



Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences Section – 2004

I15 How to Provide a Comprehensive Sex Offender Program in Civil and Forensic Psychiatric Centers?

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The main objective of this presentation is to provide the necessary components for the development of a sex offender program within a psychiatric center.

The contribution to forensic sciences and humanity has to do with the modification of current sex offender program protocols for correctional populations to meet the growing number of sex offenders being identified in psychiatric centers. With enhanced program development centers can better serve this population by providing an effective treatment protocol; better serve the courts by providing more informed opinions regarding the risk of re-offending; and better serve the community by safeguarding the inappropriate discharge of individuals who are likely to re-offend.

Over the last decade, there has been an increased demand to identify and treat sexual offenders in forensic and civil psychiatric settings. Currently, approximately 34 states have civil commitment laws for sexual offenders. In other states, sex offenders are identified in the correctional system and upon their release from prison are psychiatrically hospitalized due to their potential dangerousness. They are subsequently mandated to Psychiatric centers where specific sex offender treatment is not necessarily mandated, and the criteria for discharge remains vague. Moreover, the majority of the literature and research for sex offender risk assessment instruments and treatment protocols is based upon non-psychiatric and/or correctional populations. There is a need for establishing guidelines for sex offender risk assessments and treatment with civil and forensic psychiatric populations.

At Kirby Forensic Psychiatric Center and Manhattan Psychiatric Center we identified a large number of patients, who although involuntarily committed, had not received adequate assessment and treatment for their sexual offenses. Without a specific comprehensive assessment and treatment program, there was little chance that these individuals would be released to a less restrictive environment. For example, in order to establish criteria for release, the courts request opinions on whether these patients would re-offend. In the absence of a comprehensive risk assessment and treatment protocol, it was difficult to adequately respond to the court's request. To respond to these concerns, which are shared by many other institutions throughout the country, Kirby Forensic and Manhattan Psychiatric Center developed a comprehensive risk assessment and treatment program for sex offending.

The fundamental component of the workshop is to present guidelines for creating a sexual offender program in a psychiatric setting that includes assessment, treatment, and outcome measures with patient's who have sexual offending histories and an Axis I diagnosis. Since the development of many sex offender risk assessment tools and treatment protocols were focused primarily on correctional populations, modifications and suggestions are offered for psychiatric settings and non-mandated populations. This presentation further focuses on helping clinicians and administrators develop a sex offender program in which a number of relative issues will be addressed. The selection and limitations of the sexual offender risk assessments will be reviewed from a clinical and ethical perspective.

The participants will be introduced to modifications of current sex offender treatment programs that target a psychiatrically disturbed population. This includes administration of medications, seeking medication treatment over objection, and the right to refuse medication. Similarly, ethical considerations such as the right to refuse treatment and the patient's right to understand the potential consequences of assessment instruments will be discussed. From an administrative perspective, training requirements, supervision models and obstacles to program implementation will be carefully reviewed.

Finally, the presentation will include a method of establishing and documenting outcome data, including providing case examples. Preliminary outcome data from Kirby Forensic Psychiatric Center and Manhattan Psychiatric Center will be presented.

Sexual Offender, Risk Assessment, Program Development