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Changes in psychiatric care and treatment measures**Harumi Arai**

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Western countries have been actively promoting community-based healthcare and welfare for mentally-disabled people. For example, Franco Basaglia (1924-1980), the father of Italian mental healthcare, established a treatment support system for mentally-disabled people, realized hospitalization in open wards and started home-visit service using cars in 1977, based on the concept of human-rights protection, which triggered the mental healthcare reform in 1978 leading to the provision of new wards (with 15 beds or fewer) for psychiatric inpatients and cooperation with community service, which increased the number of beds per 1,000 people to 0.1. At the end of 1998, Italy declared a complete closure of mental hospitals. The psychiatric healthcare system in Western countries allows people with mental disorders to use community service and shorten hospital stays, thereby supporting them to return to community life. More and more psychiatric wards have been provided at general hospitals. In the United States, Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, Iceland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, etc., beds in psychiatric wards account for 40% or higher of the total number of beds. In countries with a large number of beds for psychiatric patients, there are many nursing homes in communities where elderly patients are living after hospitalization. Although it is not realistic to abolish psychiatric hospitals in Japan, there are still many things to be learned from Western countries, such as the awareness of protection of human rights of mentally-disabled patients and cooperation between mental healthcare providers and communities.

Biography

Harumi Arai has received a Doctoral degree in Health and Welfare Science from the Graduate School of Takasaki University of Health and Welfare. She is a Professor of Psychiatric Nursing and has been conducting field research for over 10 years on palliative care provided and needed for long-stay schizophrenic patients with cancer at psychiatric hospitals.

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