A Medico-judicial framework for rehabilitation of forensic psychiatric patients in Zimbabwe

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Introduction and Context

- Forensic psychiatric patients are admitted for **rehabilitation** in what are called Special Institutions in Zimbabwe
- These institutions are **hospitals located within a prison setting**
- Patients are discharged from Special institutions following the recommendations of the Special Boards and Mental Health Review Tribunal
- Their port of exit is to a general psychiatric hospital for rehabilitation and not into the community as expected
- They often stay in these institutions for more than five years and some are eventually sent back to Special Institutions creating a revolving door scenario

Observation

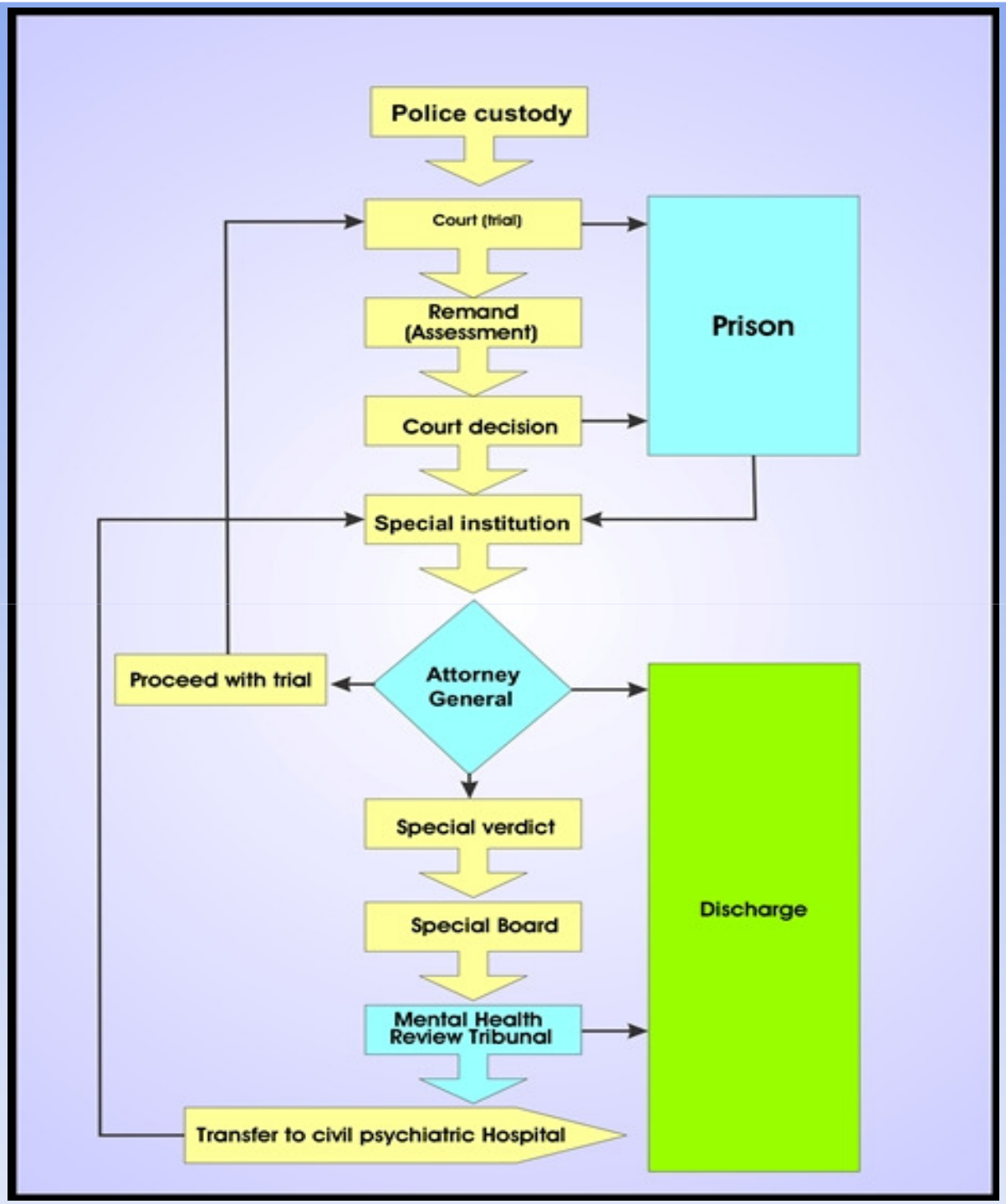
- I observed that there were no guidelines for forensic psychiatric practice and no clear documentation on procedures to be followed in the rehabilitation process in Zimbabwe
- An average Zimbabwean should have been able to follow the entry-exit process in the continuum of care for the forensic psychiatric patient
- At the time of the conception of the research study, the medico- judicial marriage with regards to rehabilitation of forensic psychiatric patients in special institutions was **blurred and discordant**

Methodology

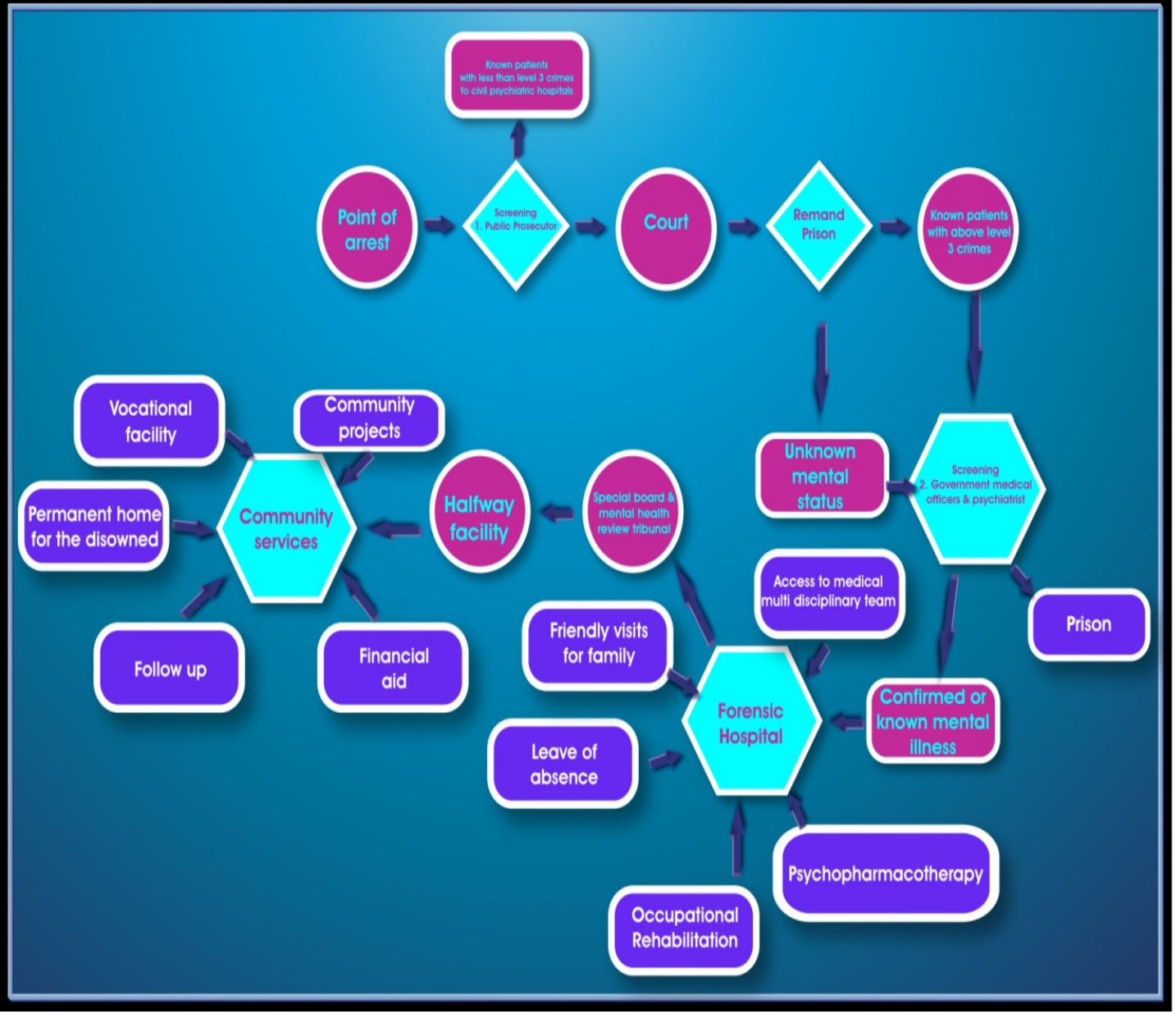
- Grounded theory (Charmaz 2006,2014)
- Exploratory partially mixed sequential dominant status design
- Theoretical framework: Pierre Bourdieu's, conceptual canon of habitus, field and capital

Participants

- Purposefully selected
- Theoretical sampling
- Included:
  - Judiciary
  - Patients
  - Patients' family
  - Psychiatrists
  - Nurses
  - Social workers
  - 119 documents/ patients' files


Police custody
Court (trial)
Remand (Assessment)
Court decision
Special institution
Attorney General
Proceed with trial
Special verdict
Special Board
Mental Health Review Tribunal
Transfer to civil psychiatric Hospital
Prison
Discharge

Preferred future Medico-Judicial Framework for the rehabilitation of forensic psychiatric patients in special institutions in Zimbabwe.



- **Guidelines for implementing the framework: The vision of a new medico-judicial cosmos**

- Exposing the dinosaur of obsolescence: Revision of the Mental Health Act of 1996

- Change of names and location for the special institutions: Renaming and finding a new home for forensic psychiatry, 'the bastard child'

- Realigning the conatus seseconservandi: Medical staffing of the remand prison

- Realigning the engine and the anchor: In-service training workshops for the judiciary

- Locating the missing pieces: Awareness campaigns
- Repairing the cracked mirror: More psychiatric trained staff than guards in forensic hospital
- Exposing the dinosaur of pluralism: Special office and separate clerk of court
- Embracing a world without clones: Separating criminal mental patients and forensic psychiatric patients
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- Navigating the libido dominandi: Integrating the Mental Health Act with the Prison Act of 1996

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