This chapter first considers statistics on mental health in the UK. It then discusses the Mental Health Act (MHA) 1983; the MHA 1983 Code of Practice; reforms to the law under the 2007 Act; problems in mental health practice; critics of mental health; and paternalism as the ground for detention. It highlights the difficulty in striking the correct balance between protecting the public from the perceived threat of mentally disordered people and protecting the rights of those who suffer mental illness. The chapter also illustrates how the principle of autonomy, which plays such an important role in medical law and ethics, is given much less prominence in the area of mental health law.
5. Mental Health Law

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