

A Descriptive Study to Assess the Attitude Regarding Mental Illness Among Adults at Selected Rural Areas of Udaipur District, Rajasthan

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Abstract

Introduction: Mental illness stigma and misconceptions are prevalent in rural areas, limiting treatment and social integration. This study assessed the attitudes toward mental illness among adults in selected rural areas of Udaipur district, Rajasthan.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 100 adults using a standardized attitude scale and socio-demographic questionnaire. The study was performed in Eklingpura, Udaipur, employing non-probability convenience sampling. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Results:

- 58% of respondents were male, and 42% female.
- The majority were aged 18-33 years (48%), married (75%), and from nuclear families (47%).
- 73% had favorable attitudes, while 27% exhibited unfavorable attitudes.
- Significant associations were observed between attitude scores and variables like age, marital status, occupation, income, religion, and prior knowledge ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusions: Favorable attitudes toward mental illness were more prevalent, but gaps persist. Targeted interventions addressing stigma and promoting mental health literacy are essential.

Keywords: Mental Illness, Rural Health, Attitudes, Stigma, Mental Health Awareness

Introduction

Mental health is a cornerstone of overall well-being, yet stigma and discrimination against mental illness remain significant barriers, particularly in rural areas. Adults often lack accurate information, leading to misconceptions and unfavorable attitudes. This study investigates the attitudes of adults in Udaipur's rural areas, aiming to reduce stigma and improve mental health outcomes.

Globally, mental disorders affect 970 million people, with higher prevalence in low- and middle-income countries. In India, approximately 15 million people experience chronic mental illness, highlighting the urgent need for awareness and education.

Need for the Study

Stigma surrounding mental illness impedes diagnosis and treatment. According to WHO, 90% of suicides in high-income countries are linked to untreated mental disorders. This study addresses the critical gap in understanding and improving attitudes toward mental illness in rural Udaipur, aiming to foster societal acceptance and encourage timely interventions.

Objectives

1. To assess the attitude toward mental illness among adults in selected rural areas.
2. To determine associations between attitudes and selected demographic variables.

Hypotheses

- **H00:** No significant association between attitude scores and demographic variables.
- **H01:** Significant association between attitude scores and demographic variables.

Methods

Research Design

A descriptive cross-sectional design was adopted.

Setting

The study was conducted in Eklingpura, a rural area of Udaipur district.

Sample

- **Population:** Adults aged 18 and above
- **Sample Size:** 100 adults
- **Sampling Technique:** Non-probability convenience sampling

Tools

1. **Socio-demographic Questionnaire:** Includes variables like age, gender, education, and income.
2. **Attitude Scale toward Mental Illness (ASMI):** A 26-item, 5-point Likert scale assessing six domains: separatism, stereotyping, restrictiveness, benevolence, pessimistic prediction, and stigmatization.

Data Collection

Data were collected door-to-door using structured tools, ensuring confidentiality and informed consent.

Ethical Considerations

Approval was obtained from the research committee of Geetanjali College of Nursing, and participants provided written consent.

Results

Socio-Demographic Characteristics

- **Gender:** Male (58%), Female (42%)
- **Age:** Majority were 18-33 years (48%)
- **Marital Status:** Married (75%), Unmarried (22%), Widow (3%)
- **Education:** 40% graduated, while 15% had no formal education
- **Income:** 39% earned below ₹10,000/month

Attitude Scores

- **Favorable Attitudes:** 73%
- **Unfavorable Attitudes:** 27%

Associations

Significant associations between attitude scores and age, marital status, occupation, income, religion, and prior knowledge ($p < 0.05$). No significant association with gender or educational status.

Discussion

The study reveals predominantly favorable attitudes toward mental illness but underscores persistent stigma. Similar findings in Saudi Arabia and Lebanon suggest cross-cultural challenges in mental health acceptance. Interventions should target awareness campaigns, leveraging nursing professionals to educate communities.

Conclusions

While favorable attitudes prevail, stigma and misconceptions persist among certain demographics. Educational programs tailored to rural settings can bridge these gaps, fostering a supportive environment for individuals with mental illness.

Nursing Implications

1. **Clinical Practice:** Nurses should lead awareness campaigns and provide mental health education.
2. **Community Health:** Conduct workshops to address stigma in rural areas.
3. **Nursing Education:** Integrate mental health modules into nursing curricula.
4. **Research:** Develop evidence-based interventions to improve community attitudes.
5. **Policy Advocacy:** Collaborate with policymakers to prioritize mental health initiatives.

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