

Irish Psychiatric Units and Hospitals Census 2013 Bulletin

November 2013

Fourteen per cent reduction in resident patient numbers since 2010; 37% were long-stay patients, i.e. in hospital for one year or more; one-third were aged 65 years and over on census night

The NPIRS Team in the National Health Information Systems Unit of the Health Research Board (HRB) is pleased to present this summary on the eighth Irish psychiatric in-patient census. The full census report includes a more detailed presentation of data by socio-demographic, diagnostic, legal category and length of stay variables. The NPIRS Team would like to thank services for their cooperation in providing returns for the census. We look forward to your continued support in the future.

Introduction

This bulletin is a synopsis of data from the eighth national census of Irish psychiatric units and hospitals, carried out on 31 March 2013. It is part of a series of censuses first carried out in 1963 and decennially thereafter, in 1971, 1981, 1991 and 2001. Due to the accelerated move to the provision of community psychiatric services it was felt that an earlier appreciation of the impact of such changes on in-patient resident numbers was needed and, thus, in 2006 a census was carried out after an interval of just five years. In 2008 the HRB and the Mental Health Commission signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in which it was agreed that the HRB would carry out a psychiatric in-patient census every three years, subject to resources, commencing in 2010.

Data on patients resident in Irish psychiatric units and hospitals operating under the provisions of the *Mental Health Act, 2001* (Department of Health and Children, 2001) at midnight on 31 March 2013 are presented in this bulletin. All patients 'on the books' in hospitals and units, including those on leave, were enumerated in the census. The rates reported were calculated using the Census of Population 2011 (Central Statistics Office, 2012) and all rates are per 100,000 total population.

National findings

The number of patients resident in Irish psychiatric units and hospitals on 31 March 2013 totalled 2,407, representing a hospitalisation rate of 52.5 per 100,000 total population. This is a reduction of 405 in the number resident in units and hospitals since the last psychiatric in-patient census in 2010 (2,812) and also a reduction in the rate of hospitalisation in the 2010 census, at 66.3 per 100,000.

There has been a considerable decline in the number of patients resident in Irish psychiatric units and hospitals over the last 50 years, with numbers falling from 19,801 in 1963 to 2,407 in 2013 (Table 1). This represents a reduction of 88% in in-patient numbers since 1963 and a reduction of 14% since 2010 and is in line with the policy to move away from traditional institutional-based in-patient care towards more community-based treatment.

Table 1 Irish psychiatric in-patient numbers 1963–2013

Year	Number	Year	Number	Year	Number	Year	Number
1963	19,801	1975	14,967	1987	10,621	1999	4,469
1964	18,989	1976	14,473	1988	9,500	2000	4,230
1965	18,641	1977	14,352	1989	7,897	2001 ^a	4,321
1966	18,084	1978	13,968	1990	7,334	2002	3,891
1967	17,841	1979	13,838	1991 ^a	8,207	2003	3,658
1968	17,218	1980	13,342	1992	6,130	2004 ^b	3,556
1969	16,802	1981 ^a	13,984	1993	5,806	2005 ^b	3,475
1970	16,403	1982	13,428	1994	5,581	2006 ^a	3,389
1971 ^a	16,661	1983	12,802	1995	5,327	2007 ^b	3,314
1972	15,856	1984	12,484	1996	5,212	2010 ^a	2,812
1973	15,471	1985	12,097	1997	4,817	2013 ^a	2,407
1974	15,156	1986	11,643	1998	4,820		

^a MSRB (Medico-Social Research Board)/HRB Census completed on 31 March each year

^b Mental Health Commission

Note: There were no census figures available for 2008, 2009, 2011 or 2012.

First-time residents, i.e., those on their first admission at the time of the census, had a lower rate of hospitalisation, at 16.5, compared with those who had been hospitalised previously, at 36.0 per 100,000

Gender and age

Males accounted for 55% of all residents on census night, representing a hospitalisation rate of 58.4 per 100,000 population, compared with a rate of 46.6 for females. The gender breakdown of in-patients has not changed over the last 50 years, with males typically accounting for just over half of all residents on census night.

One-third of in-patients on census night were aged 65 years and over; 17% were aged 55–64 years; a further 17% were aged 45–54 years; 15% were aged 35–44 years; 12% were aged 25–34 years; and 5% were under 25 years of age. The 75-year and over age group, which accounted for 17% of all residents, had the highest hospitalisation rate, at 180.4 per 100,000 population, followed by the 65–74 year age group, at 125.3, and the 55–64 year age group, at 87.4.

Marital status

Single persons accounted for 59% of in-patients on census night, married persons accounted for 20.5%, widowed persons accounted for 6% and divorced persons accounted for 3%. Widowed persons had the highest rate of hospitalisation, at 80.1 per 100,000, followed by divorced persons, at 78.6, single persons, at 57.4, and married persons, at 28.9.

Socio-economic group

The unskilled occupational group had the highest rate of hospitalisation, at 124.4 per 100,000 population, followed by agricultural workers, at 89.3, and farmers, at 57.8. It is worth noting

that 46% of occupations were returned as 'unknown' or 'unspecified' on census night, thus making assignment to a socio-economic group impossible.

Diagnosis

Almost one-third (31%) of residents on census night had a diagnosis of schizophrenia; 17% had a diagnosis of depressive disorders; 11% had a diagnosis of organic mental disorder; and 8% had a diagnosis of mania. Patients with a diagnosis of schizophrenia had the highest rate of hospitalisation, at 16.4 per 100,000 population, followed by depressive disorders, at 8.8, and organic mental disorders, at 5.6.

Legal status

Fifteen per cent of in-patients on census night were involuntary, representing a rate of 7.7 per 100,000 population. This is an increase in the proportion of involuntary in-patients from 2010 (13%). Over the last 50 years there has been a decline in the proportion of involuntary patients, from 79% in 1963 to 15% in 2013.

Length of stay

Thirty-seven per cent of all in-patients were long-stay, i.e. they had been in hospital for one year or more on census night; 22% were old long-stay, i.e. had been in hospital for five years or more. Twenty per cent had been in hospital for up to two weeks, 12% were in hospital for between two to four weeks, 19% had been hospitalised for between one to three months and 11% had been hospitalised for between three months to one year. Half of those who had been hospitalised for five years or more on census night were aged 65 years and over. Thirty-six per cent of those who were aged 75 years or over had been in hospital for five years or more on census night.

Patients with a diagnosis of schizophrenia and intellectual disability both accounted for three-quarters of all in-patient days on census night; schizophrenia accounted for 41% of in-patient days and intellectual disability accounted for 34%. Patients with a diagnosis of intellectual disability had the longest average length of stay, at 9,386.9 days (median 8,458.0 days) while those with a diagnosis of other drug disorders had the shortest average length of stay, at 299.4 days (median 25.0 days). The average length of stay for all patients on census night was 1,817.2 days (median 82.0 days).

HSE areas

Twenty-nine per cent of patients on census night were resident in Dublin Mid-Leinster, 27% were resident in Dublin North-East, 25% were resident in HSE South and 19% were resident in HSE West. Patients resident in Dublin North-East had the highest rate of hospitalisation on census night, at 63.3 per 100,000 population, followed by HSE South, at 52.7, Dublin Mid-Leinster, at 51.6 and HSE West, at 42.3.

Males had higher hospitalisation rates than females in all HSE areas, with rates ranging from 71.7 in Dublin North-East to 50.2 in HSE West. The 75 years and over age group had the highest rate of hospitalisation in all HSE areas, with rates ranging from 273.4 per 100,000 in Dublin North-East to 102.0 in HSE West.

Patients with a diagnosis of schizophrenia had the highest hospitalisation rates across all areas, with rates ranging from 18.1 per 100,000 in HSE South to 14.1 in Dublin Mid-Leinster. HSE West had the highest proportion of involuntary patients on census night, at 17%, followed by Dublin North-East, at 16% and Dublin Mid-Leinster and HSE South, both at 13% each. The rate of involuntary hospitalisation was highest in Dublin North-East, at 10.0, followed by HSE West, at 7.3 and Dublin Mid-Leinster

and HSE South both, at 6.8 per 100,000 each.

Hospital type

Over one-third (35%) of patients were resident in psychiatric hospitals/continuing care units on census night, 30% were resident in general hospital psychiatric units and 24% were resident in private hospitals (Table 2).

Table 2 Irish Psychiatric Units and Hospitals Census 2013.
Hospital type

General hospital psychiatric units	29.8
Psychiatric hospitals	35.3
Private hospitals	24.1
Central Mental Hospital, Dundrum	3.8
Carraig Mór, Cork	1.5
St Joseph's Intellectual Disability Service	5.4
Total	100.0

The proportion of patients resident in general hospital psychiatric units has increased from 3% in 1981 to 30% in 2013, while the proportion of patients resident in psychiatric hospitals/continuing care units decreased from 90% in 1981 to 35% in 2013. Psychiatric hospitals/continuing care units had the highest proportion of patients aged 65 years and over on census night, at 47%, followed by private hospitals, at 42%, St Joseph's Intellectual Disability Service, at 26% and general hospital psychiatric units, at 15%. Forty-two per cent of patients resident in psychiatric hospitals/continuing care units had a diagnosis of schizophrenia, compared with 34% in general hospital psychiatric units and 11% in private hospitals. Twenty per cent of patients resident in general hospital psychiatric units were involuntary on census night, 12% in psychiatric hospitals/continuing care units and 2% in private hospitals were involuntary.

Child and adolescent in-patients

There were 64 patients who were under 18 years of age on census night and/or were resident in child and adolescent in-patient units. This is an increase in the number of under 18s resident since the last census in 2010 (43) and may be due to increased in-patient capacity in the child and adolescent services. Just over one-third (34%) of child and adolescent patients were aged 17 years on census night, 28% were aged 16 years, 14% were aged 15 years, 17% were aged 14 years and 5% were aged 13 years. Eighty-nine per cent of patients under 18 years of age were resident in child and adolescent units on census night, 9% were resident in private hospitals, 1.5% were resident in general hospital psychiatric units and there were none resident in psychiatric hospitals/continuing care units. In terms of the main diagnoses, 41% of child and adolescent residents/under 18s had a diagnosis of depressive disorders, 14% had a diagnosis of schizophrenia, 11% had a diagnosis of eating disorders and 5% had a diagnosis of neurosis.

References

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