



Република Македонија
НАРОДЕН ПРАВОБРАНИТЕЛ
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On November 21 and 22, 2017, the Ombudsman and the National Preventive Mechanism carried out a visit to the Psychiatric Hospital Negorci. The visit was carried out according to the mandate and authorities arising from the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the Law on the Ombudsman.

The National preventive mechanism conducted the visit in several phases, according to the Book of Regulations and Methodology of prevention of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

The NPM team point out that no authority or official shall order, apply, permit or tolerate any sanction against any person or organization for having communicated to the Subcommittee on Prevention or to its delegates any information, whether true or false, and no such person or organization shall be otherwise prejudiced in any way according to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

The NPM team cooperated with the officials from the Psychiatric Hospital Negorci, and they let the NPM team in all the premises and their installations in order to inspect the requested documentation.

The right of respect, dignity and privacy of the mentally ill person, the right of protection from any kind of torture, degrading and abuse, the right of providing human and secure environment, are just a part of the general rights of the mentally ill people, declared in the Law for mental health. The NPM team noted that the patients were not dressed up in pyjamas, but in daily clothes, which shows great respect for their dignity during their stay in the institution.

The NPM team was informed that there is no longer group bathing of the patients, but they still practice bathing the patients by an official person from the opposite gender. The NPM team suggests stopping with this procedure, since this treatment shows abuse of the patient privacy.

According to the treatment and the patients' rights, the NPM team had individual conversations with some of the patients and the officials from the Psychiatric Hospital Negorci.

However, some of the patients complained about the attitude of one of the officials from the hospital staff, which was also discussed with the director of the institution, who noted that the person concerned will be interviewed regarding the complaints.

The NPM team received an information that there are no significant incidents between the patients and the atmosphere in the institution is mainly relaxed and calm

As for the living conditions in the institution, the NPM team noticed that they are different regarding the units. The units that were renovated have better and appropriate conditions for accommodation, as for the rest of the units, they are in substandard living conditions.

The maintenance and the equipment for daily accommodation activities in the units that are not renovated do not satisfy the standards, therefore the NPM team suggested the officials of the Institution should put an effort to provide human and secure environment.

The patient situated in psychiatric hospitals should have the right for information in all phases of healthcare, to be completely informed of his/her condition, about the course of the procedure when providing health care, the opportunity to decide on the recommended medical interventions, recommended lifestyle, the rights for health care and health insurance as well as the procedure for exercising those rights.¹

From the conversation with the patients, the NPM team noticed that part of the patients are aware for their therapy, but there is still lack of information about their rights, guaranteed with the Law for Mental health.

The NPM team noticed that the patients are included in the everyday activities, such as hygienic activities, making the beds, maintaining hygiene in the units where they are staying, but suggest regular animation of the patients in order to improve their life habits.

The patients in the hospitals do not have a structural day, they don't have daily activities, are not motivated to participate in any kind of activities. The patients do have an approach to the center for working therapy but they don't visit it at all. The unit for exercise most of the time is closed, there is a library in the administrative building, but it is not easily reachable for the patients.

According to the information that NPM team has, the patients have all the rights to contact their families, their close relatives, whether in person or by phone, and have the rights to receive packages.

The patients from the unit for treatment Alcoholism and other addictions, and other non psychotic disorders can leave the hospital under certain conditions, can have visits according to the house rules, can participate in activities outside their home and are informed about subjects of their interest.

As for the accommodations units, NPM noted that most of the rooms in the hospital have enough space for keeping the most necessary personal objects of the patients. Based on the conversations with the patients, we were informed that there are no limits regarding

¹ Article 7 from the Law for protection of the patients right

the possession of personal things. Therefore, NPM noted that this right of the patients in the Psychiatric Hospital Negorci is completely exercised.

Even though the NPM team was informed by the staff members, that the food in the hospital is good, variously and quantity sufficient, many of the patients had remarks that vegetable is missing on the food menu. The NPM team noticed that on the visit day, the served food for the patients was not corresponding with the food menu planned for that day. Having in mind that the food menu is prepared in consultation with food expert, in order to provide food with the necessary nutritional values, NPM suggests to respects the planned food menu when preparing the meals for the patients.

The physical restrain orders- fixations is being made in two different units for fixation, one is acute male unit and it is only for male patients, and the other one is female acute unit and it is only for female patients. In the units there are 3 beds, and one of the beds that is not fixed for the floor, has non standard belts for fixating the chest and the arms. In the units there are no soft lining on the walls for protection, and the belts are from material that can harm the patients. This was point out by the medical staff in the hospital. So, when using physical fixation instead of using belts, the staff are using wide bandages. It is concerning that on the time of fixation there are other people witnessing the intervention.

Having in mind the above mentioned, NPM recommends immediately adjusting the fixation units, completely equipped only for that purpose, providing secure, safe and physical restriction of the patients in need.

As a result of the realized visit, NPM prepared Special report in which they noted the situation and gave proper recommendations directed to the Ministry of Health, to the director of the Psychiatric Hospital in order to eliminate the weaknesses and risks.