

## ABSTRACT

The Impact of the New Mental Health Act 1989 on Admissions to The Psychiatric Hospital in Barbados.

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Although the new Mental Health Legislation appears to have facilitated hospital admission procedures, it has raised some serious concerns about the rights of patients under the Act.

A retrospective case-note study using a questionnaire analysed 200 admissions under the old Mental Health Act and compared them with 200 admissions under the new Act . The results were interpreted along specific parameters of admission status, place from which the patient was brought to hospital, who accompanied the patient and others.

The new admission status of Hospital order-emergency (HO-E) accounted for 20% of admissions.

These HO-E patients appear to be those involuntary admissions that would have been admitted as temporary patients under the old Act. Admissions (56%) under the temporary involuntary status of the old Act were significantly reduced to (27%) under the new Act.

The new Act made no mention of certification by Magistrates, however 5% of the 1993 admissions were admitted on certified status. In addition certified patients already in hospital are still detained on certified admission status and this is obviously an area that needs urgent attention.

Further studies will be needed to fully evaluate the effects of the new Act.