

## Relevant Research

### Are Acute-Care Psychiatric Beds Being Used Effectively?

**Acute-care beds in psychiatric wards** are being overused without any apparent benefit to patients, since longer stays don't seem to make them any better than shorter stays, a pilot study by the Health Services Utilization and Research Commission says.

The study, which looked at acute-care psychiatric bed use in three Saskatchewan health districts, found significant non-acute use of their psychiatric units, however "Longer hospital stays do not appear to produce better patient outcomes, nor do shorter stays appear to be associated with poorer outcomes...[or] increased readmission rates."

Laurie Thompson, executive director of the commission, said they do not want to overemphasize the pilot study's results because of its small sample size, but felt the results important enough to warrant publishing all the same.

The study recommends that hospitals continue the trend to treating psychiatric patients both in the community and also as inpatients in non-acute settings — and to look at developing those alternate settings if they don't have them or removing whatever barriers are keeping people from using them where they do exist.

The report found little difference in long-stay and short-stay patients' use of community services, but says planning for care after discharge should start at admission, to ensure that appropriate care is in place when the patient is ready for discharge.

The paper "Psychiatric Hospitalizations and Subsequent Use of Community Services: A Pilot Study," is available on the web at [www.sdh.sk.ca/hsurc](http://www.sdh.sk.ca/hsurc). Relevant Research is prepared by the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation. For more information please contact the Foundation at [Communications@chrsf.ca](mailto:Communications@chrsf.ca)

## DOING GOOD The Life of Toronto's General Hospital

- Toronto Hospital faces rising deficits and cost-cutting measures.
- The merits of outsourcing are hotly debated.
- Canadian healthcare is recognized for its 'sense of system and organization' by our American neighbours.
- The hospital's chair is visibly active in management issues.
- Two-tiered health care is debated publicly and privately.
- Government support is reduced and duplication of facilities stopped to increase efficiencies.
- Mergers are the order of the day and dissenters rise to the occasion.
- Report cards provide management with important tools.
- Debentures are sold to raise money for a new hospital.

Sound familiar? This is Toronto Hospital a hundred years ago.

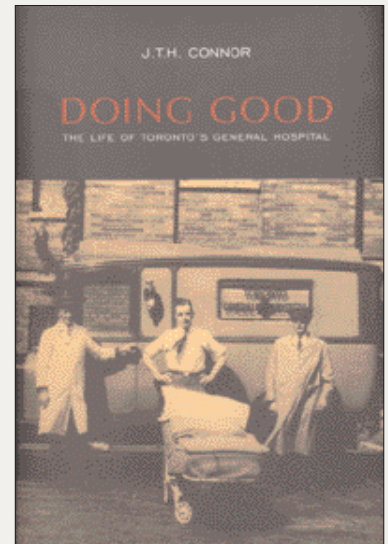
Historian J.T.H. Connor's book is a strong demonstration of the importance of bridging the domains of policymaking and politics to achieve change. (See *HealthcarePapers* vol. 1 no. 2.)

Using an effective mix of evidence and anecdote the author presents the hospital's ebb and flow in response to the prevailing social, religious, fiscal, medical, and government values and realities.

A large section is devoted to the forged relationship between the hospital and the university — worth reading as the role of the academic health sciences centres is once again called into question.

This is a good read for history buffs and students of healthcare management alike. Recommended.

[www.utpress.utoronto.ca/publishing/index.html](http://www.utpress.utoronto.ca/publishing/index.html)



### DOING GOOD The Life of Toronto's General Hospital

By J.T.H. Connor  
University of Toronto Press

### Looking for History?

Hospitals or communities looking to revisit their health facility's past might check the resources used by J.T.H. Connor, author of *DOING GOOD — The Life of Toronto's General Hospital*. In the back of the book he has compiled some fifty pages of notes providing context, references and resources.

In addition they can call The Alexander Gallery in Ancaster Ontario. Call them at 905 648 2736 or email [alexander@interlynx.net](mailto:alexander@interlynx.net). Their list of Canadiana includes history books covering (for example) the Queen Elizabeth Hospital; The Children's Hospital of Winnipeg; General Hospitals in cities across Canada; London's St. Joseph's and Victoria Hospitals; Minutes of Trustees; Sessional Papers; Reports from the Inspectors of Prisons, Hospital and Public Charities; Annual Reports; Newspaper reports; Graduation class photos and certificates of degrees from schools and universities; various reports, minutes and policy statements from associations, hospitals, institutes, ministries and other organizations; and more... Tell them I sent you. - Anton Hart