Accuracy and Completeness of Form 1 and Form 42 on an Adult Inpatient Unit in an Academic Setting

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Since 1978, the Ontario Mental Health Act has required physicians to complete specific documentation (Form 1 – Application for Psychiatric Assessment) in order to detain patients for psychiatric assessment. The Mental Health Act states that a Form 1 is not effective unless it is signed and dated by the physician, and requires the physician to provide rationale for the detainment. (R.S.O. 1990, c. M.7, s. 19 (5); 2000, c. 9, s. 3 (6).)

A retrospective chart review was conducted on all patients discharged from an acute psychiatric unit within a three month period between January 1, 2014 and March 31, 2014. All relevant ministry of health forms (Forms 1 and 42) were reviewed. The College of Physicians and Surgeons doctor search was used to classify physicians who initiated forms by specialty and level of training. Forms were assessed for accuracy and errors were classified and recorded in a database.

Physicians have a legal, and arguably, an ethical responsibility to ensure that documentation is accurate and complete to prevent invalid and possibly illegal detainment. The high rate of errors on applications for psychiatric admission (Form 1s) in this study suggests that more must be done to improve mental health act adherence in this academic setting. This audit cycle will be repeated following an intervention (a checkbox on admission reminding the admitting physician to re-check Forms 1 and 42) to determine whether this change leads to better documentation.