

Defensive Medicine in the Field of Psychiatry

The Department of Psychiatry in Hadassah Hebrew University Medical Center and the Faculty of Health Sciences in Ben Gurion University are conducting a survey on "Defensive Medicine in the field of psychiatry in a time of increasing malpractice claims".

Defensive Medicine refers to any diagnostic or treatment measures undertaken mainly in order to avoid malpractice claims. According to previous studies in Israel, defensive medicine is very common among Israeli physicians. This practice may have significant implications on the quality of medicine practiced in Israel. Yet, no research has been done on this topic among Israeli psychiatrists.

The objectives of the present survey is to evaluate the influence of Defensive Medicine on decision making in daily practice of psychiatrists. If you work with children and the question is not relevant for your practice, please indicate this between brackets.

We will be glad if you agree to help us by filling out the questionnaire. The survey is anonymous, and although formulated in masculine gender it is intended for men and women as well.

Thank you for your cooperation.

1. Gender: a. Male b. Female
2. Age _____
3. Experience: a. Resident b. Certified
How many years after certification? _____
4. Place of work: a. Public hospital b. Health Management Organization c. Private practice
5. Department position: a. Resident b. Consultant c. Department director

Do you practice defensive medicine in your daily practice?

1. With no patient
2. In a few patients
3. With half of the patients
4. With most patients
5. With every patient

The following questions refer to the history of malpractice claims:

1. Did anyone of your patients / patients' family members file a complaint against you to the director of the institution where you work? Yes / No
2. Were you ever involved in a case of medical negligence that could have led to a malpractice claim? Yes / No
3. Do you read medical-legal literature and litigation? Yes / No
4. If yes, to which extent does it affect your decision-making in daily clinical practice?
 1. Not at all
 2. To a certain extent
 3. To a great extent
 4. Very much

The following questions refer to the treatment of suicidal patients:

1. Do you advise psychiatric hospitalization to a suicidal patient even if not warranted according to his/her mental state?
1. With no patient 2. In a few patients 3. With half of the patients 4. With most patients 5. With every patient
2. Do you increase follow-up of a suicidal patient even if it is not warranted according to his/her mental state?
1. With no patient 2. In a few patients 3. With half of the patients 4. With most patients 5. With every patient
3. Do you initiate contact with family member or other support networks?
1. With no patient 2. In a few patients 3. With half of the patients 4. With most patients 5. With every patient
4. Do you consult with a senior psychiatrist / head of the department?
1. With no patient 2. In a few patients 3. With half of the patients 4. With most patients 5. With every patient
5. Do you usually refer these patients to another professional (psychologist / social worker)?
1. With no patient 2. In a few patients 3. With half of the patients 4. With most patients 5. With every patient
6. Do you prescribe medication even if there is no clear indication?
1. With no patient 2. In a few patients 3. With half of the patients 4. With most patients 5. With every patient

The following questions refer to initiating or changing a patient's medication:

1. When initiating a new medication do you inform your patient about severe yet rare side effects?
1. With no patient 2. In a few patients 3. With half of the patients 4. With most patients 5. With every patient
2. Do you usually record having explained to the patient about the side effects before initiating new medication?
1. With no patient 2. In a few patients 3. With half of the patients 4. With most patients 5. With every patient
3. Do you inform your patient about increased risk of suicidality after initiating treatment with SSRI's (as stated by FDA black box warning)?
1. With no patient 2. In a few patients 3. With half of the patients 4. With most patients 5. With every patient

The following questions refer to the treatment of pregnant women:

1. Do you avoid prescribing medication for pregnant women altogether?
1. With no patient 2. In a few patients 3. With half of the patients 4. With most patients 5. With every patient
2. If you decide to initiate new medication for a pregnant patient do you prescribe smaller dosages than customary?
1. With no patient 2. In a few patients 3. With half of the patients 4. With most patients 5. With every patient

The following questions refer to the treatment of elderly patients:

1. When you initiate antipsychotic treatment in an elderly patient do you inform the patient or his/her family member about increased risk of cerebrovascular events?
1. With no patient 2. In a few patients 3. With half of the patients 4. With most patients 5. With every patient
2. If you decide to prescribe a new medication to an elderly patient do you prescribe smaller dosages than customary?
1. With no patient 2. In a few patients 3. With half of the patients 4. With most patients 5. With every patient

If you were involved in the past in a case of a malpractice claim, **during the period the claim was filed**, did you feel any of the following?

1. Anxious: 1. Not at all 2. Slightly 3. To a certain extent 4. Very Much
2. Restless: 1. Not at all 2. Slightly 3. To a certain extent 4. Very Much
3. Loss of energy / fatigue: 1. Not at all 2. Slightly 3. To a certain extent 4. Very Much
4. Sleeping problems: 1. Not at all 2. Slightly 3. To a certain extent 4. Very Much
5. Anger: 1. Not at all 2. Slightly 3. To a certain extent 4. Very Much
6. Guilt: 1. Not at all 2. Slightly 3. To a certain extent 4. Very Much
7. Distrustful: 1. Not at all 2. Slightly 3. To a certain extent 4. Very Much
8. Impaired functioning in work, family relations, or social activities:
1. Not at all 2. Slightly 3. To a certain extent 4. Very Much