

Effects of the Changes in Legislation Governing Offenders with Intellectual Disabilities in Norway: A Descriptive Study

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*Abstract*

A recent change in legislation in Norway redefined which persons with an intellectual disability (ID) are considered as “offenders” within the judicial system. After that change, the number of adults with ID convicted of a crime and subject to forensic services decreased from 27 in 2002 to 13 in 2006. Crimes considered under the statute include those of a violent nature, sexual offenses, or life-threatening arson. Persons falling under provisions of the statute include those identified as non-responsible with intellectual functioning corresponding to moderate or severe ID (IQ < 55). The new statute includes a provision of sentence to mandatory care (MC) for those with a high risk of recidivism. The aim of this study was to compare offenders with ID adjudicated before and after the legislation revision. A comparison cross-sectional study design was used, and measures examined group compositions and staff and service characteristics. Results showed that after the change in legislation, offenders with ID appeared to be managed by more qualified staff, but at the same time, they had less contact with health services outside their residence. In addition, more restrictive care management measures were evident after the change.

*Keywords:* criminal justice system, forensic issues, intellectual disabilities, Norway, offenders

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