

# THE VERONA MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES



AZIENDA OSPEDALIERA UNIVERSITARIA INTEGRATA  
VERONA



UNIVERSITÀ  
di VERONA

## SECTION OF PSYCHIATRY

**The Section of Psychiatry of the Department of Neuroscience, Biomedicine and Movement Sciences, University of Verona**, is engaged in clinical and research activities aiming to contribute to the promotion of mental health, prevention and early interventions, reduction of the social, individual and family burden linked to mental health disorders. The methodology is focused on the evaluation of psychiatric interventions from a public health perspective, according to an epidemiological and bio-psycho-social approach. The implementation and evaluation of innovative psychosocial and pharmacological interventions, the dissemination of evidence-based knowledge relating to mental health, are core aspects of routine care.

In 1987 the Psychiatry Section and the Clinical Psychology Section were designated, *WHO Collaborating Center for Research and Training in Mental Health and Service Evaluation by the World Health Organization (WHO)*.

The Section of Psychiatry runs the clinical activities in collaboration with the University Hospital Trust (Azienda Ospedaliera Universitaria Integrata AOUI) of Verona and the Local Health Authority (ULSS 9 Scaligera) including the Verona Department of Mental Health.



### RESEARCH GROUPS:

In the Section there are 5 Research Groups that carry out their activities mainly in the following areas:

1. assessment of care patterns and costs in the context of mental health services; geography of mental health;
2. studies on the outcome of treatments for mental disorders, prevention and early interventions and assessments of the interplay of the clinical, social and genetic variables and implementation of longitudinal studies and trials on psycho-social interventions.
3. global mental health, mental health of migrants, asylum seeker, refugees and populations exposed to adversities, clinical psychopharmacology, drug epidemiology and implementation studies;
4. brain imaging studies with particular reference to schizophrenia and bipolar disorder;
5. studies on the characteristics and impact of stigma and human rights.

**CLINICAL ACTIVITIES:** The Psychiatry Section includes two main Units:

- **UNIT OF PSYCHIATRY**, directed by Professor Mirella Ruggeri, that includes **1)** an Acute Inpatient Unit, with 16 beds; **2)** the outpatient clinics; **3)** the Mental Health Center of South Verona (a multifunctional structure that provides outpatient interventions, day care, interventions in crisis phases and home visits); **4)** Residential Facilities dedicated to treatment and rehabilitation of patients requiring long-term care; **5)** the Reference Regional Centre for the specialized treatment of Eating Disorders.

All these structures contribute to the South Verona Community Based Mental Health Service (CBMHS) that covers a catchment area of more than 100,000 inhabitants). The activity of the Service is inspired by a model of public health and is based on the cardinal principle of continuity of care - understood both in a longitudinal sense (through the different phases of treatment) and transversal (through the different branches of the Service).

- **UNIT OF PSYCHOSOMATICS AND CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY** is directed by Professor Francesco Amaddeo and that implements Psychological-Psychiatric Consultations for persons admitted to the various hospital wards (800 beds), in collaboration with

psychologists who belong to the Clinical Psychology Section. In addition, the Unit of Psychosomatic provides care for persons with Panic and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder and for those with mental health conditions associated with physical health disorders.

## SECTION OF CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

**The Unit of Clinical Psychology** is directed by Professor Lidia Del Piccolo. It is based on both hospitals of the city of Verona: University Hospital Trust "Policlinico G.B. Rossi" and the City Hospital "Ospedale Maggiore" which form the Integrated University Hospital of Verona (Azienda Ospedaliera Universitaria Integrata, AOUI). The Unit of Clinical Psychology offers psychological support and psychotherapy to inpatients and their relatives, to outpatients with different chronic disease and to health providers who work at both hospitals.

The Unit of Clinical Psychology of the University Hospital carries out integrated multidisciplinary activities with: the Neurology Unit for patients with Multiple Sclerosis and Functional movement disorders; the Medical Unit for Scleroderma outpatients, the Haemodialysis Clinic, the Mastocytosis outpatient Clinic, the Infectious Diseases Clinic, Maxillofacial outpatient Clinic and rehabilitation and anaesthesiology Clinic for patients with chronic pain. Collaborations are also active with the Pancreas Institute and the Oncology Units.

The Unit of Clinical Psychology also carries out integrated multidisciplinary activities with the Child and Mother Clinic, the Transplant area (Heart, Liver and Kidney), the Intensive Care unit with the "Open Resuscitation" project in the field of Neurosurgical Intensive Care, the Haemodialysis Clinic, the Breast and Oncogene Unit and all hospital oncological units. All services are provided by the National Health Service and are therefore free, except for the usual payment of the health ticket. Both units of Clinical Psychology carry out supervision activities for trainees of recognized psychotherapy schools.





## The Historical Archive of Veronese Psychiatry

*Reference person: Professor Mirella Ruggeri  
Section of Psychiatry, Department of Neuroscience, Biomedicine and  
Movement – University of Verona, Verona*

The archive, established in 2006 thanks to the forward-looking vision of Professor Michele Tansella, with the support of the University of Verona, the Integrated University Hospital, and the ULSS 20. The archive proposed to save from the dispersion a documentation of very high interest, made up of medical records, texts and paper material of various kinds coming from the former provincial hospital of San Giacomo.

It is a documentation collected in various locations that is now available to scholars, and offers the possibility of reconstructing the social and scientific overview of the mental hospital situation in the province before the advent of the new psychiatric approach to mental illness that led to the closure of asylums. With the closure of the San Giacomo Mental Hospital, in fact, much of the historical and archival material went inexorably dispersed, in particular the furnishings, diagnostic tools, photographs, restraints, work tools for the treatment of health, numerous volumes of the library. The few buildings that have remained have been partially restored, some are in a state of advanced decay. Many initiatives and projects could emerge from having centralized documentation on the Verona asylum history in a single location.

In short, the Historical Archives should become, also through the involvement of interested scholars and researchers, a meeting point and initiative on the topic of mental hospital history, but also, more generally, the history of psychiatry in the province of Verona. In addition to the need to overcome the dispersion of the archives, unifying them in a single location, there was another aspect that was at the base of the project to create the archive: to ensure that in the place where so many lives and so many misfortunes have intertwined, where many doctors and nurses have spent a lifetime of work remained an evident and conscious sign that testified the value of this memory.

For this reason it is important that the archive is in the area where there was the San Giacomo Mental Hospitals, indeed in a building that since the early '900 welcomed patients of male observation.

In this way we begin to keep alive the memory of what was a small city, then surrounded by walls (built, among other things by the patients themselves) and the fields of the agricultural colony, far from Verona, but always present in its history, despite the inevitable attempts to remove that "madness" has always stimulated.