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Margarida M Vieira, João Neves-Amado, Sérgio Deodato

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Autoria: Margarida M Vieira

Co-autoria: João Neves-Amado, Sérgio Deodato

Prefaciador: Margarida M Vieira

Organização: João Neves-Amado

© Instituto de Ciências da Saúde – Porto | Universidade Católica Portuguesa

Rua Diogo de Botelho, 1327

4169-005 Porto – Portugal

+351 22 6196200 | saude@porto.ucp.pt

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At the end of the nineteenth century: psychiatry, nurses and their actions (1883)

Analisa Candeias (55, 23)*; Alexandra Esteves (47, 57); Luís Sá (46)

* lia.candeias@gmail.com

Introduction In 1883 it was inaugurated the first psychiatric hospital built in portuguese lands, the Hospital de Alienados do Conde de Ferreira, under administration of Santa Casa da Misericórdia do Porto, responding to the testamentary dispositions of Joaquim Ferreira dos Santos, Count of Ferreira. In 1848 was established the Hospital de Rilhafoles, a psychiatric hospital, which building was adapted from an old convent, and the patients who were at Hospital de S. José were transferred to this structure. This hospital, at the time, was the only specific structure of assistance for people with mental disorders, but it was quickly overcrowded with people from different parts of the country. The Hospital de Alienados do Conde de Ferreira emerges as a new support in the scope of health, presenting itself in the forefront of the accompaniment and treatment of the alienated, and as a national innovation. Objectives Describe the rol of nurses who worked at the Hospital de Alienados do Conde de Ferreira in the time of its inauguration; analyze the interventions of the nurses who worked at the Hospital de Alienados do Conde de Ferreira in 1883. Material and Methods This is an work that is within the qualitative paradigm, using documental research and analysis, occuring from an historical research. The documents found and analyzed were the first General Regulation of Hospital de Alienados do Conde de Ferreira and letters sent by António Maria de Sena, first clinical director of the Hospital, to the Administration of Santa Casa da Misericórdia do Porto, in March, 14th, 1883. Results In 1883, at Hospital de Alienados do Conde de Ferreira, were admitted patients according to classes, 1st, 2nd and 3rd class, and also the indigents class, who were in the same facilities that the 3rd class patients. Three wards were established for 1st and 2nd class patients, and four for 3rd class and indigent patients. Regarding the hospital workers, they fitted in three categories: economic administration, clinical administration and religious worship. Nurses belonged to the category of clinical administration, being António Maria de Sena, clinical director, the responsible for this category. If the vacancies for patients hospitalized at the Hospital were all occupied it should exist, in 1883, seven female nurses, seven male nurses, six helpers (three females and three males), twenty female servants and twenty male servents. In March of 1883 were selected by the clinical director three female nurses, two male nurses, two female servants and five male servants, being that the capacity of the institution was not complete. These Nursing staff came from different parts of the country and three of them had been worked at the Hospital de Rilhafoles. The nurses's interventions consisted, mainly, in execute, teach, promote and supervise, with emphasis on hygiene, feeding, clothing, therapy administration, occupation and behaviors of risk. Nurses also had responsibility for the materials management from infirmaries, and the helpers and servents were responsible for the cleaning and maitenance of spaces. All the Nursing staff was subordinate to the superintendent nurse, that was responsible for the surveillance of the workers and for the performance of their duties. Conclusion The Hospital de Alienados do Conde de Ferreira in 1883 presented an organized frame of workers, submitted to an hierarchy, with differentiated functions and with emphasis on the well-being of the individual considered alienated. Taking into account the stigmatized figure of the alienated in the nineteenth century, and with the association of his behavior with divine punishment and moral deviation, the hospital took on a transforming role in the portuguese society of the time. The nurses, without formal education and assuming functions based on experience and oral transmission of knowledge, presented and essential role in the accompaniment and treatment of the hospitalized individuals, being present in the daily life of the Hospital de Alienados do Conde de Ferreira, and in all hours of its activity. References BOTELHO, José Rodrigues. Enfermagem de Saúde Mental e Psiquiátrica – Alguns Contributos para a sua História em Portugal. Servir, 2004, vol.52, nº2, p.55-64 GOMES, Bernardino António. Dos Estabelecimentos de Alienados nos Estados Principais da Europa. 1ªed. Lisboa: Ulmeiro, 1843 SANTA CASA DA MISERICÓRDIA DO PORTO. Regulamento Geral do Hospital de Alienados do Conde de Ferreira. Porto: Santa Casa da Misericórdia do Porto, 1883 SANTA CASA DA MISERICÓRDIA DO PORTO. Correspondência recebida pela Santa Casa da Misericórdia do Porto. Porto: Santa Casa da Misericórdia do Porto, 1883 SENA, António Maria. Os alienados em Portugal. Lisboa: Ulmeiro, 1884

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