

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 72 HOUR ASSESSMENT POLICY OF INVOLUNTARY
MENTAL HEALTH CARE USERS AT GENERAL HOSPITALS IN VHEMBE
DISTRICT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

By

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The aim of this study was to evaluate the implementation of the 72 hour assessment policy of the involuntary Mental Health Care Users at general hospitals in the Vhembe District Limpopo Province.

Methodology: The study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional, descriptive approach. The study was conducted in all general hospitals in Vhembe District. All professional nurses working in general wards and psychiatric units, implementing 72 hour assessment policy of the involuntary Mental Health Care Users were involved in the study by completing the questionnaires. The research data was captured using Microsoft Excel and then analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences, version 22.

Results: Results were presented descriptively in tables and charts. The study revealed that 59.4% of the participants strongly agree that their infrastructure does not meet the requirements for listing facilities to conduct 72 hour assessment policy. The majority of the participants (89%) indicated that they admit patients for 72 hour assessment. These findings reveal that there are still general hospitals that are not implementing the policy. Results indicated that 88.1% of the participants agree on commencement of treatment during admission. However, there are some requirements that are not available in the units such as: monitoring tools for suicide (37%) and only 11.9% affirmed that they indeed refer patients for detoxification. This finding reveals that there is lack of supervision and support by supervisors in general hospital regarding the implementation of the policy.

Recommendation: More training needs to be provided to general nurses in order to acquire skills to manage Mental Health Care Users. Infrastructure should be improved to meet the required standard in order to implement the policy properly.

Keywords: Mental health, General hospital, Implementation, Policy, Nurse