



WHO QUALITYRIGHTS: SERVICE STANDARDS AND QUALITY IN MENTAL HEALTH CARE

The global mental health situation

- One in four people will experience a mental health condition in their lifetime.
- Over 800 000 people die annually from suicide and it is among the top three leading causes of death in young people aged 15-34 years worldwide.
- In some countries people with severe mental health conditions die on average 10 years younger than the general population.
- Almost half of the world's population lives in a country where, on average, there is less than one psychiatrist to serve 200,000 people. Mental health care providers trained to deliver psychosocial interventions, such as psychologists, social workers, and occupational therapists are even scarcer.

Mental health services in countries

- Poor quality services and human rights violations in mental health facilities and social care homes are an everyday occurrence in many countries.
- Globally 67% of mental health spending is directed towards mental hospitals and 63% of psychiatric beds are located in these institutions, which are associated with poor quality care, poor treatment outcomes and human rights violations.
- Almost 25% of people admitted to institutions across the world remain in these facilities longer than a year after admission, due to the lack of support services in the community.
- People living in mental health facilities are often exposed to inhuman and degrading treatment, including filthy living conditions, and a lack of clothes, clean water, adequate food, heating, proper bedding or hygiene facilities. Many are exposed to physical, sexual and emotional abuse.
- They are often held in cell-like rooms and put in seclusion and restraint for long periods of time.
- People are not provided with adequate mental health treatment and also lack access to physical health care services.
- Basic rights such as the right to confidentiality, to access information, to privacy, to communication, are frequently violated.
- Violations and poor quality of care are not confined to outdated institutions, and can even occur in services in general hospitals, primary health care and the community.
- Many people seeking care from outpatient and community care services are disempowered and also experience extensive restrictions in their basic human rights.
- People with mental health conditions are far more likely to be a victim of violence than a perpetrator, with one in four reporting that they experienced violence in the past year.



Harrie Timmermans/Global Initiative on Psychiatry

The importance of implementing services standards to improve the quality of care

- Everyone should have access to basic mental health care that is affordable, equitable, geographically accessible, available on a voluntary basis, and of adequate quality.
- Working to improve the quality of care in both in- and outpatient facilities is important, not only to reform past neglect, but to ensure the development of effective and efficient care in the future.
- High quality services require the use of evidence based practices and must incorporate human rights principles, respect autonomy and protect people's inherent dignity.
- Quality services must also promote recovery by putting at the forefront individuals' goals and aspirations to lead fulfilling lives in the community.
- Mental health services need to go beyond the provision of medical treatment but also encompass the important roles of supporting individuals to access employment, housing, educational opportunities, and to engage in community activities and programmes
- Service standards that reflect evidence, best practice and human rights standards need to be implemented and closely monitored in order to put an end to human rights violations and promote quality mental health care that promotes recovery and positive outcomes for people with mental disabilities.



What is WHO QUALITY RIGHTS?

The poor quality of mental health services and extensive violations taking place within services in countries all over the world has led to the development of the WHO QUALITYRIGHTS PROJECT. This project aims to unite and empower people to improve the quality of care and promote human rights in mental health facilities and social care homes.

The objectives of the project are to:

- Improve the quality of care and human rights conditions in inpatient and outpatient mental health and social facilities.
- Build capacity among people with mental health conditions, their families, and health workers to understand and promote human rights.
- Strengthen civil society and citizen action to conduct advocacy and influence decision-making processes.
- Reform national policies and legislation in line with best practice, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other international human rights standards.

The WHO Quality Rights Toolkit: Setting quality and human rights standards in all facilities

As part of the project WHO has developed the *WHO QualityRights Toolkit to Assess and Improve Quality and Human Rights in Mental Health and Social Care Facilities*.

- **The Toolkit** uses the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD) as a framework for providing countries with information on human rights standards that need to be respected, protected and fulfilled in mental health and social care facilities
- It was developed with inputs from international experts including people with psychosocial disabilities and their organizations



The Toolkit provides practical information and guidance on:

- The quality standards that need to be met in mental health care, in line with human rights principles
- How to prepare for an assessment of services, including the establishment of multi-disciplinary assessment committees
- How to conduct a comprehensive assessment of services
- How to report findings and make appropriate recommendations to improve quality of care, services standards, and human rights in mental health and social care services

How, where and by whom can the WHO QualityRights Toolkit be used?

- The WHO QualityRights Toolkit has been designed so that it can be used in low, middle and high income countries.
- It can be applied in a full range of inpatient and outpatient mental health and social care facilities.
- It can be utilized by many different groups with an interest in promoting the rights of persons with mental and psychosocial disabilities such as dedicated assessment committees, NGOs, National Human Rights Institutions, National Health/Mental Health Commissions, health service accreditation bodies, and national bodies and mechanisms established under international human rights standards.

For more information:

http://www.who.int/mental_health/policy/quality_rights/en/index.html



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