

COMPLETENESS OF PSYCHIATRIC ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION IN THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT AT GOZO GENERAL HOSPITAL

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Background

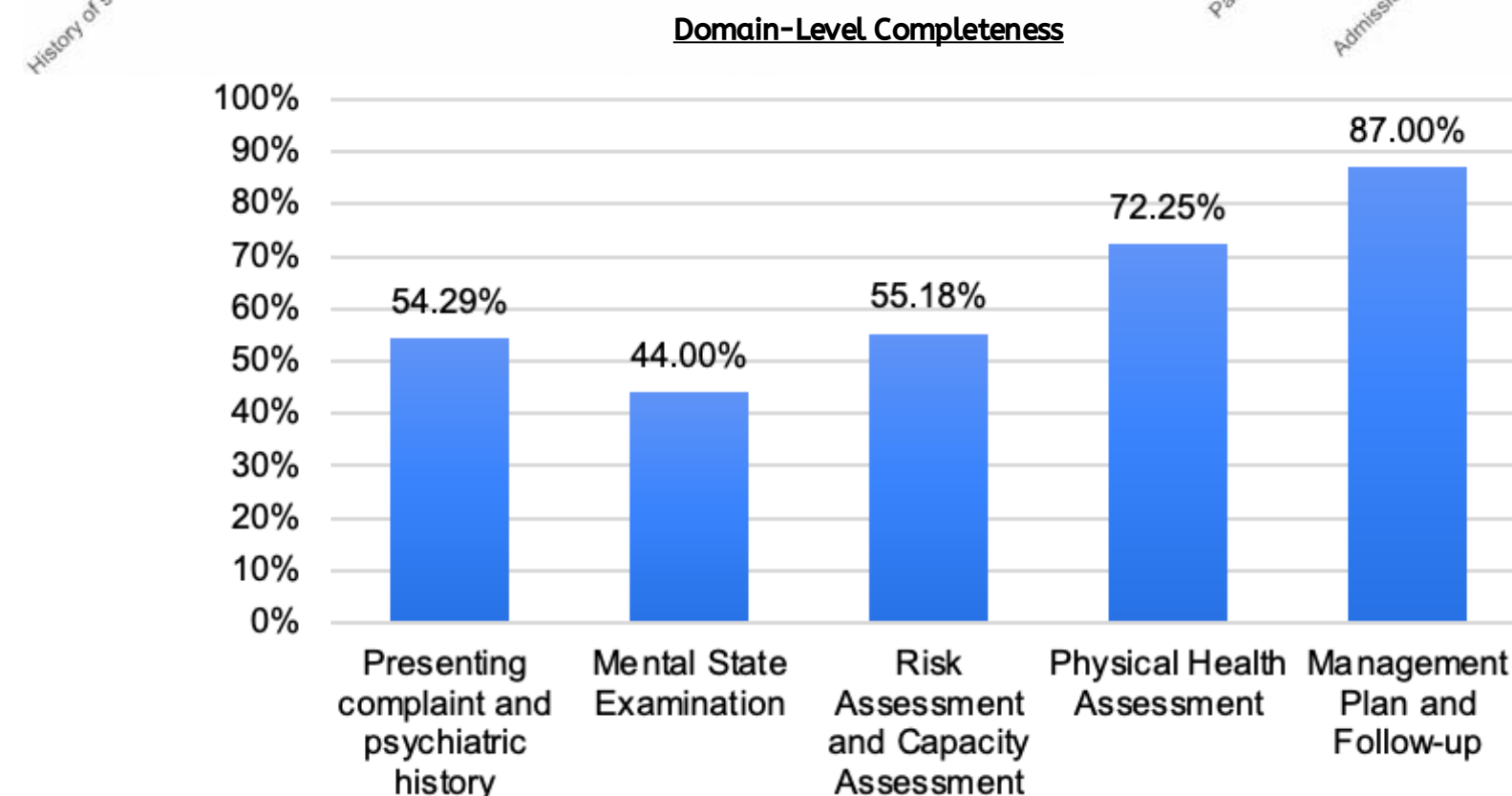
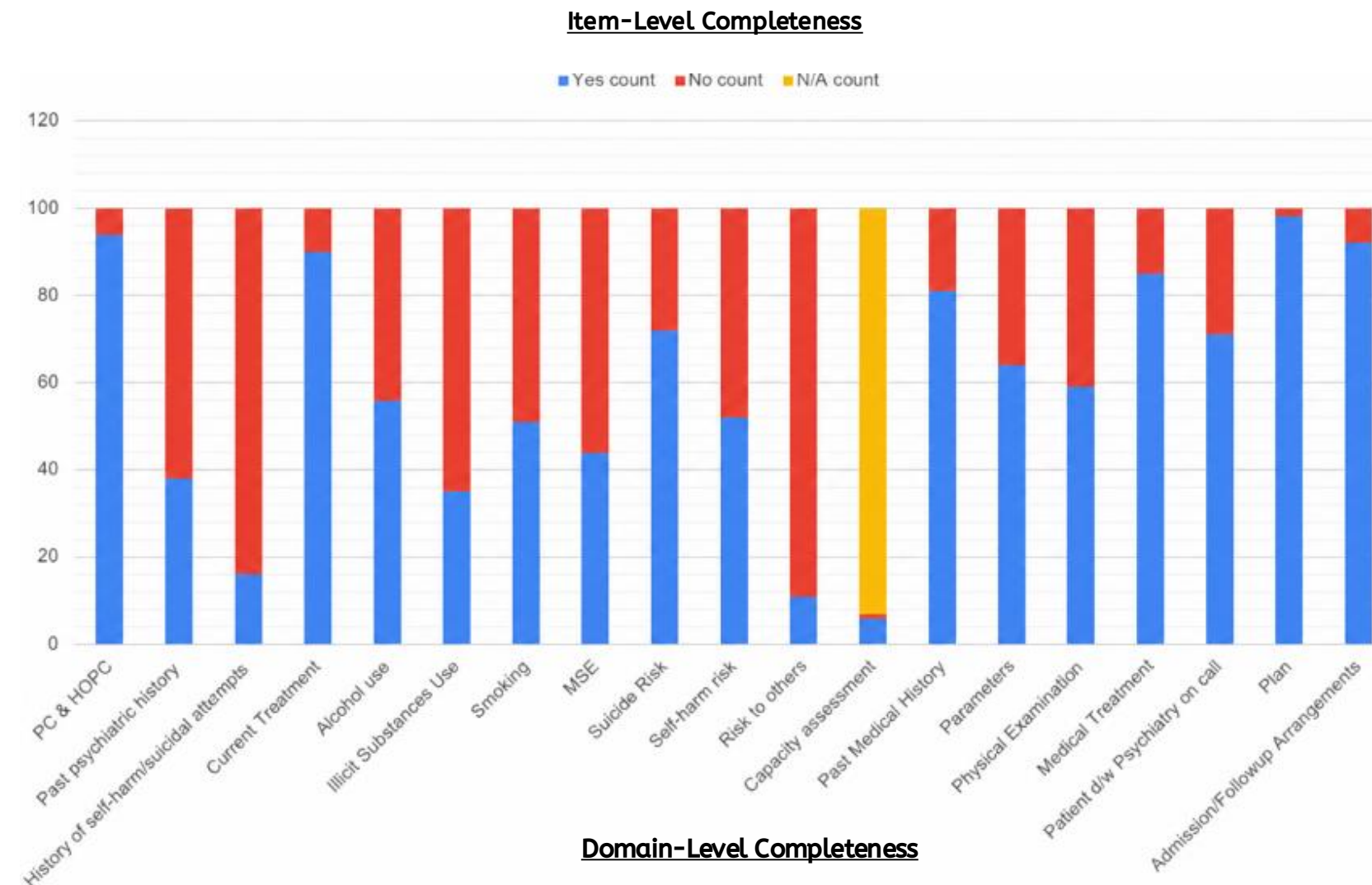
Emergency Departments (EDs) are a key point of contact for patients presenting with acute mental health concerns. Comprehensive psychiatric assessment and accurate documentation are essential for safe clinical decision-making, continuity of care, and effective risk management. However, documentation quality in high-pressure ED settings is frequently variable, particularly in relation to psychiatric history, mental state examination, and risk assessment.

Objectives

- To assess the completeness of key components of psychiatric history documentation.
- To evaluate compliance with the **Royal College of Emergency Medicine (RCEM) Mental Health Toolkit** and **National Confidential Enquiry into Patient Outcome and Death (NCEPOD) Treat as One Report** standards for psychiatric documentation in the ED.
- To identify specific areas where documentation can be improved.

Methodology

- Retrospective audit of adult Emergency Department attendances with primary psychiatric presentation.
- A total of 100 ED attendances were reviewed.
- Three-month period of data collection (October - December 2025).
- Data was collected from iSOFT electronic health record.
- Key aspects of ED psychiatric assessment were analysed, including presenting complaint, relevant psychiatric and medical history, mental state examination (MSE), risk and capacity assessment, physical health evaluation, and management and follow-up planning.
- Data collected was grouped into **5 domains** for ease of interpretation of results as shown in the result section.



Results

The highest level of completeness was observed in the Management Plan and Follow-up domain (87.0%). The Physical Health Assessment domain demonstrated moderate-to-high completeness (72.3%). Lower levels of completeness were identified in the Presenting Complaint and Psychiatric History domain (54.3%) and the Risk Assessment and Capacity Assessment domain (55.2%). The lowest-performing domain was Mental Health Assessment, with an overall completeness of 44.0%.

Conclusion

- This audit identified variability in the completeness of psychiatric documentation in the Emergency Department at Gozo General Hospital.
- These findings highlight opportunities to improve structured psychiatric documentation within the ED, particularly in relation to accurate history-taking and mental state examination.

Recommendations

- Implementation of a structured psychiatric clerking proforma may support more consistent recording of key assessment components.
- Education sessions for ED staff focusing on psychiatric documentation standards
- A re-audit following targeted intervention is recommended to assess improvement and strengthen the quality of psychiatric documentation in the ED setting.