



Mental Health Literacy among family caregivers of patients with mental health illnesses: Knowledge, Influence of factors and Approach towards management.

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INTRODUCTION

Mental health literacy (MHL) is a phrase to describe knowledge about mental disorders that aids in their detection, management, and prevention. Caregivers are the mainstay as far as the mental health patients are concerned.

The management activities are influenced by the level of mental health literacy of the caregiver.

In various studies, factors associated with low mental health literacy included

- cultural and religious beliefs,
- financial and knowledge barriers,
- fear and mistrust of treatment services,
- stigma.

Though a significant positive trend in mental health literacy is observed at various places in the world. However, in Pakistan there is discrepancy between the number of cases reported and the actual mental health issues, and a meagre number of studies have assessed mental health literacy.

Majority of the researches were conducted outside Pakistan.

Those conducted in Pakistan left a lot of gaps regarding the thorough investigation of all the influencing factors and approaches adopted by the people living in this geographical area.

They were published few years ago.

The AIM of this study would be to bridge this gap and to assess this change in perception and knowledge of the masses in this geographical area.

Problem Statement

The researches conducted previously in Pakistan left gaps in assessing the knowledge and approach of caregivers in this population. They were published few years ago, so with advancing literacy rate; the knowledge of caregivers regarding mental health problems would have been improved. This research is done to assess this change in perception and knowledge of the masses in this geographical area.



OBJECTIVES

- To determine mental health knowledge of caregivers including knowledge about positive mental health.
- To determine the various risk factors which hinder the patients from seeking medical help.
- To determine the attitudes regarding management of mental health problems.
- To assess the perception of caregivers regarding psychiatric help

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Study Design: Descriptive Cross-Sectional Study

Setting: Department of Psychiatry, Mayo Hospital Lahore

Population: The Caregivers of patients of any mental illness who were admitted in Mayo Hospital Lahore

Duration: June to September 2022

Sample Size:

Sample size of 160 patients is estimated by using 95% confidence level, 5% absolute precision with expected Percentage perception about mental health treatment as 11.8%

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \cdot 1 - \frac{a}{2} \cdot p \cdot q}{d^2}$$

$Z^2_{1-\alpha/2}$ = confidence level 95% = 1.96

p = prevalence = 11.8%

q = 1 - p

d = absolute precision = 10%

Sampling Technique: convenience sampling.

Data Collection Tool

Data was collected through face-to-face interview using the structured questionnaire information regarding mental health literacy of the caregivers was collected by using "Public Perception of Mental Illness Questionnaire".¹⁰

Sample Selection:

• **Inclusion:**

The caregivers included were of age 18 to 55 years, either male or female, belonged to the near family of the patient. If there were more than one caregiver of a patient, we chose the one who was the main caregiver and volunteered to fill the questionnaire. The caregiver must have spent at least 6 months caring for the patient. Only those were included who were willing to provide information.

• **Exclusion:**

The caregivers who themselves were diagnosed with any mental illness were excluded. Caregivers with the following conditions were excluded:

- Substance Abuse
- Mental retardation

RESULTS

Analysis was done using SPSS-23 software. The relationship between the level of education of the respondents and their perception about the etiology of mental illness was analyzed.

It was found that majority of the respondents with education of matriculation and higher agreed that mental illness is caused by genetic inheritance while the majority of respondents with low level of education disagreed to that.

Majority of the participants believed that mental illness is caused by substance abuse. Only 28% of the illiterate disagreed to that.

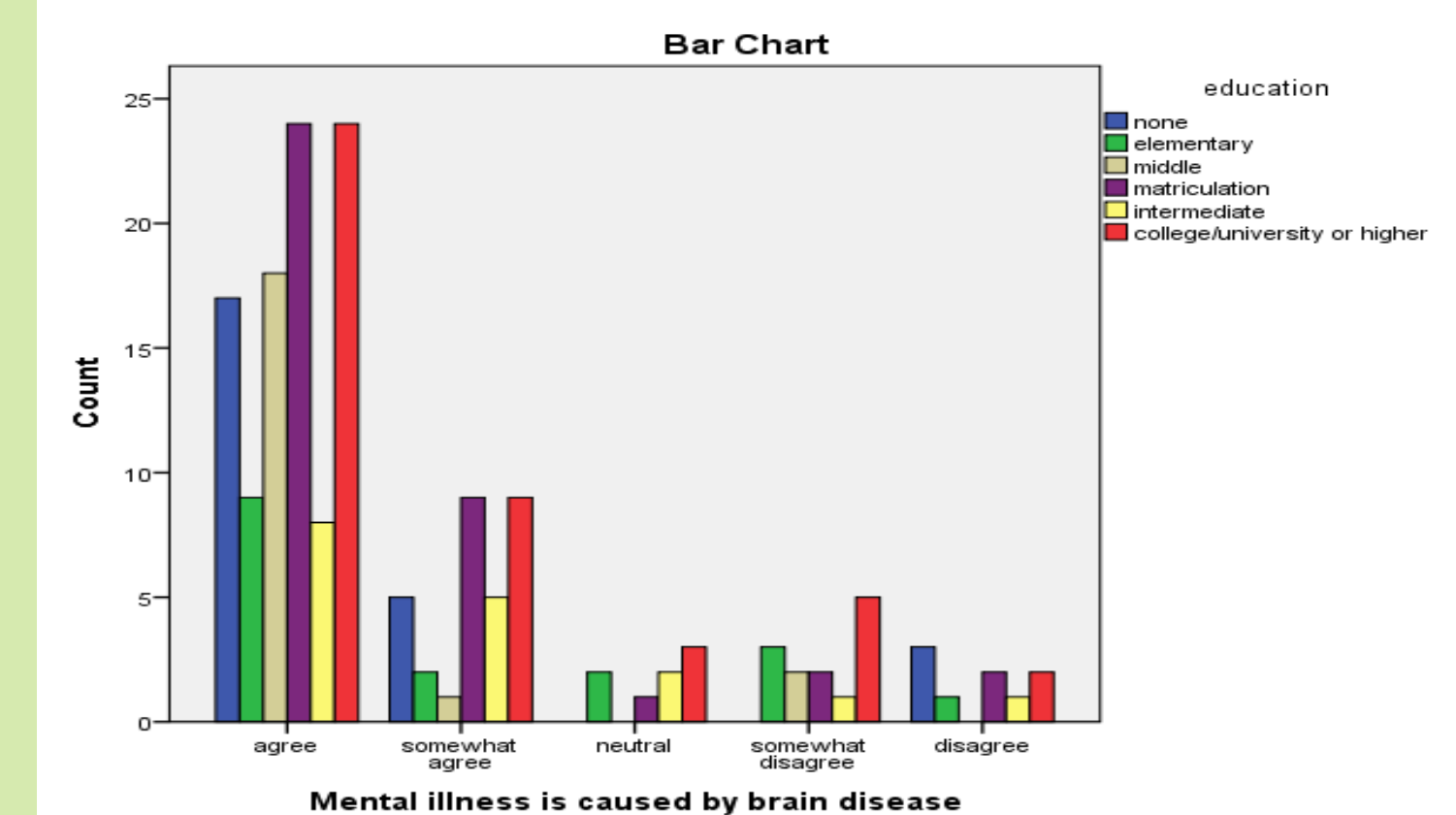
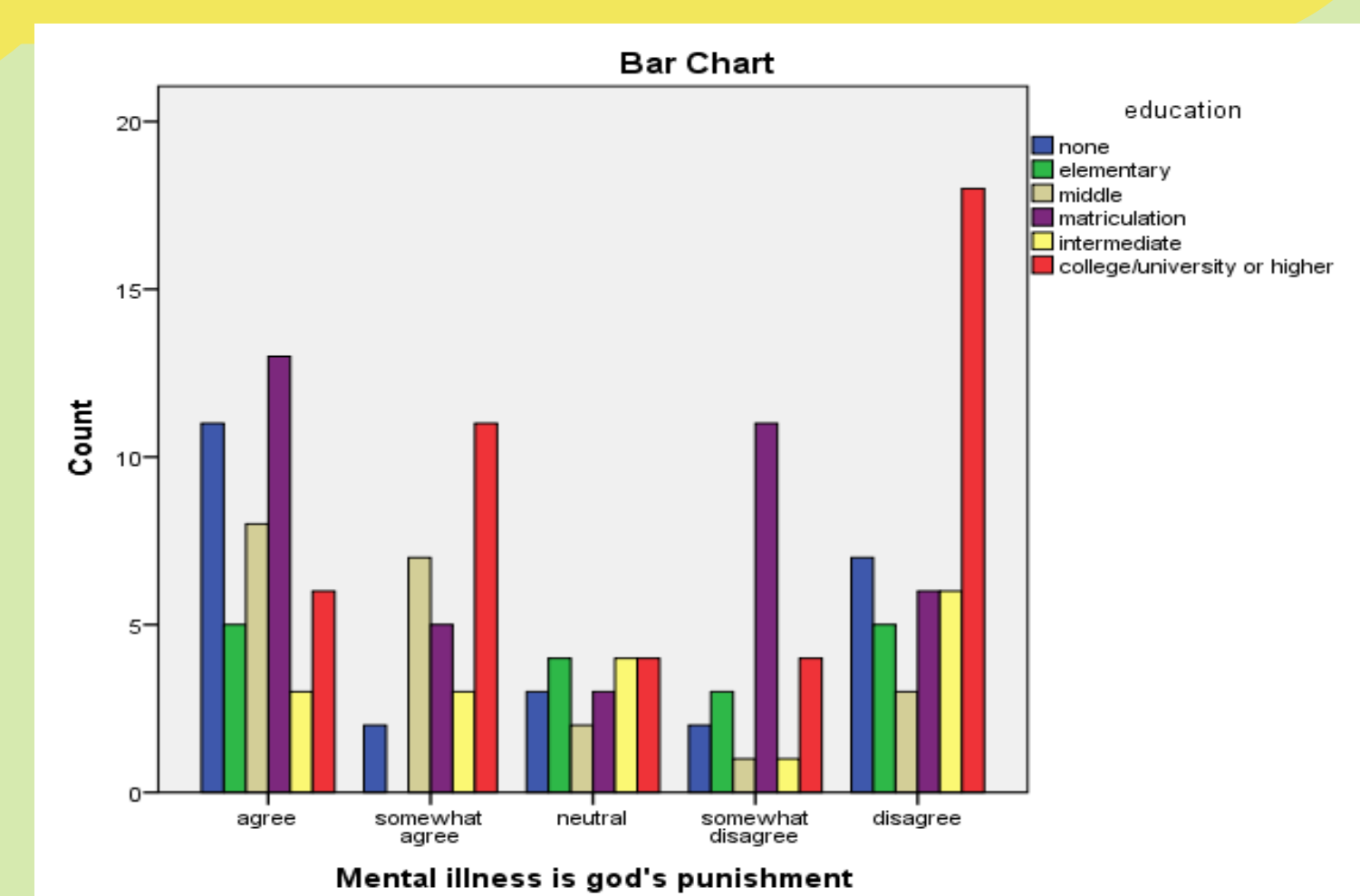
Majority of both literate and illiterate participants agreed that mental illness is caused by bad things happening to the person. More than half of the respondents with low level of education agreed that mental illness is God's punishment while the majority of respondents with level of education of matric or higher disagreed.

80% of respondents with higher level of education agreed to the fact that mental illness is caused by brain disease.

Two-thirds of the respondents with low level of education agreed that mental illness is caused by a personal weakness of the person

LIMITATIONS

- Small sample that was restricted to only Psychiatric dept of Mayo Hospital. Hence the findings may not be generalized.
- The cross-sectional design is another limitation and we are not able to evaluate how the caregivers' mental health literacy levels influence the patients' rehabilitation



CONCLUSION

- The results demonstrate that the participants with higher level of education have better understanding of the causes of mental illness.
- However, the majority of the participants are holding stigmatizing attitudes toward people with mental illness in relation to social participation, treatment, work, marriage and recovery.

Thus, there is an urgent need to educate and change the attitudes of the caregivers regarding mental illness through mental health literacy programs specifically on certain groups within the population who have a particular need for mental health education

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