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Asylum rules – London 1966

These bathing rules were framed and hanging on the walls of many of the ward bathrooms when I first worked in the hospital in 1960. They were dated from 1903 to 1956 and even with revisions had hardly changed in 60 years though there had been slight changes in the maximum temperature allowed for the bath. When the medical superintendent retired in 1961 I took down those remaining.

TOOTING BEC HOSPITAL BATHING RULES

These were framed on the walls of each ward.

1. In preparing a Bath the cold water is to be turned on first.
2. The height of the water in the Bath is never to exceed 9½ inches, and this height shall be marked in the Bath.
3. Before the Patient enters the Bath the temperature is to be ascertained by thermometer, and it is not to be less than 90 degrees, nor above 98 degrees unless specially ordered. In case of the thermometer becoming inefficient, all bathing operations are to be suspended until another is obtained. The Charge Attendant is to be responsible for the temperature of the water.
4. Under no circumstances is a Patient to be bathed unless two Attendants are present.
5. Not more than one Patient is to be bathed in the same water.
6. No additional hot or cold water is to be added to the Bath while the Patient is in it, and care is to be taken that the hot water and the cold water are thoroughly mixed before the Patient is put in.
7. Except during the use of the Bath the door of the room is to remain locked and the door to be kept dry.
8. The waste valve is always to be left open while the Bath is not in use.
9. Under no pretext is the Patient's head to be put under water.

10. In the Bath each Patient is to be well cleansed with soap. After coming out of the Bath care must be taken to dry those Patients who are feeble and helpless and to clothe them as rapidly as possible.
11. Keys of the Bath taps are on no account to be left on the taps or in the Bath Room.
12. Neither the Cold Bath, the Shower Bath, nor the Turkish Bath, is ever to be employed, except under the order of the Medical Superintendent.
13. It is the duty of one of the Head Attendants to be present at all Baths given under medical order, and to take care that the duration does not exceed the Time specified in such order.
14. The Assistant Matron, the Superintendent Nurse, or one of the female Head Attendants on the female side, and on the male side a Head Attendant is always to be Present in the general Bath Room during the time the Patients are being bathed (also at such other places and times as may be required by the Medical Superintendent), in order to supervise all bathing operations and to ensure that the rules are rigidly observed.

References

Online archive 22, *The Penultimate Medical Superintendent*