

ATTITUDE TOWARD PSYCHIATRY AMONG NURSING STUDENTS IN A PUBLIC SECTOR NURSING SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

OBJECTIVE

To determine the attitude and perception among nursing students about psychiatry in a public sector hospital.

STUDY DESIGN

Cross sectional

PLACE AND DURATION OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted from 31st January 2018 to 31st Jan 2019 at Institute of Nursing/DUH in Karachi.

SUBJECTS AND METHODS

236 nursing students were included in the study. A semi structured questionnaire based on attitude to Psychiatry (ATP) was used for data collection. The nursing students in the different training years were approached after their lectures. The data was analyzed using SPSS V.20. sociodemographic variables were assessed for frequency and percentages. For descriptive analysis, responses on each item of the ATP scale were grouped according to overall responses. The Likert scale scores were compared using Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA of the rank order data. All statistically significant results were reported at $p < 0.05$.

RESULTS

Majority of the sample (70.3 %) were between 16 to 25 years of age and females (58.9%). The graduate nurses were 32.2% followed by 2nd year students (21.6%). Only 19.9% attended lectures on Psychiatry during their study. In ATP majority agreed that the overall merits have increased and psychiatry is a rapidly expanding frontier of medicine. Regarding specific nursing school factors, they agreed that teaching about psychiatry should be part of curriculum; they had interest but were of opinion that no efforts are made to introduce psychiatry to postgraduate level.

CONCLUSION

The nursing students consider psychiatry as medical profession with biological bases and their attitude towards psychiatry is positive. Student nurse are interested to continue it as a post graduate program but consider that adequate efforts are put into providing support.

KEY WORDS

under graduate, nursing students, Psychiatrist, mental illness

INTRODUCTION

The term "mental illness" includes a wide range of disorders. The prevalence of mental illness is increasing in all age groups and among both women and men. Stigma and negative connotations unfortunately go hand in hand with the field of psychiatry due to the longstanding stigma. It is cultivated by society in general and further exacerbated by the culture as documented in studies conducted in under developed countries. A shortage of specialists psychiatric nurses is also an obstacle in better care of psychiatric patients. It has been studied in several countries including major western countries, and underdeveloped countries the medical undergraduates attitudes towards Psychiatry has improved towards Psychiatry after their clinical rotations. In a Korean study, findings showed that nurses had a vital role in care of psychiatric patients and further their role was important in destigmatising Psychiatric disorders.

Lack of awareness and knowledge about mental illness and Psychiatrist among under graduate nursing students have a negative attitude toward mental illness they do not want to pursue it as a future career or go for post-graduation in Psychiatry.

Their important role in multidisciplinary team for mental health care, require that their education must be planned in a way to have a better perception and change in attitude about psychiatric conditions. To challenge beliefs and assumptions, psychiatric teaching should promote a commitment to provide holistic care to people with mental illness. A study showed a negative attitude among nurses had adverse effects on the prognosis of patients.

literature has focused to find if the experience of nurses had a significant impact on the students, baseline outlook on various aspects of psychiatry overall and as a potential future field in which to specialize. The aim of our study was to analyze the attitude of psychiatry among nursing students in successive years. This will help to assess the needs of the students and help to plan for the future curriculum of nurses to sensitize them with mental illness and reduce the stigma. And to consider it as a potential future field for their specialization. A few of studies with similar objectives have already been conducted in Pakistan for medical students but for nursing students very little evidence is available. The objective of the study is to determine the attitude about Psychiatry among successive years of nursing students about psychiatry.

SUBJECTS AND METHODS

Participants

The sample was 256 nursing students from all 4years from Institute of Nursing/DUH. The Exclusion criteria were those absent on interview day, not consenting and other staff member of Institute of Nursing/DUH. Sample size

was calculated after a pilot study conducted to derive a proper sample size. The sample size was derived with the following parameters: Mean 111.75, SD 8.7607 08, Z 1.96, e 0.21, , 95% confidence interval. n=256. Only those who completed questionnaire were included. 236 valid questionnaires were included in the study. Data of study was collected from 31st January 2018 to 31st Jan 2018. Both male and females were included.

Instrument

A semi structured questionnaire based on ATP (attitude to psychiatry) with demographic information was used for data collection. ATP is 29-item questionnaire that assesses attitudes toward psychiatry across six domains. ATP questionnaire has been found to be a reliable and valid instrument; it was originally developed by Wilkinson to measure specific attitudes towards psychiatry, including both academic and clinical domains of psychiatry as well as attitudes towards psychiatrists and patients in the psychiatric settings. Response was measured on a Likert scale with 5 response options to the statements: "Strongly Agree=5", "Agree=4", "No opinion/neutral=3", "Disagree=2", "Strongly Disagree=1". The range of scores is from 29-145. The higher the score, the more positive the attitude towards psychiatry is.

Procedure

After approval from the ethical review board and permission from the In charge of nursing school this cross-sectional study was conducted at a tertiary care nurse-training institute in Karachi (university-affiliated training program attached to a multispecialty hospital). All the nursing students enrolled in the institute were explained about the study. They were ensured of the confidentiality of their data. They were approached after their lectures. After taking their consent and explaining the purpose of study the semi structured questionnaire based on attitude to Psychiatry (ATP) was provided. The sampling type was purposive convenient. Inclusion

criterion was nursing students from all the 4 years from the Institute of Nursing/DUH.

The data was analyzed using SPSSV.20. Between group analyses was carried out for the different training years, namely, first year, second year, third year, fourth year and graduate. For descriptive analysis, responses on each item of the ATP scale were grouped according to overall responses. The Likert scale scores were compared using Kruskal–Wallis ANOVA of the rank order data. All statistically significant results were reported at $p < 0.05$.

RESULTS

Total number of enrolled participants was 256 Nurses, 236 completed the questionnaire. The response rate was 92%. As per socio demographic characteristics of the participants, majority of the sample (70.3 %) were between 16 to 25 years of age and females (58.9%). The graduate nurses were 32.2% followed by 2nd year students (21.6%). Only 19.9% attended lectures on Psychiatry during their study.

Regarding overall merits of Psychiatry, participant nurses agreed that psychiatry is a rapidly expanding frontier of medicine but disagreed that psychiatry is unscientific and imprecise and these both were found on the basis of mean rank statistically significant at $P < 0.001$. Regarding efficacy of psychiatry, the nurses of different years of study were agreed that psychiatric consultation for medical or surgical patients is often helpful and psychiatric treatment is helpful to most people who receive it. Regarding role definition and functioning of psychiatric professionals the psychiatry was considered as a genuine profession but psychiatrists are too biological minded. (Table1)

Table 1
Merits of psychiatry, Efficacy and Role definition and functioning of psychiatric professionals on Kruskal–Wallis analysis of variance of the rank order.

| Overall merits of psychiatry | Years in Program | n | Mean Rank | Chi-Square | P-value |
|--|------------------|----|-----------|------------|---------|
| Psychiatric research has made good strides in advancing care of the major mental disorders | 1st Year | 23 | 117.11 | 2.652 | 0.618 |
| | 2nd Year | 51 | 123.85 | | |
| | 3rd Year | 42 | 115.35 | | |
| | 4th Year | 44 | 106.08 | | |
| | Graduate | 76 | 124.26 | | |
| Psychiatry is a rapidly expanding frontier of medicine | 1st Year | 23 | 102.70 | 19.394 | 0.001 |
| | 2nd Year | 51 | 90.80 | | |
| | 3rd Year | 42 | 111.40 | | |
| | 4th Year | 44 | 133.24 | | |
| | Graduate | 76 | 137.26 | | |
| Psychiatry is unscientific and imprecise | 1st Year | 23 | 95.46 | 18.455 | 0.001 |
| | 2nd Year | 51 | 92.56 | | |
| | 3rd Year | 42 | 125.14 | | |
| | 4th Year | 44 | 144.09 | | |
| | Graduate | 76 | 124.39 | | |
| Efficacy | | | | | |
| If someone in my family was very emotionally upset and the situation did not seem to be improving, I would recommend a psychiatric consultation | 1st Year | 23 | 127.20 | 2.904 | 0.574 |
| | 2nd Year | 51 | 127.51 | | |
| | 3rd Year | 42 | 121.18 | | |
| | 4th Year | 44 | 108.52 | | |
| | Graduate | 76 | 114.12 | | |



| | | | | | |
|--|----------|----|--------|--------|--------|
| Psychiatric consultation for medical or surgical patients is often helpful | 1st Year | 23 | 104.87 | 13.673 | 0.008 |
| | 2nd Year | 51 | 102.91 | | |
| | 3rd Year | 42 | 101.73 | | |
| | 4th Year | 44 | 126.05 | | |
| | Graduate | 76 | 137.99 | | |
| Psychiatric treatment is helpful to most people who receive it | 1st Year | 23 | 136.50 | 14.597 | 0.006 |
| | 2nd Year | 51 | 97.25 | | |
| | 3rd Year | 42 | 104.51 | | |
| | 4th Year | 44 | 117.83 | | |
| | Graduate | 76 | 135.43 | | |
| Role definition and functioning of psychiatric professionals | | | | | |
| Psychiatry is not a genuine and valid branch of medicine | 1st Year | 23 | 142.35 | 23.249 | <0.001 |
| | 2nd Year | 51 | 90.47 | | |
| | 3rd Year | 42 | 97.38 | | |
| | 4th Year | 44 | 132.56 | | |
| | Graduate | 76 | 133.62 | | |
| Most psychiatric professionals are clear, logical thinkers | 1st Year | 23 | 117.59 | 20.252 | <0.001 |
| | 2nd Year | 51 | 94.92 | | |
| | 3rd Year | 42 | 101.81 | | |
| | 4th Year | 44 | 119.78 | | |
| | Graduate | 76 | 143.08 | | |
| With a few exceptions, clinical psychologists and social workers are just as qualified as psychiatrists to diagnose and treat emotionally disturbed persons | 1st Year | 23 | 108.54 | 30.890 | <0.001 |
| | 2nd Year | 51 | 79.27 | | |
| | 3rd Year | 42 | 111.60 | | |
| | 4th Year | 44 | 140.86 | | |
| | Graduate | 76 | 138.70 | | |
| Among mental health professionals, psychiatrists have the most authority and influence | 1st Year | 23 | 120.91 | 3.394 | 0.494 |
| | 2nd Year | 51 | 125.85 | | |
| | 3rd Year | 42 | 106.75 | | |
| | 4th Year | 44 | 109.95 | | |
| | Graduate | 76 | 124.28 | | |
| Psychiatrists are too frequently apologetic when teaching psychiatry | 1st Year | 23 | 119.57 | 5.441 | 0.245 |
| | 2nd Year | 51 | 105.76 | | |
| | 3rd Year | 42 | 107.60 | | |
| Psychiatrists are too frequently apologetic when teaching psychiatry | 1st Year | 23 | 119.57 | 5.441 | 0.245 |
| | 2nd Year | 51 | 105.76 | | |
| | 3rd Year | 42 | 107.60 | | |
| | 4th Year | 44 | 128.01 | | |
| | Graduate | 76 | 127.24 | | |
| Psychiatry is too "biologically" minded and not attentive enough to the patient's personal life and psychological problems | 1st Year | 23 | 114.26 | 17.577 | 0.001 |
| | 2nd Year | 51 | 99.62 | | |
| | 3rd Year | 42 | 96.14 | | |
| | 4th Year | 44 | 127.91 | | |
| | Graduate | 76 | 139.36 | | |
| Psychiatry is too analytical, theoretical, and psychodynamic, and not attentive enough to patient's physiology | 1st Year | 23 | 112.52 | .551 | 0.968 |
| | 2nd Year | 51 | 121.39 | | |
| | 3rd Year | 42 | 116.60 | | |
| | 4th Year | 44 | 122.82 | | |
| | Graduate | 76 | 116.92 | | |

For social criticism, nurses agreed that psychiatrists frequently abuse their legal power to hospitalize patients against their will. For career and personal rewards, mean rank was found significant difference in two statements of ATP where participants agreed that many people who cannot obtain a position in other specialties eventually enter psychiatry and Psychiatry is a discipline filled with international graduates whose skills are of a low quality. Regarding specific nursing school factors, participated nurses agreed on the basis of mean rank that teaching of psychiatry at their nursing school is interesting and of good quality and although they that although they are interested in psychiatry, but no effort were made to improve the curriculum (Table 2).

Table 2

Social criticism, Career and personal reward, and Specific nursing school factors on Kruskal–Wallis analysis of variance of the rank order.

| Social criticism | Years in Program | n | Mean Rank | Chi-Square | P-value |
|---|------------------|----|-----------|------------|---------|
| Psychiatrists frequently abuse their legal power to hospitalize patients against their will | 1st Year | 23 | 113.59 | 15.456 | 0.004 |
| | 2nd Year | 51 | 91.98 | | |
| | 3rd Year | 42 | 110.46 | | |
| | 4th Year | 44 | 128.65 | | |
| | Graduate | 76 | 136.35 | | |
| On an average, psychiatrists make as much money as most other doctors | 1st Year | 23 | 132.74 | 6.463 | 0.167 |
| | 2nd Year | 51 | 128.20 | | |
| | 3rd Year | 42 | 99.64 | | |
| | 4th Year | 44 | 112.00 | | |
| | Graduate | 76 | 121.87 | | |
| Career and personal | | | | | |
| Psychiatry has a low prestige among the general public | 1st Year | 23 | 110.87 | 8.879 | 0.064 |
| | 2nd Year | 51 | 101.35 | | |
| | 3rd Year | 42 | 111.90 | | |
| | 4th Year | 44 | 120.28 | | |
| | Graduate | 76 | 134.93 | | |
| Psychiatry has a high status among other medical disciplines | 1st Year | 23 | 119.61 | 4.622 | 0.328 |
| | 2nd Year | 51 | 123.82 | | |
| | 3rd Year | 42 | 106.12 | | |
| | 4th Year | 44 | 107.78 | | |
| | Graduate | 76 | 127.64 | | |
| Many people who cannot obtain a position in other specialties eventually enter psychiatry | 1st Year | 23 | 135.61 | 11.336 | 0.023 |
| | 2nd Year | 51 | 99.58 | | |
| | 3rd Year | 42 | 102.58 | | |
| | 4th Year | 44 | 127.49 | | |
| | Graduate | 76 | 129.61 | | |
| Psychiatry is a discipline filled with international graduates whose skills are of a low quality | 1st Year | 23 | 126.91 | 11.148 | 0.025 |
| | 2nd Year | 51 | 92.53 | | |
| | 3rd Year | 42 | 117.92 | | |
| | 4th Year | 44 | 132.06 | | |
| | Graduate | 76 | 125.86 | | |
| My family discourages me from entering psychiatry | 1st Year | 23 | 116.04 | 0.380 | 0.984 |
| | 2nd Year | 51 | 121.32 | | |
| | 3rd Year | 42 | 117.35 | | |
| | 4th Year | 44 | 114.31 | | |
| | Graduate | 76 | 120.41 | | |
| Friends and fellow students discourage me from entering psychiatry | 1st Year | 23 | 112.87 | 3.891 | 0.421 |
| | 2nd Year | 51 | 110.23 | | |
| | 3rd Year | 42 | 108.63 | | |
| | 4th Year | 44 | 128.62 | | |
| | Graduate | 76 | 125.35 | | |
| If a student expresses interest in psychiatry, he or she risks being associated with a group of other would be psychiatric nurses who are often seen by others as odd, peculiar, or neurotic | 1st Year | 23 | 139.91 | 4.306 | 0.366 |
| | 2nd Year | 51 | 123.43 | | |
| | 3rd Year | 42 | 120.45 | | |
| | 4th Year | 44 | 109.03 | | |
| | Graduate | 76 | 113.11 | | |
| I feel uncomfortable with mentally ill patients | 1st Year | 23 | 104.65 | 1.877 | 0.758 |
| | 2nd Year | 51 | 125.95 | | |
| | 3rd Year | 42 | 121.52 | | |
| | 4th Year | 44 | 118.92 | | |
| | Graduate | 76 | 115.78 | | |
| Specific nursing school factors | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|----------|----|--------|--------|-------|
| Teaching of psychiatry at my nursing school is interesting and of good quality | 1st Year | 23 | 97.07 | 23.699 | 0.001 |
| | 2nd Year | 51 | 96.78 | | |
| | 3rd Year | 42 | 99.92 | | |
| | 4th Year | 44 | 129.01 | | |
| | Graduate | 76 | 143.74 | | |
| During my psychiatry rotation, psychiatry residents were good role models | 1st Year | 23 | 104.39 | 3.055 | 0.549 |
| | 2nd Year | 51 | 118.03 | | |
| | 3rd Year | 42 | 116.29 | | |
| | 4th Year | 44 | 112.41 | | |
| | Graduate | 76 | 127.84 | | |
| Attending psychiatrists during my psychiatry rotation were good role models | 1st Year | 23 | 131.17 | 6.326 | 0.176 |
| | 2nd Year | 51 | 120.00 | | |
| | 3rd Year | 42 | 101.65 | | |
| | 4th Year | 44 | 109.00 | | |
| | Graduate | 76 | 128.47 | | |
| Most psychiatrists at my nursing school are clear, logical thinkers | 1st Year | 23 | 115.04 | 8.737 | 0.068 |
| | 2nd Year | 51 | 136.55 | | |
| | 3rd Year | 42 | 127.70 | | |
| | 4th Year | 44 | 100.17 | | |
| | Graduate | 76 | 112.96 | | |
| Most non-psychiatry and house staff at my nursing school are respectful toward psychiatry | 1st Year | 23 | 118.17 | 2.998 | 0.558 |
| | 2nd Year | 51 | 131.71 | | |
| | 3rd Year | 42 | 112.52 | | |
| | 4th Year | 44 | 118.85 | | |
| | Graduate | 76 | 112.84 | | |
| Although I am interested in psychiatry, no effort was made to provide support | 1st Year | 23 | 104.02 | 25.561 | 0.001 |
| | 2nd Year | 51 | 82.63 | | |
| | 3rd Year | 42 | 116.64 | | |
| | 4th Year | 44 | 135.92 | | |
| | Graduate | 76 | 137.89 | | |

Item responses on ATP scale

The frequency distribution of responses of nursing students from the four groups on different items has been represented in Figures 1 and 2.

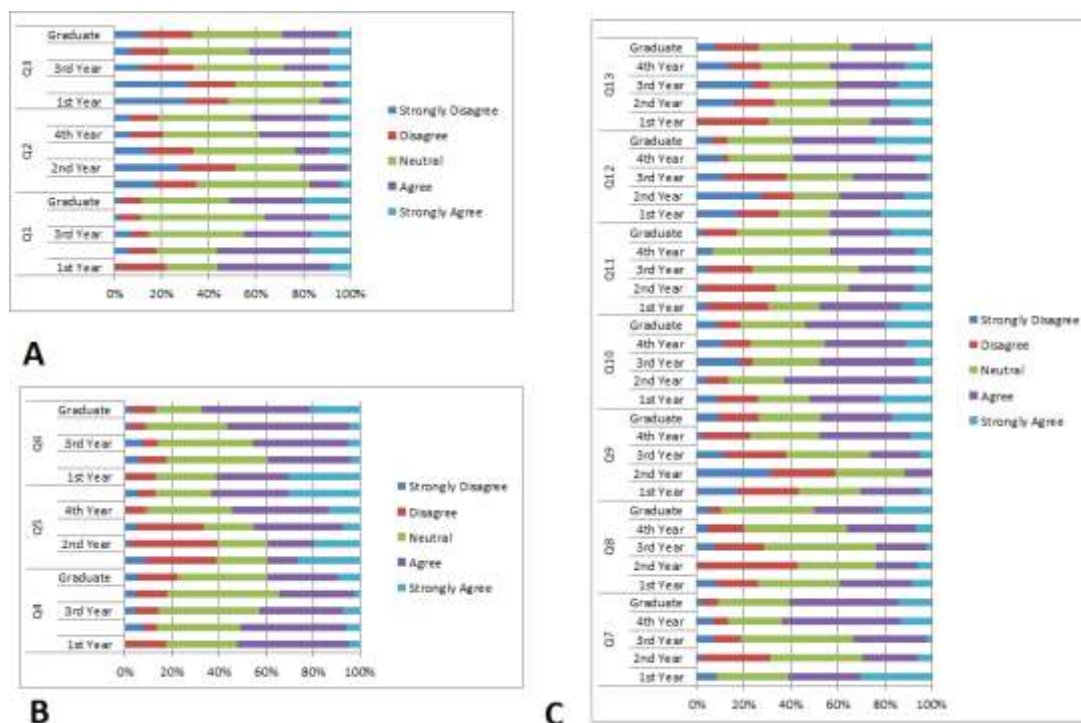
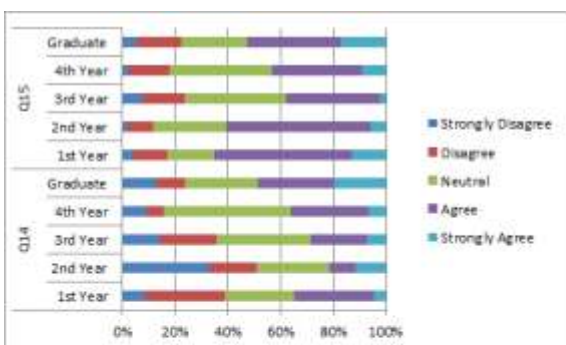
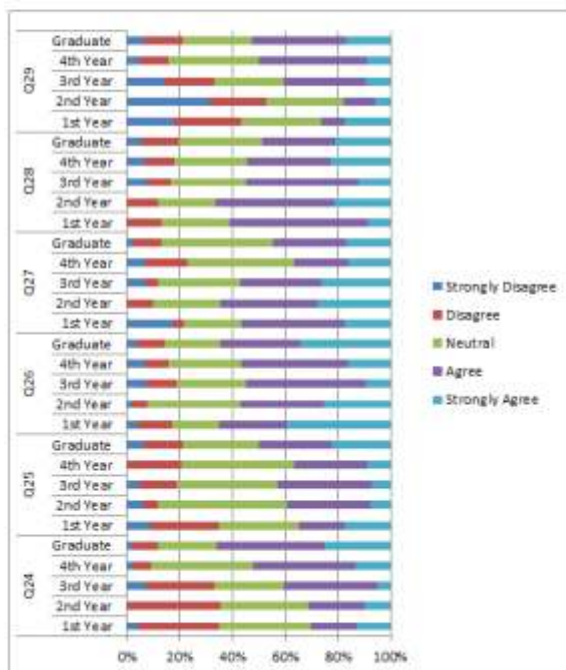


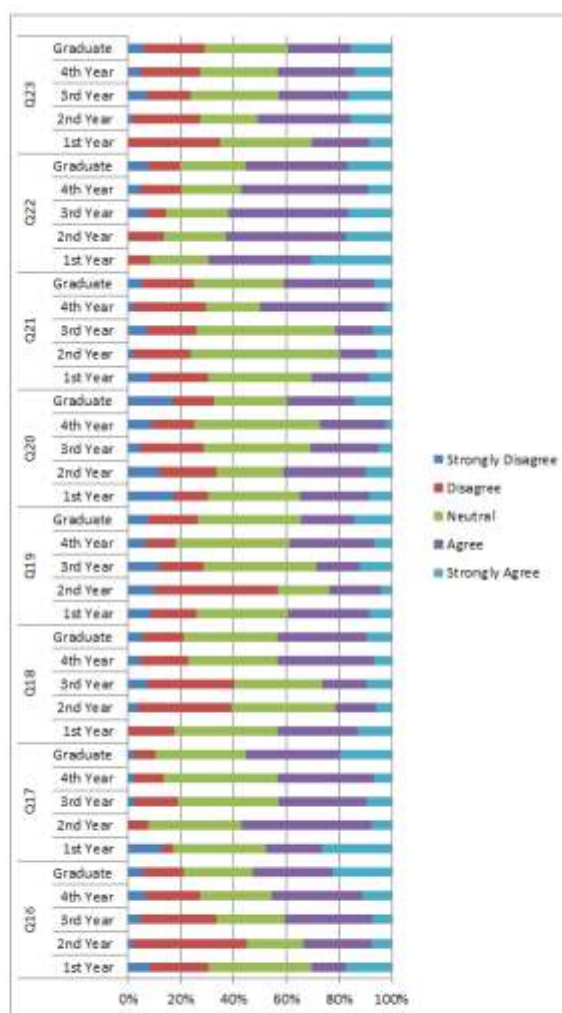
Figure 1: Percentage distribution of responses to statements of the Likert scale: (A) Overall merits of psychiatry; (B) Efficacy and (C) Role definition and functioning of psychiatric nursing professionals reward and Specific nursing school factors



D



E



F

Figure 2: Percentage distribution of responses to statements: (D) Possible abuse and social criticism; (E) Career and personnel reward and (F) Specific nursing school factors

DISCUSSION

Nurses have a vital role in care and rehabilitation especially for psychiatric patients. The study was aimed to find about out awareness and knowledge about mental illness and Psychiatrist among under graduate nursing students. Further to determine cause of negative attitude toward mental illness they do not want to pursue it as a future career or go for post-graduation in Psychiatry Nursing.

The study showed that nursing students attitudes towards psychiatry is positive which is consistent with other studies conducted nursing populations. According to our study, most of the participants were from young age group (16-25 years). Similar age distribution has been found in a study conducted in Nigeria belonged where most of participants were from age group of 20-25 years¹³. In other studies respondents had a mean age was 23.9 \pm 4.1 years, 21.27 \pm 3.28 years and 20.1 \pm 3.1 years respectively.

Regarding gender of participated nurses, in our study, majority of nurses (58.9%) were females. In other studies conducted in Nigeria and other countries, females were 90%, 71.1% and 83.4% respectively^{15,17}. Though we also found females to be more but less difference of male is to female ratio as compared with other studies. In our study it was overall observed that nurses were least interested to pursue Psychiatric nursing as future career. The participants agreed that many people who cannot obtain a position in other specialties eventually enter psychiatry and Psychiatry is a discipline filled with international graduates whose skills are of a low quality. Similar to it, in a study before clinical placement, only 13.7% nurse students reported that they would choose psychiatric nursing as a future career, which improved to 28.4% after the clinical posting¹⁸. In another study, it was at number six with only 5.7% select it for future career¹⁴. In a study only 34.2% expressed an interest in choosing psychiatric nursing as a specialty¹⁷. However, for option to choose psychiatry was at 4th number with only 5.2% definitely decide to be a mental health nurse in other studies the similar



results were counted.

In our study, majority of the nurses agreed that teaching of psychiatry at nursing school is interesting and of good quality. It is similar to a study¹⁸ results conducted pre- and post-clinical training indicating a significant difference in interest. In another study indicated that nurses clinical experiences helps them for better understanding of mental illness but it was also suggested by them that it is not profitable to plan it to consider it as a future career.

CONCLUSION

The nursing students consider psychiatry as medical profession with biological bases and their attitude towards psychiatry is positive. Student nurse are interested to continue it as a post graduate program but consider that adequate efforts are put into providing support.

A better knowledge will help to de stigmatize patients suffering from mental illness. Taking these factors into consideration may improve recruitment and alleviate the shortages in the psychiatric nursing field.

Limitations: uni centered data so generalization is not possible.

Conflict of interest: none

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