

Inspection visit to the psychiatry clinic of SA Pärnu Hospital

On 9 November 2019, advisers of the Chancellor of Justice made an unannounced visit to the Psychiatric Clinic of Pärnu Hospital (hereinafter the Clinic). Together with an expert, the advisers to the Chancellor of Justice took a tour around the premises of the clinic, talked to the hospital's staff and the patients, and examined documents.

The number of units and beds available at the clinic has not changed since the Chancellor of Justice's last inspection visit. The intensive care unit had 5 patients, one of whom received involuntary treatment; the unstable remission unit had 11 patients (including 6 patients receiving involuntary treatment); the general psychiatric unit had 10 patients (including one patient receiving involuntary treatment); and the depression and anxiety disorder unit had 7 patients who were receiving voluntary medical care.

The intensive care unit has two nurses and two caregivers on call during the day and one nurse and one caregiver on call in the evenings and at night (from 6 p.m. to 8 a.m.). The unstable remission unit and the general psychiatric unit have one nurse and one caregiver on call during the day and at night. The depression and anxiety disorder unit has one nurse and one caregiver on call during the day, and one nurse is on call in the department at night. Janitors are also working in the units (from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. or until 6 p.m.). Psychiatrists are present from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on working days, and in the evenings and on the weekends, the psychiatrists are on call from home based on a schedule approved by the director of the clinic. On working days, patients' leisure activities are organised by an activity therapist. The clinic also employs three clinical psychologists and six psychologists.

The patients' leisure activities are well-organised at the clinic. The patients praised the activity instructor, who provides instructions on drawing and making handicraft items. Patients receiving care at the hospital can also spend their leisure time at the day centre, which is located next to the clinic. The clinic has a large walking yard with a roofed shelter and benches. According to the patients, the staff at the clinic are attentive and supportive. The patients are provided with various therapy options (e.g. family therapy, individual psychotherapy) and social workers assist the patients in resolving any concerns related to the patients' living arrangements. The units have separate rooms in which patients can communicate with persons close to them in an uninterrupted manner. The staff confirmed that the management is fully supportive of further training and the clinic holds regular training on the safe implementation of means of restraint.

The rooms of the clinic's intensive care and unstable remission units must be made more comfortable to provide the patients with a therapeutic environment. Psychiatrists must document the justifications regarding the need for using means of restraint and the need to continue using means of restraint clearly and in accordance with the prescribed regularity. Chemical restraint and the use of means of restraint to resolve instances of violence must always be properly documented and entered to the aggregate register on the use of means of restraint. Wards can make use of video surveillance only when this is absolutely necessary considering the health status of a patient. Letterboxes that are meant for submitting complaints and recommendations should be made more accessible to the patients.