Abstract

Objective Mental health reform in Brazil presupposes mental health becoming integrated into the Brazilian health system, involving multidisciplinary teams whose professional practice has yet to be defined. The present study forms part of a project aimed at understanding human resources practices in Brazilian mental healthcare services. Methods This was a descriptive, exploratory study using a sample of highly qualified practitioners involved in the Ribeirao Preto/SP public mental health network. The project was approved by the Ribeirao Preto College of Nursing/University of Sao Paulo’s ethics committee. A semi-structured questionnaire was used and the data was statistically analyzed. Results One hundred and forty-four of the 193 practitioners from the public mental and psychiatric health care services agreed to participate. It was observed that current practice was mainly based on individual care, emphasizing medical, psychological and nursing care. Group activities were more frequently provided by community services. Conclusion Mental care was infrequently prescribed and a low value was placed on activities like observation, recording and therapeutic interaction. Mental care services were being structured; however, practitioners still had difficulties in implementing current policy.

Keywords
Mental health service, human resources, nurse-patient relationships, medical assistance (source: MeSH, NLM).