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DESCRIPTION OF THE ADMISSIONS OF ELDERLY PSYCHIATRIC PATIENTS IN AN ACUTE UNIT

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Aims: To describe the characteristics of the admission of those older than 70 in the past year, in an acute psychiatric care unit.

Method: Medical records of all over 70 patients admitted in our unit during 2007 are reviewed to find out their diagnosis, how many are first admissions and their average stay time, and this is compared to general average stay time for this unit.

Results: About 10% of patients admitted to this unit is more than 70. The most frequent diagnosis is depression, followed by bipolar disorder, dementia, psychosis and other diagnoses. Nearly half of all these patients are in their first admission. The average stay of these patients is twice that of the total patients admitted to this unit.

Conclusion: Despite the fact that in some places the number of admissions of elderly patients is not considered enough to justify the creation of specific units, objectively their admissions are frequent and their average stay time is much higher than usual. This is probably both the difficulty of drug treatment and social problems that sometimes hampers their discharging. As the elderly population is increasing, we believe that treating these people in specific units should be reconsidered.