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When to use non-emergency compelled medications in the correctional setting

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Patients treated in correctional settings, including those in correctional inpatient psychiatric hospitals, have a right to refuse medication, unless certain conditions are met. Treating professionals need to be aware of the conditions that must be present prior to compelling use of medication. These specifics have been delineated in several landmark Supreme Court cases, including Washington vs. Harper (1990), Riggins vs. Nevada (1992), and Sell vs. the United States (2003). There is now a standard process to be followed to guarantee patient rights, as well as guide compelled medication use when appropriate. This review of requirements for use of non-emergency compelled medications, and application to patient cases, supports clinical decision making for providers in forensic correctional settings. This poster/or presentation will review the individual cases heard by the Supreme Court, and the outcomes, with emphasis on requirements for use of non-emergency compelled medications. For providers working in correctional settings, the decision regarding whether or not compelled medication is appropriate, particularly in a non-emergency situation, requires a thoughtful review of the patient condition and current guidelines prior to proceeding. The authors will present several patient cases from the forensic setting in which they work, in which non-emergency compelled medications were used, and how the conditions for use were met.

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