

Inspection visit to the Department of Tuberculosis Treatment of the Psychiatry Clinic of Viljandi Hospital

On 12 November 2018, the advisers to the Chancellor of Justice inspected the Tuberculosis Treatment Department of the Psychiatry Clinic of Viljandi Hospital. The advisers to the Chancellor of Justice and an expert visited the premises of the Tuberculosis Treatment Department, spoke with the department's staff and patients and reviewed the documents of the implementation of involuntary treatment.

Patients are also referred to the tuberculosis department of Viljandi Hospital on the basis of court rulings (§ 5 of the Communicable Diseases Prevention and Control Act). There are one to five such cases per year. There are 29 beds in the Tuberculosis Treatment Department. All of the places were occupied at the time of the inspection visit: there was one female patient and the rest were men. Involuntary treatment (on the basis of a court ruling) had been prescribed to one patient.

The department has no isolation room or equipment for mechanically restraining patients. Restraining within the meaning of § 14 of the Mental Health Act is not used in the Tuberculosis Treatment Department. If the behaviour of a patient becomes dangerous due to a mental disorder, they are taken to the acute care department of the Psychiatry Clinic. According to the staff, this happens very rarely.

One nurse and four carers are on duty in the department during the day (8:00 to 20:00). One nurse and two carers are on duty at nights (20:00 to 8:00). A pulmonologist (8:00 to 16:00) and the head nurse (7:00 to 15:00) are also on duty on working days. The psychiatrist of the acute care department of the Psychiatry Clinic counsels patients with mental problems.

The department has modern equipment for prevention of the risk of infection: there are quartz lamps and ventilation systems in all patients' rooms and public rooms. The staff use protective equipment to prevent infection (masks with protective filters, disposable coats, gloves and caps). Used protective equipment is destroyed in the utilisation centre of the Tartu University Hospital. The employer pays for the vaccination of the staff. In-service training of all employees is supported. Information exchange between staff members is well organised. Employees prepare detailed reports on all violent incidents and they are discussed with the entire team. It is positive that there is a social worker in the department who helps the hospitalised people find places of residence or the necessary welfare institutions. The patients praised the caring and understanding attitude of the staff.

Curtains should be hung in front of the windows of all rooms of the department in order to guarantee the privacy of patients. The devices used by patients to call for help must be in working order. The acquisition of aids that makes the work of carers easier should be considered. There should be a complaints box in each section of the department.