

Book review

**Review of the book entitled *Psiquiatria forense: 80 anos de prática institucional***

Carlos Alberto Crespo de Souza, Rogério Göttert Cardoso (orgs.)

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We are experiencing hard times in the psychiatric practice in hospitals. Erroneous and even frivolous interpretations condemn the therapeutic resource “hospitalization” and stigmatize professionals who work in these institutions. Among them, forensic psychiatric hospitals are those that suffer the most. Far from feeling dispirited, the professionals at Instituto Psiquiátrico Forense Maurício Cardoso (IPFMC), from Porto Alegre (Brazil) decided to stand up. They increased their personal knowledge through study and research, which was reflected in master’s and doctoral theses and dissertations known at a national level. Important awards in Brazilian psychiatry have been won by those professionals. The crowning achievement of this new energy, of this new enthusiasm, is expressed in this book on forensic psychiatry. It is a pioneering work, which is born making history: It is the first book written by professionals who work or worked at IPFMC, which has celebrated its 81<sup>st</sup> anniversary.

The book is composed of 30 chapters describing the work of many sectors in the institution, such as administration, psychology, social assistance, legal department, nursing and occupational therapy. In addition, some chapters were written by psychiatrists – a greater number – who, in practice, demonstrate how each medical record of a person with mental disorder is sent to the legal department. There are also chapters describing the history of forensic psychiatric hospitals in the

Western world, including one chapter about the formation of IPFMC, compared with other Brazilian hospitals. It provides data of national interest, such as the meaning of the benefit of progressive discharge, an achievement obtained by a joint effort with the judicial branch of Rio Grande do Sul.

There are 350 pages of technical and objective information on forensic practice, written by 24 authors related to IPFMC and organized by Dr. Crespo de Souza and by Dr. Rogério Cardoso. “The coexistence with duality or ambiguity between hospital and prison is very hard for all professionals.” “The forensic psychiatric institution is a difficult place to work in, with heavy duties, hazardousness is always present, through verbal threats and even physical assaults, besides penalties for transgressions and threats of investigations made by SUSEPE (Superintendence of Penitentiary Services).” “Not everyone can stand the pressure, they end up quitting, those who remain are mature, strong and fearless.”

The institution has three main tasks:

- 1) Psychiatric assessment of everyone who committed crimes as a consequence of a real or suspected mental behavior – including a report of criminal liability – coming from all criminal jurisdictions of the state, federal and military as well;
- 2) Care and control of the mentally ill hospitalized in accordance with a security measure;
- 3) Treatment of convicts with psychopathological manifestations when supervising the mental disease.

In Brazil, there are 28 forensic psychiatric institutions and around 4,000 inmates. In chapter 3, demographic and statistical data of the past 5 years at IPFMC are presented.

The services of social assistance, psychology, nursing and occupational therapy are described in chapters 6 to 9. From chapters 12 to 28, the most important clinical features are examined. Chapters 1, 2, 10 and 12, as well as 27 to 30 discuss medical, legal and ethical aspects and the history of IPFMC. In chapter 11, progressive discharge is analyzed. This is an issue of great interest for those who work at IPFMC and is debated all over the country. Due to this work, the

IPFMC, represented by Rubens Menezes, won the Award of Social Inclusion, granted by ABP (Brazilian Psychiatric Association) in 2004

([http://www.premiodeinclusao.com.br/vencedores/categoria\\_defesa.shtml](http://www.premiodeinclusao.com.br/vencedores/categoria_defesa.shtml)). Dr. Lisieux Elaine de Borba Telles was also awarded at a national level in 2005, when she won the Award Professor Rubim de Pinho for best work in forensic psychiatry and ethic, granted by the Brazilian Psychiatric Association. Those are only two out of a selected group of authors admired for other publications who participated to show their affective bond with the work being performed at IPFMC.

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