

By far the greatest proportion of the resources used in promoting mental health in Canada today is expended on the care and treatment of the institutionalized patient although, with increasing public recognition of the dimensions of the problem of mental health, more emphasis is being placed on the prevention and early treatment of mental disorders. Through measures such as professionally organized and directed public education programs, mental health clinics and the utilization of many other community resources, progress is being made in changing public attitudes towards mental illness and in promoting opportunities for the development of mental health.

THE DIMENSIONS OF THE PROBLEM

Of the 68,157 patients on the books of mental institutions at the end of 1954, 62,323 were in hospital, 87 p.c. more than the 33,290 reported in hospital at the end of 1932. A more precise measure of the volume of patients actually resident in institutions is obtained from the rate per hundred thousand population, a figure that increased from 317.2 to 410.9 during the 1932-54 period. Of the patients institutionalized at the end of 1954, 56.0 p.c. were admitted on the certificate of one or more doctors in accordance with provincial law and 24.1 p.c. were voluntarily admitted on their own application. The changing public attitude towards the treatment of mental illness is reflected in the increasing proportion of voluntary admissions which rose to its present level from 6.7 p.c. ten years ago.

Some indication of the demand for institutional services is obtained from a study of first admissions and re-admissions to mental institutions. Compared with 1932, admissions more than trebled* by 1954 and the admission rate per hundred thousand population rose from 90.1 to 193.5 (Table 2). A significant feature of this rate is that, though it increased only 9.7 p.c. from 1932 to 1944, it showed a 90.0 p.c. advance from 1945 to 1954.

* Newfoundland data were first included in 1949: admissions in that Province have not exceeded 1.7 p.c. of the Canadian total in any year of their inclusion.

2.—Admissions to Mental Institutions, Patients in Residence and Bed Capacity 1932-54

Year	First Admissions		Re-admissions		Total Admissions		Patients Institutionalized at Dec. 31		Bed Capacity	
	No.	Rate ¹	No.	Rate ¹	No.	Rate ¹	No.	Rate ¹	No.	Rate ¹
1932	7,628	72.7	1,828	17.4	9,456	90.1	33,290	317.2	32,951	313.9
1933	7,518	70.8	1,683	15.8	9,201	86.6	34,979	329.4	32,781	308.7
1934	8,096	75.0	1,965	18.3	10,061	93.8	36,571	340.9	34,918	325.5
1935	8,604	79.5	2,166	20.0	10,770	99.5	38,261	353.3	35,987	332.3
1936	9,002	82.3	2,121	19.4	11,123	101.7	39,833	364.3	37,379	341.9
1937	8,703	78.9	2,258	20.5	10,961	99.4	41,677	377.9	37,798	342.7
1938	8,581	77.1	2,384	21.4	10,965	98.5	42,687	383.3	38,671	347.3
1939	8,301	73.8	2,250	20.0	10,551	93.8	43,275	384.7	39,277	349.1
1940	7,736	68.1	2,087	18.4	9,823	86.4	44,163	388.6	39,441	347.1
1941	7,902	68.8	2,401	20.9	10,303	89.7	45,135	392.8	40,115	349.1
1942	8,410	72.3	2,282	19.6	10,692	91.9	45,937	394.7	41,762	358.9
1943	8,556	72.6	2,390	20.3	10,946	92.9	46,631	395.9	42,454	360.5
1944	9,170	76.9	2,629	22.0	11,799	98.9	47,279	396.3	42,500	356.3
1945	9,489	78.7	2,779	23.1	12,268	101.8	48,056	398.6	45,124	374.3
1946	9,752	79.5	3,144	25.6	12,896	105.1	49,163	400.7	45,443	370.4
1947	9,745	77.8	3,335	26.6	13,080	104.4	50,203	400.8	45,180	360.7
1948	10,685	83.5	3,499	27.3	14,184	110.8	51,050	398.9	45,682	356.9
1949	11,556	86.1	3,920	29.2	15,476	115.3	52,663	392.3	44,055	328.2
1950	11,912	87.0	4,499	32.9	16,411	119.9	53,957	394.2	45,981	329.3
1951	13,152	94.0	4,591	32.8	17,743	126.8	55,395	396.1	46,096	329.6
1952	15,056	104.5	5,901	41.0	20,957	145.5	57,621	400.0	48,893	339.4
1953	15,925	107.9	7,206	48.8	23,131	156.8	60,574	410.5	51,328	347.8
1954	20,627	136.0	8,724	57.5	29,351	193.5	62,323	410.9	54,346	358.3

¹ Per 100,000 population.