

Irish Psychiatric Units and Hospitals Census 2006 Bulletin

September 2006

Dear Reader

As part of our national reporting role in relation to mental health service activity, the Mental Health Research Division (MHRD) of the Health Research Board (HRB) presents summary data from a national psychiatric in-patient census. The detailed report is in print and will be available in November. The report includes international comparisons and a discussion of the timeframe for exit of long stay patients from the system which is in line with current policy. The MHRD would like to thank services for their cooperation in providing returns for the census. We look forward to your continued support in the future.

Rosalyn Moran
Head of MHRD

Introduction

This bulletin is a synopsis of data from the sixth national census of Irish psychiatric units and hospitals, carried out on 31 March 2006. It is part of a series of censuses first carried out in 1963 and decennially thereafter, in 1971, 1981, 1991 and 2001. The present census was carried out after an interval of five years. More frequent census reporting is planned to monitor the increasing pace of change to community psychiatric services. Advances in electronic data capture also allow for these more frequent censuses.

Data on patients resident in Irish psychiatric hospitals and units operating under the provisions of the *Mental Treatment Act, 1945* (Department of Health, 1945) at midnight on 31 March 2006 is presented. All patients 'on the books' in hospitals and units, including those on leave, were enumerated in the census. The rates reported were calculated using the Census of Population in 2002 (Central Statistics Office, 2003) and all rates are per 100,000 population aged 16 years and over.

National Findings

As of 31 March 2006 the number of patients resident in Irish psychiatric units and hospitals totalled 3,389; this figure represents a hospitalisation rate of 111.9 per 100,000 population aged 16 years and over. The corrected rate based on the total population of Ireland of 4,234,925 in 2006 was 80.0 per 100,000.

First-time in-patients had a lower hospitalisation rate, at 36.6 per 100,000; this compares with a rate of 7.53 per 100,000 for patients who had been admitted previously. The past 40 years have seen a considerable decline in the number of patients resident in Irish psychiatric units

and hospitals, with the number of in-patients dropping from 19,801 in 1963 to 3,389 in 2006. This represents a reduction of 83% since 1963 and a reduction of 22% since 2001.

Table 2.1 Irish psychiatric in-patient numbers 1963-2006

Year	Number	Year	Number	Year	Number	Year	Number
1963	19,801	1974	15,156	1985	12,097	1996	5,212
1964	18,989	1975	14,967	1986	11,643	1997	4,817
1965	18,641	1976	14,473	1987	10,621	1998	4,820
1966	18,084	1977	14,352	1988	9,500	1999	4,469
1967	17,841	1978	13,968	1989	7,897	2000	4,230
1968	17,218	1979	13,838	1990	7,334	2001 ^a	4,321
1969	16,802	1980	13,342	1991 ^a	8,207	2002	3,891
1970	16,403	1981 ^a	13,984	1992	6,130	2003	3,658
1971 ^a	16,661	1982	13,428	1993	5,806	2004 ^b	3,556
1972	15,856	1983	12,802	1994	5,581	2005 ^c	3,475
1973	15,471	1984	12,484	1995	5,327	2006 ^a	3,389

^aMSRB/HRB Census completed on 31st March each year

^bMental Health Commission, 2005

^cMental Health Commission, 2006

Gender and age

Males accounted for over half (55%) of all in-patients on census night, representing a hospitalisation rate of 124.7 per 100,000 population; the comparable rate for females was 99.5 per 100,000. There has been little change in the gender breakdown of in-patients over the past 40 years, with males representing over half of all in-patients in each census year.

One-third of in-patients were aged 65 years and over on census night; 37% were aged 45–54 years; 25% were aged 25–44 years, and 6% were under 25 years of age. Sixteen per cent of in-patients were aged 75 years and over. This group had the highest hospitalisation rate, at 292.5 per 100,000 population, followed by the 65–74-years age group, at 224.8, and the 55–64-years age group, at 174.1 per 100,000. The 16–19-years age group had the lowest rate, at 14.7 per 100,000 population.

Marital status

Two-thirds of in-patients on census night were single; 18% were married; 7% were widowed, and 1% were divorced. Single persons had the highest rate of hospitalisation, at 177.8 per 100,000 population, followed by divorced persons, at 125.5, and widowed persons, at 119.3. Married persons had the lowest rate of hospitalisation, at 41.1 per 100,000.

Socio-economic group

Agricultural workers had the highest rate of hospitalisation, at 264.4 per 100,000 population, followed by the unskilled group, at 249.9, and farmers, at 82.7. However, it should be noted that 51% of occupations were classified as 'unknown' or

'unspecified', thus making it impossible to assign them to a socio-economic group. Males had a higher hospitalisation rate than females for all socio-economic groups with the exception of higher professionals.

Diagnosis

Over one-third (34%) of all residents on census night had a diagnosis of schizophrenia; 15% had a diagnosis of depressive disorder; 8% had a diagnosis of mania, and 7% each had a diagnosis of organic mental disorder and intellectual disability. Patients with a diagnosis of schizophrenia had the highest rate of hospitalisation, at 38.4 per 100,000 population, followed by other and unspecified, at 20.4; depressive disorders, at 16.2, and mania, at 9.1.

Legal status

Twenty-two per cent of in-patients on census night were non-voluntary; this represents a rate of 24.6 per 100,000 population. Twenty-four per cent of males were non-voluntary; the comparable rate for females was 20%. Males had a higher rate of non-voluntary hospitalisation, at 29.5 per 100,000, than females, at 19.8 per 100,000.

Length of stay

Forty-six per cent of all in-patients were long-stay i.e. they had been in hospital for one year or more on census night; 29% were old long-stay i.e. had been in hospital for five years or more. Seventeen per cent of in-patients had been in hospital for between one and three months, and an additional 17% had been hospitalised for up to two weeks on census night. Forty-seven per cent of those who had been in hospital for five years or more were aged 65 years and over.

In-patients with a diagnosis of intellectual disability had the longest average length of stay, at 165.1 days, followed by those with development disorders, at 141.5 days, and those with organic mental disorders, at 140.4 days.

Children's Centres

On 31 March 2006 the number of children resident in children's centres totalled eight (four male and four female). Three of these children were aged 8 years, 13 years and 14 respectively; three were aged 15 and two were aged 16. Two children each had a diagnosis of depressive disorders, neuroses and behavioural and emotional disorders of childhood and adolescence, while one had a diagnosis of schizophrenia and one had a diagnosis of eating disorder.

Health Service Executive Areas

The HSE South area had the highest rate of hospitalisation on census night, at 131.0 per 100,000 population, followed by the HSE Dublin North-East area, at 113.0, and the HSE Dublin Mid-Leinster area, at 105.7. The HSE West area had the lowest rate of hospitalisation, at 96.4 per 100,000 population.

The HSE South area had the highest proportion (40%) of elderly patients i.e. those aged 65 years and over. This was followed by the HSE Dublin North-East area, at 32%, and the HSE Dublin Mid-Leinster area, at 30%. One-fifth of patients resident in the HSE South area were aged 75 years and over on census night.

Diagnostically, schizophrenia had higher rates in all HSE areas. Rates ranged from 43.0 per 100,000 in the HSE

South to 33.1 per 100,000 population in the HSE Dublin Mid-Leinster. The HSE South had the highest proportion of non-voluntary patients, at 27%, followed by 22% for the HSE Dublin North-East and 19% each in the HSE Dublin Mid-Leinster and HSE West. The HSE Dublin Mid-Leinster area accounted for the largest proportion of in-patient days, at 34% and had the longest average length of stay on census night, at 68 days.

Hospital Type

Psychiatric hospitals accounted for 52% of all patients who were resident in psychiatric in-patient care on census night; an additional 23% of patients were resident in general hospital psychiatric units and 17% were resident in private hospitals. The proportion of residents in general hospital psychiatric units has risen from 3% in 1981 to 23% in 2006. There has been a corresponding decrease in the proportion of residents in psychiatric hospitals from 90% in 1981 to 52% in 2006. Psychiatric hospitals had the largest proportion (42%) of patients aged 65 years or over, this compared to private hospitals with 36%, and general hospital psychiatric units with 16%. Twenty-six per cent of those resident in general hospital psychiatric units, 23% of those in psychiatric hospitals and 7% in private hospitals were non-voluntary.

Individual Units and Hospitals

There were wide variations in hospitalisation rates between catchment areas and individual units and hospitals, with North Cork having the highest rate of hospitalisation, at 240.5 per 100,000 population, followed by East Galway, at 212.7, and Waterford, at 206.0. West Cork had the lowest rate of hospitalisation, at 15.4 per 100,000 population, while Meath had the second lowest rate of hospitalisation, at 16.2.

The highest rate of hospitalisation for schizophrenia was in North Cork, at 124.7 per 100,000 population; this was followed by East Galway, at 121.7, and Longford/Westmeath, at 94.6. Units and hospitals in Waterford had the highest rate of hospitalisation for depressive disorders, at 49.9 per 100,000, followed by units and hospitals in Tipperary, at 43.0 and units and hospitals in North Cork, at 36.9. The highest rate of hospitalisation for intellectual disability was in Carlow/Kilkenny, at 29.2 per 100,000 population, followed by Tipperary, at 24.3, and East Galway, at 17.4.

References

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