PERCEPTION OF NURSES TOWARDS MENTAL ILLNESS

ASMA GUL, SUBHA MALIK

[1]*Lahore General Hospital, Lahore.* [2]*Lahore College for Women University*

ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to explore the perception of nurses towards mental illness. A qualitative approach was used. Thematic analysis was done. Data was gathered through individual in-depth face to face interviews. Six nurses were purposively selected for the study from Lahore General Hospital, Lahore. Nurses from different departments were taken. The age range was 35 years to 55years. The interviews were conducted between January 2017 to February 2017. Initial list of themes were extracted from each interview and then converted into final themes. It indicated that nurses perception towards mental illness and its treatment was found highly linked with love and care. Most of the nurses showed positive behavior towards mentally disturbed. They expressed their understanding and suggested different ways to improve their condition.

INTRODUCTION

All over the world, there is an increasing awareness of mental illness as a significant cause of morbidity. This awareness has increased with the steady decline of morbidity due to nutritional disorders, communicable diseases and other forms of physical illnesses, especially in countries undergoing epidemiological transition. Mental and behavioral disorders are common, affecting more than 25% of all people at sometimes during their lives. These disorders are also universal, affecting people of all countries and societies, regardless of age, gender and income. The prevalence of mental illness in the adult population at any given time is about 10% WHO.

A mental illness is a disease that cause mild to severe disturbances in thought or behavior, resulting in an inability to cope with life 's ordinary demands and routines. There are more than two hundred classified forms of mental illness. Some are the more common disorders are depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and anxiety disorders. Symptoms may include change in mood, personality, personal habits and social withdrawal. Mental illness may be caused by a reaction to environmental stresses, genetic factors, biochemical imbalance or combination of these. With care and treatment many individuals learn to cope or recover from mental illnesses or emotional disorders.

Adverse attitudes to mental illness are found in all societies in the world. The belief that mental is incurable or self- inflicted can also be damaging, leading patients not being referred for appropriate mental health care. For effective health care to be delivered, it is crucial that professionals are not hampered by prejudiced attitude. Stigmatizing attitudes and discriminatory behaviors towards person with mental illness are of international concern and have negative personal and social impact on patients and their families.

The need for care of people with mental health problems in general hospitals has increased. Nurses are the major providers of hospital care and have become an important resource in the delivery of mental care.

However, the attitudes and ability of many nurses in providing this care have been shown to be poor (Sharrock & Happell, 2002) and this may also have negative impact on care.

Researches showed that many nurses responsible for care feel unprepared to support mental health needs and negative attitude to caring for people with mental health problems(Brinn 2000, Roberts 1998, Brady 1979). The need to explore how attitudes affect nursing care has been identified from findings that negative attitudes lead to social distancing that reduces the ability to provide effective care (Corrign et al, 2001).

The last half century has seen major changes in mental health service policy and delivery. The trend towards care and treatment within the general health system and the community due to increased emphasis on the right of people with mental illness. More than ever before people with mental health problems are cared for in Emergency Departments and general hospitals wards (Huudermark 2002, Sharrock & Happell 2000).

AIM
The aim of this study was to explore the perception of nurses towards mental illness.

METHOD AND DESIGN
The methodological frame work for this study is based on the thematic analysis Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a qualitative analytic method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within the data. Research data was collected through individual in-depth face to face interviews. By using thematic analysis, we aimed to reveal and to capture the participant's perception fully and thoroughly.

Participations
Six nurses were purposively selected for the study from Lahore General Hospital, Lahore. This is quite a large government hospital. Nurses from different departments like Psychiatry, Medical, Neurology, Gyne, Surgery and Pulmonology were included in the study. The age range was 35 to 55 years. One nurse experiences was from 12 to 25 years.

Data Collection:
Six interviews were conducted between January 2017 to February 2017, each interview lasted between 25 to 30 minutes. The participants decided where the interview were held. Four nurse chosen their own departments, two came to the researcher's office. All interviews begun with an open question. In order to ensure the important that important issues were covered, a guiding interview schedule with open and expansive question was developed minor changes were made to the schedule from one interview to the next. The interviews were audio taped and transcribed verbatim.

Analysis:
Nurses perception towards mental illness and its treatment were found highly linked with care and love. Most of the nurses showed positive behavior towards mentally disturbed people. The majority indicated a strong desire to provide care for people with mental issues. The nurse had different views. They expressed their understanding and spoke about mental illness in a straight forward manner. They suggested different ways to improve their conditions. The nurses expressed that with separate hospitals for mentally ill people stigma is attached. People labeled them and started to believe that there is no chance to improve

Table 1:
Initial list of the themes:
Nurse no. 1
Unaware about surroundings

No interest in daily activities
Need for love and care
Motivate them to care of personal hygiene
Give medicine on proper time and behave with them properly.
Involve them in different activities. Give them extra attention
Need for separate hospitals
Treatment them with love give them medicine at an appropriate time

Nurse no. 2
Behavioral and emotional changes
Life style changes completely
Treat them according to their disease
Need for care, understanding and non judgmental behavior
Need for a person on which they trust
Supportive therapy and proper medication
Involvement in different games
Need separate hospitals where they should be given proper environment
Keep them in separate cells
Nurses should be supportive, caring and good communicator between
Doctor and family

Nurse no. 3
Consider it as a disease
Should give them equal attention as we give physical illnesses
Need love and care
Proper attention
Separate hospitals
Ratio of mental patients is increasing so every has separate psychiatry
Department
Should be good communicator between doctors and patients

Nurse no. 4
Become isolated and show strange type of behaviors
Treat them with love, guide them and try to make them busy
Divert their attention from disease
Try to change environment
Need psychiatry department in every hospital
Treatment them with care and look after them properly

Nurse no. 5
Stressors play important role
Tensions disturb a person
Polite behavior towards them

Need medicine, counseling and environmental change
Separate hospitals
Spend good time with them

Nurse no. 6
When a person leave the right the path become
Give too much importance to materialistic things
Teach them according to islam
Counsel them that these problems are due to the will of God
Every hospital should have separate psychiatry department

Table no. 2
Table of themes:
* Behavioral change
Lost interest
Become irritated
Isolated

* Love and care
Nonjudgmental
Understanding
Trust building
Proper attention

* Ways to improve their condition
Medication
Different activities
Change in their environment
Family support
Counseling
*Stigma with separate hospitals
Psychiatry department in every hospital
Separate hospitals create stigma about mental patients
*Nurses's role in treatment
Look after them
Involve them in different activities
Supportive
Good communicator
Teach them

The analysis of the data revealed the following themes:
Behavioral change, love and care, ways to improve their conditions, stigma with separate hospitals, nurses's role in treatment.

Behavioral Change
Most of the nurses stated that people with mental illness become unaware about their surrounding and they experienced many behavioral and emotional changes and their life style change completely. They become isolated and started to show strange type of behaviors. Nurses said that daily stressors also had an important role.

Love and care
Most nurses showed love and care towards mentally ill people. they expressed that we have to motivate them to take care of their personal hygiene. The mentally ill people had the need of an understanding person. The nurses had to show nonjudgmental attitude towards them.

Ways to improve their condition
The nurses's responses revealed that to improve their condition, they had to give them medication at the proper time. They required to involve them in different activities. We also tried to make positive change in their environment. They had the need of proper attention, counseling and family

Stigma with separate hospitals
Nurses's responses showed that they had different views regarding their admission facilities. Some suggested their should be psychiatry department in every hospital. Some suggested the need for separate hospital for them. Majority of the nurses had the view that the number of the mentally ill people is going to increase that's why every hospital had this facility. The separate hospital for them had stigma related issues. If we started to keep them in separate hospitals they will got label and this stigma had long lasting effect on them.

Nurses's role in treatment
Responses indicated that nurses had an important role in the treatment process of mentally ill people. Nurses had to give patients medication at the proper time. They had to involve them in different type of activities. Some nurses said that they should be supportive, and good communicator between doctors and the families of mentally ill patients. Nurses had to guide and counsel them and had to provide empathetic understanding.

DISCUSSION
The perception of nurses towards mental illness showed that different nurses had different views. Most of them had the view that patient had behavioral and emotional changes. Only one nurse had different view that when a person had to loss the right path and give too much importance to the materialistic things becomes disturbed.

Most of the nurses focused on love, care and understanding in their treatment but the different views

which observed, was to teach them according to the teaching of Islamic principles and told them that these problems are due to the will of God and we had no control over it.

The nurses felt that the medication was the important way to treat them, all of them were in favor of counseling and guidance of the patients. It indicated that medication, counseling and involvement in different type activities had positive effect on them.

It indicated that nurses had mix views towards separate hospitals for mentally ill patients. They viewed that with separate hospitals stigma is attached and the mentally ill patients which is very difficult to remove. The number of the patients is going to increase, so every hospital had this facility to cater the burden of patients.

Nurses had an important role in the treatment of mentally ill patients. Nurses had to play the role of communicator between doctors and nurses, because nurses had to spend a lot of time with them. They had the opportunity to know a lot about them that's why they can provide a lot of information to the doctors, regarding their symptoms and the factors which had to contribute an important role on the

CONCLUSION

This study was limited to a small sample of nurses in one hospital. It appears that the nurses who are working in different department have a knowledge mental illness and its treatment. Although knowledge was not upto the mark but it indicates that the nurses are aware these issues. They argued that mental illness should be give as much as much importance as physical illnesses and patients having these problems should not be ignored.

Many nurses in this study demonstrated a strong desire that every hospital has psychiatry departments so

that the mentally ill patients should properly treat and get attention. The number of patients also increasing day by day. For serious patients, there is a need of Furthermore, the perception of the nurses towards mentally ill patients is good regarding their disease, how to handle them, the way to treat them properly, hospitalization and their role in the treatment of mentally ill patients.

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