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# The Belgian mental health reform: When a combination of soft instruments hampers structural change

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## Abstract

In Europe, the mental health field is undergoing a paradigm shift from a hospital-centered, institutionalized and segmented model toward a community-based, patient-centered and more integrated model. From 2010 onwards, Belgian policymakers availed themselves of new policy instruments to complete this shift, having been hampered by strong professional and cultural barriers over the four previous decades. However, the reform objectives have only partially been achieved. Assuming that an instrument perspective on policy implementation would illustrate why the reform does not achieve its priority objectives, the article questions the relationship between the types of instruments used