RESCAPE: Reconstructing Social Imaginaries that Shape Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Intensive carE

Compulsory care decisions in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (CAP) require moral sensitivity. However, the severe moral distress experienced by professionals, as well as the often mentioned long-term suffering of patients, suggests an underdeveloped normative perspective on compulsory measures in practice and in existing guidelines. What is particularly lacking is an understanding of the role that dominant social imaginaries – i.e. the ways people in a society "imagine their social existence" (Charles Taylor and others) – play in coshaping CAP intensive care practice and rendering compulsory measures acceptable. Such imaginaries provide hermeneutic and prescriptive discourses that guide perceptions of and care for mental health in young people, shape societal roles for young individuals with severe and persistent mental health issues, and confront all involved with normative expectations. RESCAPE starts from the idea that the practice of compulsory care in CAP arises from the interaction between individual considerations and actions (by professionals, patients, and proxies) and these social imaginaries. Only through a critical examination of this interaction can we fully understand how and why compulsory care persists in CAP intensive care and explore alternative approaches.

This presentation explores the value of 'social imaginaries' in CAP research and how to build robust studies around them.