

# The profile of absconding psychiatric inpatients in a psychiatric hospital in central of Taiwan

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**Aims and objectives** Absconding, where patients under an involuntary mental health order leave hospital without permission that may result in patient harm and professional emotion impact for nursing staff. The purpose of this study was to describe the characteristics of the absconding patient and these events in acute and rehabilitation wards of a psychiatric hospital in Taiwan from January 2012 to November 2017.

**Background** Absconding is an important issue in psychiatric inpatient units. That may risks that include patient harm and professional anxiety. In spite of this, limited research has been conducted in Taiwan on patients who abscond while receiving psychiatric care.

**Design** This study was conducted retrospective study.

**Method.** Absconding events was analysis from six acute and twenty rehabilitation wards from January 2012 to November 2017 in a psychiatric hospital in Central Taiwan.

**Results.** Over the 6.9 years period, 117 times were absconded a total of 5414 patients of a psychiatric hospital in Taiwan. The absconding rate was 0.31 incidents per 100 voluntary admissions. Being male, middle-aged, diagnosed with schizophrenia having a longer hospital stay were predictive of absconding. Psychiatric patients absconded average  $44.4 \pm 13.06$  years old. Over 55% of absconding patients were multiple times admission. 76% were male patients. Gender was significantly associated with absconding. There are 6.8% patients absconded more than once time. Age and diagnosis emerged as particularly important factors to consider

**Discussion.** The present study provides a comprehensive psychiatric center picture of absconding. The characteristics of patients and incidents provide useful risk assessment information for nurses. Nurses should be pay attention to patients' risk factors of admission patients. Nurse is a key role in prevention absconding that factors have led to absconding reductions in the wards. Such interventions provide a complex consideration to prevent in inpatient hospitalization to inform nursing management plans. There also appears to be a link between continuing detention orders and an absconding event.

Table Absconding event of patients characteristic

n=117

Variable	Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	total	(percentage)
<b>Absconding person</b>		18	22	18	21	23	15	117	
<b>Ward</b>									
Acute ward		7	8	8	9	16	6	54	(46.1%)
Chronic ward		11	14	10	12	7	9	63	(53.9%)
<b>Age</b>		42.9	34.2	42.6	48.0	45.3	45.8	44.5	
Minimum		60.0	22.0	18.0	31.0	24.0	24.0	18.0	
Maximum		46.0	63.0	66.0	84.0	77.0	65.0	84.0	
<b>Gender</b>									
Male		15	18	10	16	17	14	89	(76.1%)
Female		3	4	8	5	6	1	28	(23.9%)
<b>Diagnosis</b>									
Dementia		1	0	1	2	2	0	6	(5.1%)
Schizophrenia		14	18	16	16	13	11	88	(75.2%)
Schizoaffective		1	1	1	2	3	0	8	(6.9%)
Other		2	3	0	1	5	4	15	(12.8%)

**Conclusions.** Findings provide the profile of absconding patients in Taiwan. Exploration of the related factor why patients abscond and why many do so repeatedly warrants further investigation.

**Relevance to clinical practice** Risk factor management approaches taking into account associated with absconding could be trial to reduce the incidence of absconding in psychiatric inpatient settings.

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