

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify information needs within National Forensic Mental Health in Ireland. Forensic mental health service in Ireland is provided at Central Mental Hospital, which is the only forensic mental health hospital in the country. The study was carried out at Central Mental Hospital. The aims of the study were

- To explore, capture and identify information needs and requirements within forensic mental health by key informants
- To determine and explore information needs of staff working within NFMHS
- To address the information needs identified by the staff of NFMHS using information provided by key informants

The researcher used a descriptive qualitative design to determine the information needs within NFMHS. Data was collected from key informants (phase I, N=13) and staff (phase II, N=20) working in the setting using semi-structured interviews. Clinicians, clinical information officers, and individuals having experience in a mental health setting or a forensic mental health setting were included as key informants. Phase II participants included the staff currently working in Central Mental Hospital, which included nurses, occupational therapists, social workers, health care assistants and psychologists. A purposive sampling technique was utilized for the study. Key informants identified information needs and requirements within a forensic mental health setting, and staff interviews explored the information needs within the hospital setting. Data analysis of transcribed data yielded themes from both phases. The researcher then used themes generated from phase I interview to address information need themes from Phase II interview. The main themes from phase I interviews were a customizable electronic health record, integrated alarm system, system for patient finances and patient property and video links. Phase II interviews identified errors, lack of information, time and illegible handwriting as critical issues around information needs within the setting. The study also found the information needs identified by phase II participants can be resolved adequately by the information requirements identified by key informants.