

MEDDEPTINST 6520.1
JLK/ey
3 January 1966

MEDICAL DEPARTMENT INSTRUCTION 6520.1

From: Medical Officer
To: Medical Department Personnel

Subj: Psychiatric Patients; care and safeguarding of

1. Purpose. The purpose of this instruction is to establish policies governing the care and safeguarding of psychiatric patients.

2. Responsibility.

a. The Ward Corpsman shall be responsible for the care and treatment of all patients admitted to the Medical Maximum Security Rooms.

b. The Medical Officer will assign one or more guards, as necessary to the Medical Maximum Security Rooms whenever a patient has been admitted. The senior man assigned will be responsible for the safeguarding of the patient. He will be thoroughly familiar with the evacuation plan in regard to the evacuation of mental patients in the event of abandon ship.

c. All personnel assigned to caring for, or safeguarding emotionally disturbed patients must constantly keep in mind that every emotionally disturbed patient is a potential suicide risk, and that any self-injury or violence to others must be prevented.

d. The Medical Officer shall be responsible for the overall security of all psychiatric patients transported under locked conditions. He shall not release any psychiatric patient committed to his care except by request by a competent authority. He will obtain a written, dated receipt for each and every psychiatric patient released from his custody. A file for such receipts shall be maintained in the Medical Records Office.

3. Care of Psychiatric Patients.

a. Personal hygiene and nutrition of psychiatric patients will be carefully observed. Special efforts shall be made to see that these patients are clean and present a neat appearance. To this end the Ward Corpsman shall see that:

- (1) Each patient bathes himself or is bathed daily.
- (2) Each patient shaves or is shaved as his growth of beard requires.
- (3) Each patient's underclothing is clean and that in all other respects he conforms to the rules of personal hygiene.

b. During meals a Corpsman will be present and shall insure that no utensils are misused.

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c. Patients will be exercised three times a day unless the Medical Officer directs otherwise.

d. A corpsman shall visit these patients hourly to determine their status. During these visits the patients will be allowed to make head calls and obtain water or fluids.

4. Security for Psychiatric Patients.

a. Patients will be searched as soon as possible after boarding and daily thereafter to determine whether or not they have in their possession knives or any other articles which may be of potential danger to themselves or others.

b. Only spoons will be given to these patients at mealtime and they will be collected thereafter. The patient must not be allowed to retain anything from the food serving.

c. Whenever patients are taken out of locked ward spaces for exercise the following will be done:

(1) All doors including those leading to ladderwells will be secured prior to release of patients.

(2) Guards will be posted at the entrance to any exits which cannot be secured.

(3) All fire axes and other potentially dangerous implements will be removed from the exercise area prior to release of the patients.


(4) Patients will be accompanied by guards at all times.

(5) Guards should never be more than ten feet away from the patients, never let anyone walk between them and the patient, nor never turn their backs to a patient.

d. Books may be brought into the rooms, but no other article without the permission of the Medical Officer.

e. Visitors shall not be allowed the patient unless so directed by the Medical Officer.

f. Psychiatric patients will be kept under constant observation and supervision, but although they are often security patients, they are not prisoners and shall not be treated as such.


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