

MORTALITY AND PSYCHIATRIC DISORDERS AMONG PUBLIC MENTAL HEALTH CARE CLIENTS IN UTRECHT: A REGISTER-BASED COHORT STUDY

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Introduction: The mortality among homeless people is linked to the presence of psychiatric disorders.

Objectives: We compared the risk of specific death causes among clients of the Public Mental Health care (PMHc) in Utrecht with that of the general population, and assessed whether treatment at a local psychiatric service is associated with this risk.

Aims: To clarify the association between the presence of a mental disorder and mortality among the socially marginalized.

Methods: Out of 8,741 clients in the PMHc register, the records of 6,724 could be linked to the registries of Statistics Netherlands (CBS). Controls (N=66,247) from the population register were personally matched to a PMHc client. A Cox regression analysis was used to estimate hazard ratios (HR) of death.

Results: An increased all-cause mortality among PMHc clients compared to controls was found (HR=2.99, 95%-CI: 2.63-3.41), associated with a broad range of death causes. PMHc clients with record linkage to the Psychiatric Case Registry Middle Netherlands ('PMHc+') had an increased risk of suicide (HR=2.63, 0.99-7.02), but a lower risk of death from natural causes (HR=0.71, 0.54-0.92), compared to PMHc clients without ('PMHc-'). Compared to controls, however, 'PMHc-' clients experienced increased risks of suicide (HR=3.63, 1.42-9.26) and death due to mental & behavioural disorders (HR=7.85, 3.54-17.43).

Conclusion: Among PMHc clients, a registered diagnosis at a local psychiatric service appears to be favourably associated with lower mortality due to natural death causes. The high risk of suicide among 'PMHc-' clients probably indicates a high prevalence of undiagnosed mental disorders among PMHc clients.