

Forensic psychiatry in Chile

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Mental disorders are among the most prevalent of chronic disorders, and a high prevalence of these disorders has been consistently found in jails and prisons. This study was a retrospective case series that described the population of adults charged with a criminal offense who were court ordered to undergo a psychiatric assessment within the Medical Legal Service in Santiago, Chile from 2005 to 2006. Characteristics were explored in order to better understand this population in light of the recent reforms in the judicial and health systems of Chile. Ninety percent of sampled individuals were male, primarily between the ages of 18-39. years. Seventy percent of the evaluations came from the pre-reformed judicial system and 30% were from the reformed system. Approximately 63% of evaluated offenders were considered to have a psychiatric pathology, the most common being the personality disorders. Of the evaluated offenders, approximately 84% were considered by a psychiatrist to be criminal