



### II Closing Judicial Psychiatric Hospitals: Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity Offenders' Socially Dangerous Treatment Inside the Psychiatric Community Network—An Italian Perspective

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**Learning Overview:** After attending this presentation, attendees will better understand the treatment practices of socially dangerous offenders inside the psychiatric community network called REMS (Residence for the implementation of Security Measures).

**Impact on the Forensic Science Community:** This presentation will impact the forensic science community by demonstrating the security measures that the new national residential network is developing to share common good practices of care.

Two years after the introduction of Italian forensic psychiatric reform, the new national residential network for subjects in security measures is now trying to develop and share common good practices of care, according to the contents of the new legislation. In this work, progressive steps of assessment and care of those admitted to the REMS will be illustrated, as well as the way new scenarios may impact the role of expert judgement in the courts and their effects on forensic subjects' referrals. Some critical points fostered by the new system, including criteria for admissions and clinical rationale for releases to lower levels of security, are discussed further in this work.

Regarding risk issues, the forensic and general psychiatric network may benefit from an integration with recovery-oriented models, looking at the risk-taking paradigm and strength model.<sup>1</sup> Concept of risk, in this manner, is viewed as life challenges in prosocial goals, real social integration, autonomy, advocacy, and the protection of rights.<sup>2</sup> The combination and integration of both concepts of risk, according to a patient's features, his environment, service provision, and quality of networks may better suit the specific institutional and cultural Italian ground for security measures.

Inclusion of different ways of conceiving risk may foster a patient's active involvement into pathways of care and a more active participation of staff members to care programs as they better identify themselves as mental health staff members, despite also being custodial agents. The closing of Judicial Psychiatric Hospitals (OPGs) has put the duty of adopting evidence-based strategies of violence risk assessment functionally at the development of risk management and caring strategies.<sup>3,4</sup>

It is a priority to introduce the daily practice of using reliable instruments of violence risk assessment, bearing in mind that they have statistical limits and their use may present side effects in terms of prolonged hospitalizations.<sup>5,6</sup>

In many regions, and at the national level, an agreement is requested to promote quality networking of the main actors and the interested stakeholders. The juridical system (i.e., courts and surveillance judges), community psychiatric services, lawyers, forensic experts, and social services work together with the goal of developing shared practices to provide effective assessments and regulations.

The closure of forensic hospitals represents a valid opportunity for Italian psychiatry to plan and allocate proper resources to sustain this reform, including training and education for all professionals involved in the processes of care.

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#### REMS, Risk Assessment, Forensic Psychiatric Treatment