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SIMILAR CLINICAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF IMMIGRANT AND NATIVE PATIENTS IN AN ACUTE PSYCHIATRIC UNIT

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Aims: The recent increase of immigrant population in some European countries represents a new social reality demanding an update of psychiatric clinical practice and resources. We aimed to:

1. compare the clinical and demographic profile of immigrant patients admitted to a Spanish acute psychiatric ward with that of native patients, and
2. detect changes over the last years regarding both the profile and the occupation of psychiatric beds.

Method: Demographic and clinical data of immigrant patients admitted to the Doctor Peset University Hospital acute unit during 2005-2007 were retrospectively analyzed. For each case, a non-immigrant patient was assigned as a control. Immigrant subjects hospitalized during 2007 were compared to those admitted during 2000.

Results: Over the three-year period, 38 immigrant individuals needed 45 hospitalizations (2.9-5.1% of total annual psychiatric admissions). Native patients presented similar demographics and produced a similar number of hospital stays, but had significantly more psychiatric ($p=.02$) and medical ($p=.05$) comorbid conditions. Immigrant patients hospitalized during 2007 ($n= 12$) were comparable to those admitted in 2000 ($n=6$), although the former accounted for a larger proportion of annual admissions (3.44% vs. 1.93%).

Conclusions: During the last seven years, the occupation of psychiatric beds by immigrant population has almost doubled but it is still in the low range. The clinical and demographic profiles of patients admitted to this acute ward were similar, regardless of their geographical origin.