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51.2. Care Consultancy by Forensic Psychiatrists in Dutch Penitentiary Facilities

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Together with the courts, the Netherlands has 19 different justice districts. In each of them, like the Hague, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, and other cities, there is an FPD office: Forensic Psychiatric Service.

The psychiatrists involved are judicial forensic psychiatrists, who fall under the Ministry of Justice.

One of their core working fields is the care consultancy in prisons for mentally disturbed/psychiatric inmates. Patients with emergency psychic stress like suicidal behaviour can be the object of psychiatric consultancy as well.

Our work is primarily multidisciplinary. There is a panel consisting of the prison doctor, nurses (medical service), psychologists, and the psychiatrist. This panel discusses the patients' psychological problems before seeing them and, after having seen the inmate/patient; the results are presented and evaluated. This panel is the so-called PMO: psychic medical communication. Generally the psychiatrist goes to the same prison twice a week. He/she sees inmates from different units. In nearly each prison, there is a specialized care unit smaller than the standard units with more qualified personal called BZA.

It is, in fact, possible to see the inmate/ patient twice a week. The consultancy is not only on verbal base done verbally in the PMO but also in by means of a medical letter for the medical service in the prison, the psychologist, and the medical dossier/status. It is important that the psychiatrist sees his patient as often as necessary in order to control the expected treatment effect. If the patient's condition worsens in his psychiatric illness, there are possibilities to transfer him to a psychiatric hospital outside the prison walls, but preferentially preferably they mean be transferred to the FOBA: Forensic Observation and Treatment Unit within the Prison system, which is like a psychiatric clinical prison unit.