

## Letter to the Editor: Still Regarding Causes of Death in an Acute Psychiatric Inpatient Unit of a Portuguese General Hospital

### Carta ao Editor: Ainda a Propósito das Causas de Morte numa Unidade de Internamento de Agudos de Psiquiatria de um Hospital Geral Português

**Keywords:** Cause of Death; Hospital Mortality; Mental Disorders/mortality; Portugal; Psychiatric Department, Hospital

**Palavras-chave:** Causas de Morte; Mortalidade Hospitalar; Perturbações Mentais/mortalidade; Portugal; Serviço Hospitalar de Psiquiatria

Dear Editor,

We read with great interest, in a previous issue of this journal, one article regarding the causes of death in an acute psychiatric inpatient unit of a Portuguese general hospital.<sup>1</sup> It seems to be the first article in Portugal regarding such an important topic, so many times neglected in our small country's clinical practice and scientific literature. Besides this paper we had to travel back in time more than 25 years to find a similar article, although in an ambulatory community treatment.<sup>2</sup> We have been working, for more than ten years, in what was once called a psychiatric asylum, and here we have a completely different reality. We have higher numbers, unfortunately, in our personal records (almost 2000 patients), with 50 deaths (2 suicides by hanging) in ten years of time-span (2008 February 1<sup>st</sup> – 2018 February 1<sup>st</sup>). This means an average of 5 deaths per

year, and all deaths were confirmed at the national online electronic health registry *Registo de Saúde Electrónico (RSE)*, previously known as *Plataforma de Dados de Saúde (PDS)*. This RSE platform<sup>3</sup> is very useful, to confirm, among other things, the death of our patients in times of austerity,<sup>4</sup> but it doesn't allow us to find the cause of death. We hope that one of these day the causes of death, compiled at the national system of death certificate - *Sistema de Informação dos Certificados de Óbito (SICO)*<sup>5</sup> - will be crossed with the RSE and publicly available online, for clinicians. That would be extremely useful and would allow us to work on better studies regarding the mortality of our patients. Meanwhile we would like to invite all readers to submit their works regarding mortality in their psychiatric patients in other settings (e.g. the acute patients' wards in the psychiatric hospitals or the chronic patients' wards in the religious charity institutions) where thousands of Portuguese patients still receive (the only) treatment for their mental illness. We could try guessing that there are some numbers deserving publication and comparison with other countries. Only then, with a better knowledge of our mortality rates we will be able to improve the mental health care in Portugal.

#### CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

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Carta ao Editor Relativa ao Artigo: "Saúde Oral - Fatores de Não Adesão aos Cheques-Dentista: Um Estudo de Caso-Controlo" de Rita Filipe e Pedro Aguiar. *Acta Med Port* 2018 Jun;31(6):303-311.

Letter to the Editor Regarding the Article: "Oral Health - Factors of Non-Adherence to Dental Vouchers: A Case-Control Study" by Rita Filipe and Pedro Aguiar. *Acta Med Port* 2018 Jun;31(6):303-311.

**Palavras-chave:** Avaliação de Programas e Projetos de Saúde; Educação em Saúde Oral; Portugal; Promoção da Saúde; Saúde Oral

**Keywords:** Health Education, Dental; Health Promotion; Oral Health; Portugal; Program Evaluation

Caro Editor,

Tive o prazer de ler o artigo "Saúde Oral - Fatores de Não Adesão aos Cheques-Dentista: Um Estudo de Caso-Controlo"<sup>1</sup> publicado no número de Junho de 2018 da *Acta Médica Portuguesa*, no qual foram estudados os fatores