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## Service users' perceptions of safety in the acute mental health inpatient setting

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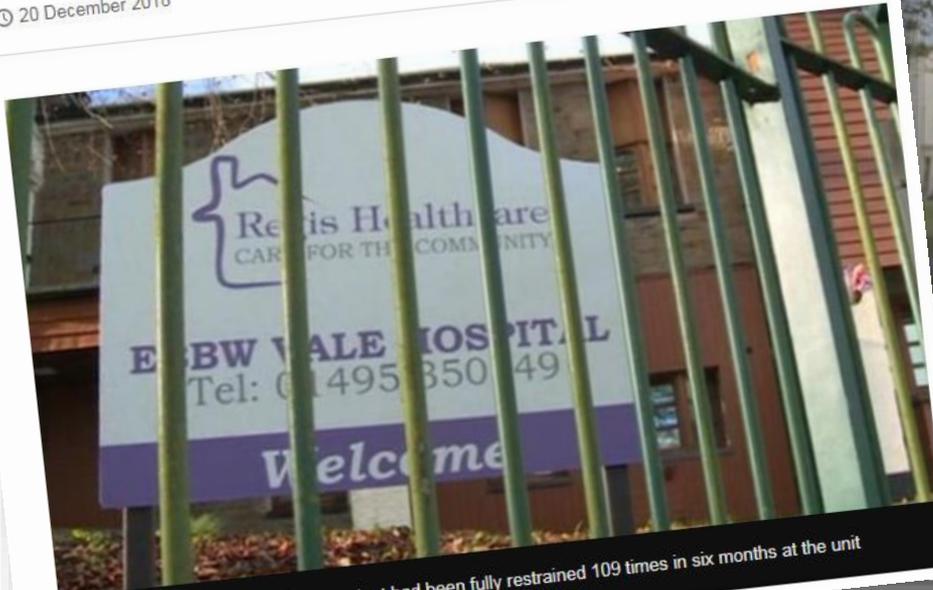


# Patient safety concerns at child mental health unit in Wales

By India Pollock  
BBC Wales social affairs correspondent

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In March, inspectors found one patient had been fully restrained 109 times in six months at the unit

# Mental health hospital in Northampton deemed unsafe

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Mental health unit has been deemed "unsafe" and threatened it does not improve.

# Definitions of safety

Safety is the absence of preventable harm and reduction of risk associated with the delivery of health care.

WHO (2019)

We define patient safety as the avoidance of unintended or unexpected harm to people during the provision of healthcare.

NHS (2017)



What does the concept of safety mean for people who have experienced admission to an acute mental health inpatient unit?



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# Methods

- *Naturalistic Inquiry*
  - *Qualitative research approach*
  - *Not representative or generalisable*
  - *Reference: Guba & Lincoln (1985)*
- *Ethics*
  - *Vulnerable group*
  - *Capacity for consent*
  - *Reference: National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007 (Updated 2018)*



# Methods

- *Setting and sample*
  - *Greater Sydney region, New South Wales, Australia*
  - *One or more admissions to an acute mental health inpatient unit*
  - *Not currently an inpatient*
  
- *Data collection*
  - *Semi-structured individual interviews*



# Methods

- *Analysis*
  - *Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)*
  - *Three themes identified*
  - *Impact of Nurses: Availability, Responsiveness, Caring*
  
- *Rigour and trustworthiness*
  - *Guba & Lincoln (1994)*
  - *Reflexivity and consensus-seeking*
  - *Verbatim quotes*



# Demographics

- *Fifteen (15) participants*
  - *Two-thirds female (10/15)*
  - *Aged between 23-56 years (mean 39)*
- *Seven (7) participants (47%) had five or more acute inpatient admissions*
  - *Length of longest admission ranged from 3-days to five-months*
  - *All but two participants had experienced involuntary admission*
- *Most common (5/15) self-reported diagnosis was Bipolar Disorder*



# Findings

## *Availability*

- “Some of the nurses would come and sit in the common area and watch TV with the patients...they knew much more about what the patients were doing than that dude standing at the window with the clipboard” (Ellen)
- “It’s not about giving someone medications and waking them in the morning and giving them a meal... it’s about nurses spending time with you, and that makes you feel safe” (Kristen).
- “In theory you can go and chat to the nurses, but they’re really busy, and the hourly checks are the only time they’re around” (Alex)



# Findings

## *Responsiveness*

- “She would talk to me until she worked out what I needed” (Brian)
- “I’d been in hospital for weeks and wanted to go home for the weekend. When my doctor said ‘no’, I was devastated. The nurse spoke to the doctor about it, and even though I still didn’t get leave, I felt safe whenever that nurse was on shift” (Nalini)
- “Some nurses wouldn’t talk or listen to me... it meant I withdrew and stayed in my room. If I had a concern I’d just keep it to myself” (Jack)



# Findings

## *Caring*

- “The nurses sit down on your bed and say, ‘So how are you feeling today?’”  
(Gloria)
- “they make me feel like I have someone in my corner that genuinely cares what happens to me” (Kristen)
- “I could talk a lot about the little acts of kindness that have made me feel very safe” (Marlon)
- “Some nurses don’t really show empathy or kindness...they’re just there to do their eight or 10 hours, and then go home...they don’t care” (Brian)



# Discussion

- *Implications for practice*
  - *Recovery-oriented nursing aligned with safety*
- *Implications for service evaluation*
  - *Service-user measures of safety*
- *Implications for further research*
  - *Explore nurses' perceptions of safety*
  - *Explore barriers to availability, responsiveness and caring*



# Next steps

- *Publications*
  - *Findings (themes x 3)*
  - *Concept analysis*
  
- *Investigate national and international linkages to promote consumer safety in acute mental health inpatient units*



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# Self-identified diagnosis

