issue's

editorial on gender differences and mental health in the Middle East, may therefore be the implications for the burden placed on women who have to look after relatives at home with a mental illness. Another concern is the appropriateness, nature and quality of compulsory treatment of those women in Qatar and Jordan alleged to be suffering from mental disorders. Have they been getting a fair and equitable deal compared with men?

MENTAL HEALTH LAW PROFILE

Mental health law in Qatar

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This article provides a brief outline of mental health services in Qatar, historical notes on the use of informal traditional conventions under common law for the care under compulsory conditions of people who are mentally ill and information on the ongoing development of the Mental Health Law and its key provisions in the context of the new National Mental Health Strategy.

In Qatar, a national mental health programme was introduced in 1990 with the aim of setting up a community-based mental healthcare model. A planning committee for mental health was established in 2008 within the Supreme Council of Health (SCH) and is responsible for providing policy direction as well as developing mental health services across the spectrum of promotion, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation. The vision is to protect, promote and enhance the mental health