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AVOKATI I POPULLIT

O M B U D S M A N
Republic of Macedonia

The Ombudsman-National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) on **26.03.2014** carried out a follow up visit to the **Psychiatric hospital Demir Hisar** accompanied by associates from the Association of Psychiatrists and the Association of Forensics of the Institute for Forensics, whom with had a previously signed Memorandum of Cooperation.

The aim of the visit was to assess the level of implementation of the given recommendations from the separate NPM report from 2012, and to identify additional risks for the purpose of preventing torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

The NPM team met with the responsible staff of the hospital, after which the team splat in two and inspecting the acute department, the department for chronic conditions, the mixed and the adolescent department, the judicial department, the department for alcoholism, the department for psycho-geriatrics, and the department for working therapy, the kitchen and the storage for food products. During the visit there was an inspection of the medical files and the files for fixation.

During this follow up visit, a program for education of the medical staff for 2014 was submitted which was in line with the NPM recommendation to continue such education, i.e. to permanently support the education of the highly educated staff from all profiles, hereby including the psychiatrists, psychologists and the social workers.

The NPM concluded that the hospital has a separate room for fixation of patients, which contains several beds out of which two are fixated by the floor. During the fixation, there is a supervision by a paramedic, while as a nurse temporarily visits the patient. The NPM inspected several files of patients who were forcibly fixated and conducted interview with patients who were fixated. It was concluded that the procedures for fixation are respected, the documentation is properly filled, and the medical condition adequately followed.

During the visit of the Psychiatric hospital Demir Hisar, the NPM did not receive complaint in the acute and the chronic departments about the medical staff, i.e. the manner they take care about the health of the patients and their everyday communication. The NPM did not receive complaints from the patients about usage of excessive force by the medical staff during their hospitalization. When inspecting the departments of this Psychiatric hospital, the NPM met with some of the patients. From these meetings, the NPM concluded that mainly the patients are satisfied with the manner the medical staff takes care about them. They have regular visits and the patients have regular contacts with the doctors and the nurses. The patients' demands in terms of medical checks and hygiene are met within the possibilities.

The complaints refer to the strengthen regime of the judicial department, in particular the need to receive permission by a responsible court for usage of therapeutic weekend.

Most of the patients had problems with their teeth, this condition should be improved having in mind the fact that within the hospital there is a dental practice.

There was an information received from the male chronic department that the bathing was in groups. This should not be allowed, the bathing should be individual. Having in mind the medical condition of the patients in the geriatrics (male and female), who cannot personally take care of themselves, there should be a frequent bath few times during a week.

The department for adolescents is divided in male and female section, but one of the female patients complained that during the afternoons and at night when the doors are open male patients are bothering her. Thus, there is a need of more rigid control and banning the male patients to enter the premises of the female patients and vice versa.

During this follow up visit the NPM was informed that the Psychiatric hospital Demir Hisar is in the plan for renovation of the Ministry of Health-in its second phase, which it is expected to begin this year.

In terms of the conditions of the departments, it was concluded that some of them are renovated, the sanitary knots in the department for alcoholism, the acute female department, the chronic department and the female geriatric department. In terms of the inventory, it can be generally concluded that in all departments the mattresses, the beds and the linens are old, and there is a lack of wardrobe closets for personal use. The judicial department is still based in improper premises, and there is still no judicial female department.

During the follow up visit the NPM was informed that for the hygiene of the hospital an external Cleaning Agency is hired, while as the hospital additionally secures means for cleaning. Still, during the inspection it was concluded that the hygiene is not on a satisfactory level, in particularly there was a strong smell in the male chronic department and in the departments for psycho-geriatrics.