

Willowbrook Chief Reported to Be Out

The young, beleaguered director of Willowbrook, the state institution for the retarded on Staten Island, is being replaced, sources high within the Department of Mental Hygiene disclosed last night.

Dr. Miodrag Ristic, 36, it is reported, will lose the controversial post exactly two years after he assumed the \$43,000 directorship of the nation's largest and perhaps most scandal-ridden institution for the retarded.

He will be moved to another state job at Willowbrook after recent Federal Court hearings at which there were charges of continuing mistreatment of patients

Reached after a meeting in Albany yesterday with Dr. Alan Miller, head of the department, Ristic stated that he did not resign, nor was his resignation requested by Miller.

Sources said Ristic will be transferred to a senior position at the Institute for Basic Research on Mental Retardation, a separate center on Willowbrook's grounds. The department's official announcement of the transfer, at a comparable salary, was to be made today.

Hearings in Federal Court in Brooklyn last week disclosed allegations of mistreatment of patients and continuing inadequacies in their care.

Mistreatment Alleged

Early this year, state Sen. Frank Padavan (R-Queens) charged that reported rapes, robberies, assaults and burglaries at Willowbrook were more prevalent in 1973 than in 1972.

Ristic said last night: "Those charges are not unfounded, but I think in these instances, one



Dr. Miodrag Ristic
Denies resignation

"There is a lot of good going on here today."

Under a court order, Ristic reduced the number of patients at Willowbrook from 5,000 to 3,000. He also increased the staff at the state school, as it is called, so that the number of employees almost equalled the number of patients.

"I feel that I accomplished something for the institution," he said.

Well informed people in the state department said that even before the Federal Court hearings began last week, there had been general displeasure with Ristic's administration of Willowbrook.