

Press Release

Reasons for referral and consultation liaison psychiatry diagnoses

To improve awareness, it is essential to know which mental health disorders present most commonly among inpatients in general hospitals across Ireland. Such knowledge is also needed to focus strategies for improving mental health among inpatients.

A recent study by Dr John Lyne and colleagues at St. Vincent's University Hospital, Elm Park, Dublin, examined diagnoses among patients referred to the liaison psychiatry team. Liaison psychiatry is the department that assists general hospital inpatients with mental health problems. The findings of this study were compared with those of similar studies from around the world.

- The study included all patients referred to the liaison psychiatry service over a duration of 12 months.
- *Alcohol-related disorders* were the commonest diagnoses among those referred (19.7%), followed by *depressive disorders* (16.6%).
- *There were two to four times as many referrals with alcohol-related disorders in the Irish study, compared with those in other countries, including the United States, Australia and other European states.*
- This study highlights the increasing need for awareness of alcohol misuse among the Irish population.
- This is important, given that other studies have already highlighted the considerable burden caused by alcohol among people receiving hospital treatment for medical illnesses.
- More research is needed to clarify how common mental health disorders, including alcohol-related disorders, are in Ireland.

ENDS

The original article can be found in the September 2010 edition of the *Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine* (Irish J Psych Med 2010; 27(3): pages 123-129).