

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Violent forensic psychiatric inpatients and violent detainees in the Netherlands

Ruud H.J. Hornsveld^{a*}, Erik B.H. Bulten^{b,c}, Edzard T. de Vries^a and Floor W. Kraaimaat^c

^a*De Kijvelanden Forensic Psychiatric Centre, Poortugaal, the Netherlands;*

^b*Pompestichting Forensic Psychiatric Centre, Nijmegen, the Netherlands;* ^c*Radboud University Nijmegen, Nijmegen, the Netherlands*

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A group of 136 violent inpatients detained under hospital order and a group of 100 violent detainees with a prison sentence of at least four years were compared as regards individual criminogenic factors such as personality traits and problem behaviours. The inpatients appeared to score higher than detainees on antisocial lifestyle, neuroticism, and disposition to anger. No significant differences were found on other measures. Inpatients were all classified as having an antisocial personality disorder, but there were indications that this was also the case for a considerable percentage of the detainees. It seems advisable that the psychiatric and psychological criteria used in the decision to detain an offender under hospital order should be specified further.

Keywords: forensic psychiatric patients; detainment under hospital order; personality traits; problem behaviours

In the Netherlands, forensic psychiatric patients are those for whom the court has established a connection between a psychiatric disorder on the one hand and their felony on the other. Rulings are based on the evaluations of a psychiatrist and/or psychologist. Without care or treatment, recidivism is deemed probable. Those mentally disordered offenders that have committed an offence punishable by a minimum of four years (e.g., severe assault, manslaughter, or murder) are referred to as patients detained under hospital order, and are sentenced to forensic psychiatric treatment (so-called ‘TBS patients’).

Forensic psychiatric patients are judged by the court as being not accountable for their crime. However, accountability in the Netherlands is not a question of all or nothing. Five gradations are applied: accountable,

*Corresponding author. Email: r.hornsveld@tiscali.nl