GERMANY: Psychiatry on Closed and Open Wards: The Suicide Risk Remains the Same

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ScienceDaily [1]

Psychiatric clinics with an open-door policy did not have a higher risk of patient suicide or absconding from treatment than clinics with locked wards, according to the results of a new study published in The Lancet Psychiatry. Researchers from the University of Basel and the University Psychiatric Clinics of Basel examined 350,000 admissions to 21 German clinics over a 15-year period. They found that rates of suicide, suicide attempts, and absconding among patients were not increased in clinics with unlocked wards. The authors suggested that the effect of locked wards on the risk of patient self-harm has previously been overestimated, with implications for inpatient care and treatment. First author Christian Huber said, "According to our study, being locked in does not improve patient safety and, in some cases, actually hinders the prevention of suicide and absconding. An atmosphere of control, restricted personal freedoms and sanctions is more likely to be a risk factor impeding successful therapy."

Spark Extra! Read the research abstract [2].

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