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Assessing quality of care and observance of human rights in residential mental health facilities in Greece through the WHO QualityRights tool kit.

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Summary:

This article presents the process of assessing quality of care and protection of human rights through WHO QualityRights toolkit in Greece, specifically to two residential mental health facilities in Thessaloniki, Greece. A multidisciplinary team was set up for the project involving mental health professionals, academics and representatives of users and family members in mental health. In the paper the pilot use of the Toolkit.

A detailed description of each step in the implementation and evaluation process is presented in the article and it provides valuable guidance for the replication of the project in similar settings. A set of recommendations is then delivered following the evaluation of the facilities and the results. It is highlighted that basic needs are covered while also safeguarding privacy of the service users and ensuring their meaningful engagement in activities. Staff addresses appropriately general and mental health needs while collaboratively responding to individualized needs of the users. In this direction, users are engaged in a supported decision making model. Nevertheless, systemic challenges are also identified, highlighting the struggle for financial independence and adequate employment opportunities. Through an intersectional approach of recovery-oriented and human-rights based principles a collaborative approach to medication is further suggested arguing the need to further empower service users in an informed negotiation for treatment options. Lastly, active measures are taken to help prevent involuntary hospitalization and safeguard the right to freedom of expression among users. In this direction, further actions of establishing formal processes are advocated.

A refreshing view on the collaborative process of evaluating mental health units is presented in the article, highlighting the empowering effect of collaboration among all the stakeholders in the implementation of QualityRights intervention. It is thus further established that engaging professionals, users and carers in such a framework can promote equality and respect among the stakeholders.

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