

# Compulsory admissions in Ticino: the impact of a set of organizational interventions on the rate of involuntary admissions and length of coercion

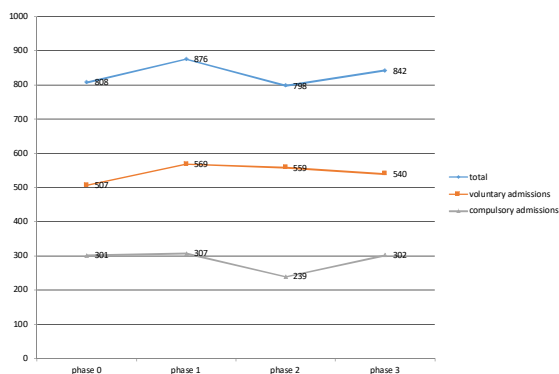
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## Introduction

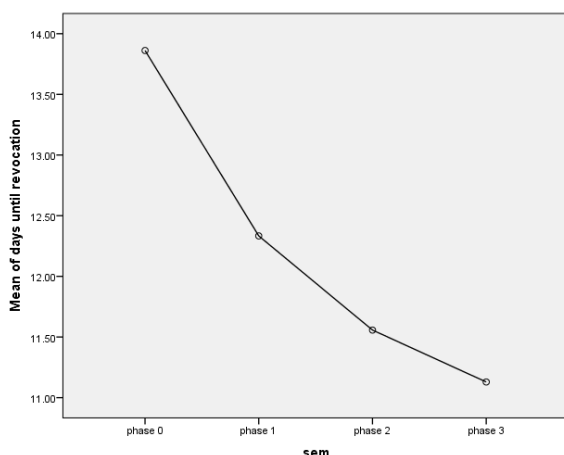
In Ticino the rate of compulsory admissions to a psychiatric clinic is about 25%, more than 80% of which occurs at the Cantonal Psychiatric Clinic (CPC). In addition to the obvious ethical question posed by coercion, compulsory treatments can disadvantage the therapeutic process, lead to a decreased investment in the search for compliance and increase levels of aggression. This study aims to evaluate the impact in the short and medium term of a set of measures aimed to reduce the number of compulsory admissions and their duration.

## Results

Rate of compulsory admissions significantly decreased immediately after interventions' implementation ( $p < .01$ ). In Phase 3 this effect completely disappeared



Length of stay before revocation of involuntary commitment in CPC significantly decreased during and after interventions (Phases 0 - 3) even if less noticeable as time goes by ( $p < .05$ ).



## Methods and materials

Organizational and training interventions were implemented at the Organizzazione Socio-psichiatrica Cantonale (OSC, Ticino public psychiatry):

- reorganization of psychiatric consultations in general hospitals (reduction of intervention times, obligation to carry out a specialist assessment, dedicated slots for urgent outpatient visits)
- collaboration with ambulance services
- raised staff awareness
- revision of the medical record at the CPC
- procedure for a constant re-evaluation of the coercions

Rate of compulsory admissions, duration until revocation of involuntary commitment in addition to clinical e socio-demographical data were collected. Observation was divided in Phases of 6 months each:

- Phase 0: before interventions' implementation
- Phase 1: during interventions' implementation
- Phase 2: after interventions' implementation
- Phase 3: 6 months after interventions' implementation

Statistical analysis was carried out with IBM SPSS Statistics 21

## Discussion

- Our study shows how it is possible to successfully address the duration of compulsory stay in the short and medium term through organizational and training interventions on health professionals.
- The strength of these results tends to decrease over time. This could be an effect of desensitization of the staff involved
- In accordance with literature, interventions at the organizational level are insufficient to reduce the number of compulsory admissions, as they depend on factors and actors partially independent from psychiatric services
- As suggested by other authors, we also believe that, in order to achieve the goal of a reduction of involuntary admissions, it is indispensable to reason in terms of broad healthcare policies: legislative and regulatory issues, organizational matters in hospital and territorial emergency services which intervene before psychiatric response.