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Stigma towards mental illness among Saudi laypeople

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Introduction: Stigma is a perceived negative attribute that causes someone to devalue or think less of others. In mental health, stigma is resulting from negative attitudes people hold about mental ill and patients about themselves. Such attitudes might be published on social distances that could attribute symptoms of mental illness to misconceptions of causes and the way they can be treated. Stigma towards mental illness is a global phenomenon, it influences, on one hand seeking mental health services while they are needed and on the other hand the way mental illness can be managed. Fighting for decreasing stigma has increasingly become a demand thru certain planned clinical, community and political procedures, aiming at "Destigmatization". Saudi society is not excluded, stigma is there and it might be more exacerbating due to social and cultural interpretations. Although health care system in Saudi is one of the best in the region, the field of mental illness is still a taboo. Whereas many people rarely hesitate to seek religious healers as the first line of treatment which they practice exorcism believing people psychological pain springs from demons, envy and witchcraft. Consequently, addressing stigma in Saudi is essential that cannot be denied. Aiming to decrease ignorance and increase people mental health and quality of life which usually get affected and the suffering get endured, hence that others do not stigmatize them.

Methods: A sample around 100 male and female individuals will be selected randomly from those laypeople who are waiting on the Out-Patient Department "OPD" at King Fahd Hospital of the University. A questionnaire designed to assess the amount of stigma towards mental ill will be utilized. It includes a demographical sheet and themes related to the etiologic of mental illness, the way it could be treated and lastly the social distance. The response of participants on the questionnaire related to the social distance follows Likert-type "strongly agree up to strongly disagree". SPSS Software package will be used for data analysis through appropriate certain statistical formulas linked to hypothetical assumptions.

Results: Results of data will be discussed inclusively on light of the literature, the way they can be implemented clinically and for establishing Destigmatization campaigns on personal, family, community and institutional levels.

Biography

Abrar AlMajed has completed her Bachelor's degree in Psychology from King Saud University and currently she is pursuing her Master's degree in Clinical Psychology from College of Medicine, Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University. She works as an Assistant Psychologist at King Fahad Medical City. She had studied abroad for three years in the United States where she studied English as a second language and then had a chance to be an Intern at mental hospital for four months in Wisconsin state. Her areas of interest in research are stigma and cross-cultural studies.

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