Comparative Impact of Mental Health Awareness Program Among Youngsters WRT Before and After the Program

Emekwisia, Esther U.[1]*, Akeredolu, Taiwo O.[2], Ikwuebe, Stanley C.[3], Odubunmi, Oluwapelumi I.[4], Emesobum, Munachimso A.[5], Ariyo, Adesokan M.[6], Oladipupo, Tosin S.[7], Onu, Chisom C.[8]

[1]*School of Post-Basic Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing, Neuropsychiatric Hospital Enugu, Nigeria.

[2]Department of Environmental Health Science, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

[3]Department of Commerce and Cooperative/Education/Business Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Nigeria.

[4,5]School of Public Health, University of Nevada, Reno, USA.

[6]Department of Anatomy, University of Medical Sciences, Ondo, Nigeria.

[7]School of Social Work, New Mexico Highlands University, New Mexico, USA

[8]Department of Biochemistry, Micheal Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike, Nigeria.

*Corresponding Author's Email: estheremekwisia@gmail.com

Abstract:

This study assessed the impact of a mental health awareness program on nursing students by comparing their attitudes and perceptions before and after the program. A sample of 54 participants was surveyed using a reliable questionnaire (reliability = 0.897). Data were manually analyzed using frequency, mean, and standard deviation. Results showed that 55.5% understood the meaning of mental illness, while 44.4% initially felt anxious or scared when interacting with mentally ill patients. After the program, 51.9% found it easier to initiate conversations with mentally ill individuals. Notably, 92% of respondents reported positive behavioral changes, indicating the program's effectiveness in enhancing their understanding and attitudes toward mental health.

Keywords: Awareness, Impact, Attitude, Mental Health.

1. Introduction

Mental health awareness program is one of the pre-licensure programs designed to prepare youngsters in the medical training to care for patients holistically and in the psychiatry. Medical skills required to give optimal care including competency in providing medical care for individuals who have multiple health needs, including mental health behaviours. The need to provide medical interventions for clients with mental health concerns may occur in designated mental health treatment agencies, or in conjunction with other healthcare needs occurring in, but not limited to; general hospitals, community settings, primary care providers and specialty tertiary treatment sittings. The ability of youngsters in medical training to enter the psychiatric and mental health setting possessing strong, competent psychiatric nursing skills will depend greatly upon the effectiveness of the educational experience. These youngsters have a lot of misconceptions about the causes, treatment, symptoms and behaviour of mentally ill

patients. They frequently voice feelings of anxiety and fear in anticipation of the psychiatric clinical component of their nursing education.1 The presence of anxiety could lead to decreased medical skills in the care of patients with mental illness. The psychiatry and mental health awareness programme were developed and implemented to address the need to reduce anxiety, and clear certain misconceptions about psychiatric patients, workers and the care they receive. Studies have revealed that these youngsters-in-training have a high degree of anxiety before their awareness training in psychiatric care settings2. The mental health awareness programme is inevitable in the medical profession as it serves as a course requirement to be fulfilled before being licensed to be a registered medical professional. The programme helps these youngsters to view mental health from a better perspective and lead to improving the quality of life, it also reduces the rate of stigmatization of the mentally ill in society1. Listening to the patients' narratives about their life situations is a significant part of medical profession, and should be the primary focus for youngsters-in-training during their mental health clinical education which will help them in relating well with the patient thereby caring out their nursing care effectively.3 Mental health clinical education is often perceived by nursing students as stressful due to feelings of uncertainty and fear with the regard to communicating and interacting with psychiatric patients with potentially unpredictable or violent behaviours1. To increase students' confidence and reduce anxieties and fears, they need to communicate and interact with patients in a therapeutic manner.4 It is therefore important to examine the comparative impact of mental health awareness program on the attitude of youngsters-in-training (nursing students) at Alex Ekwueme Federal University Teaching Hospital, Abakaliki towards the mentally ill patient in Federal Neuropsychiatric Hospital, Enugu. This is because training has a way of correcting misconceptions and thereby modifying behaviours of students which will lead to better treatment and care of mentally ill patients.

2. Methods
The various methods and procedures applied in this work are discussed under the following sub-heading; design, area of study, target population, sample size and technique, instrument for data collection, validity of instrument, reliability of instrument, method of data collection, method of data analysis, ethical consideration.

Research Design
The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This method was chosen because it gives the information about the situation under study. Therefore, it helps the researcher to assess the impact of the psychiatric and mental health nursing awareness program on the attitude of students of Alex Ekwueme Federal University Teaching Hospital, Abakaliki towards the mentally ill patient in Neuropsychiatric Hospital Enugu.

Area of Study
The research was carried out in Neuropsychiatric and mental health hospital, Enugu in Enugu state. The hospital is a tertiary institutional hospital concerned with the diagnosis and management of mental illness. It is made up of male acute ward, male extension, female acute ward, female extension, drug ward, out patient department and emergency unit. It also has school of post basic psychiatric and mental health nursing department made up of the administrative block, school block and hostel block. Nursing students from different school of nursing and universities come there for their awareness program which is a criterion for issuing of practicing license. The hospital has a place of worship for the workers, students and patients.

Target Population
The target population was 54 students' nurses of Alex Ekwueme Federal University Teaching Hospital, Abakaliki who came to do their psychiatric and mental health awareness program in Neuropsychiatric Hospital, Enugu.

Sample Size and Technique
The total population was studied owing to the fact that they are few. According to 5. Leard J. total population is necessary when the population size is relatively small and the subjects share common characteristics. So, no sampling technique was used, all student nurses from Alex Ekwueme Federal University Teaching Hospital, Abakaliki who are on their awareness program within the period of the study participated in the study. No sampling technique was used as the participants were all used for the study.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument used for data collection is a four-point likert scale questionnaire which comprises of 16 organized items in four sections (A, B, and C).

Section A: Has 6 demographic data

Section B: It contains 5 questions on attitudes of student nurses prior to the awareness program.

Section C: It contains 5 items on the impact of the awareness program on the student's attitude toward mentally ill patients after the program.

Validity of the instrument

The face and content validity of the instrument was done to assess whether it will be capable of collecting the required data. It was screened thoroughly and necessary correction were made. The corrections were adequately affected during the work and approval given for instrument usage.

Reliability of the Instrument

Pilot study of the Instrument was conducted using 5 nursing student which is the 10% of the total population from Alex Ekwueme Federeal University Teaching Hospital Abakaliki. Reliability of the Instrument was determined by using test-retest method. Questionnaire was re-administered to the same respondent after two weeks and the result were subjected to Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) to get the reliability coefficient and 0.897 level of significance was gotten, therefore the instrument proved reliable.

Method of Data Collection and Analysis.

The questionnaire was delivered by hand to the respondents and was collected after one week of distribution. Data obtained was analyzed manually using calculator and presented in tables, percentages, frequency, mean and standard deviation.

Ethical Consideration

All ethical guidelines for conducting research study in Neuropsychiatric and Mental Health Nursing, Enugu was strictly complied with.

3. Results and Discussion

This results and analysis of data collected from the respondent are shown below. 54 questionnaires were shared and all were collected and presented using tables, frequency, mean and standard deviation.

Demographic data of the respondents

Table 1: Percentage response of the demographic data of the respondents. n=54

S/N	Variables Frequency		
1	**Age**	**Number of Respondents**	**Percentage**
	15-20	12	22.2%
	21-25	34	63%
	26-30	8	14.8%
	31 and above	0	0%
	Total	54	100%
2	**Gender**		
	Male	6	11.1%
	Female	48	88.9%
	Total	54	100%
3	**Marital Status**		
	Single	44	81.5%
	Married	10	18.5%
	Seperated	0	0%
	Total	54	100%
4	**Religion**		
	Christianity	54	100%

	Islamic	0	0%
	Total	54	100%
5	**Tribe**		
	Igbo	54	100%
	Hausa	0	0%
	Yoruba	0	0%
	Others	0	0%
	Total	100	100%
6	**Nationality**		
	Nigeria	54	54%
	Others	0	0%
	Total	54	100%

From the demographic data, the table reveals that 12(22.2%) student nurses fall under the age of 15-20, 34(62%) fall under the age of 21-25, 8(14%) fall under the age of 26-30, no student is above 31 years.

The attitudes of the student before the awareness program

Table 2: Attitudes of the student before the program. n = 54

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	X	SD	Decision
7.	A mentally ill patient is someone who lacks insight, has excessive fears and worries, extreme mood changes, withdrawn from friends and activities.	30	21	2	1	3.5	3.0	Accepted
8.	I have come in contact with mentally ill individuals before this program	22	27	3	2	3.3	2.8	Accepted
9.	I feel they are dangerous and can kill or injure someone at any time.	16	22	8	8	2.9	2.5	Accepted
10.	I feel anxious and scared relating to them.	11	24	8	11	2.6	2.3	Accepted
11.	Mentally ill patients are friendly	3	22	20	9	2.4	1.9	Rejected
	Average mean	**2.9**						

Criterion mean = 2.5

The table 2 above showed that the respondents agreed that mentally ill patient is someone who lacks insight, has excessive fears and worries, extreme mood changes, withdrawn from friends and activities with the mean score of 3.5. The respondents agreed that they have come in contact with mentally ill individual before their posting with the mean score of 3.3. The respondents agreed that mentally ill person can kill or injure someone at any time with the mean score of 2.9. The respondents also agreed that they feel anxious and scared relating with them with the mean score of 2.6. the respondent disagreed that mentally ill patients are friendly with the mean score of 2.4.

The impact of the awareness program on the students after the program.

Table 3: The impact of the awareness program on the student after the program. n = 54

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	X	SD	Decision
12.	Mentally ill patient are humans and not beasts or monsters.	24	27	1	3	3.4	2.9	Accepted
13.	Mental illness can happen to anybody.	28	22	1	3	3.4	2.9	Accepted
14.	I can differentiate psychiatric condition from medical condition.	20	31	1	2	3.3	2.8	Accepted
15.	Psychiatric and mental health nursing orientation program modified my behavior toward mentally ill	50	1	1	2	3.8	3.5	Accepted

	person.							
16.	I will like to specialize In mental nursing after my training.	7	22	12	11	2.5	7.2	Acceptance
	Average mean			**3.3**				

Criterion mean =2.5

From the table 3 above, the respondent agreed that mentally ill patients are humans and not beast or monsters with the mean score of 3.4 at the end of the program. The respondents, at the end of the posting believed that mental illness can happen to anybody with the mean score of 3.3. The respondents agreed that the program modified their behaviour with the mean score of 3.8. The mean score of 2.5 reveals that most of the respondents wants to specialized in psychiatric and mental health nursing after their training.

Answering hypotheses

There is a significant relationship between awareness program and students' attitudes toward mentally ill patients.

Summary of student's response before and after the awareness program.

Table 4: Summary of students response before and after the awareness program.

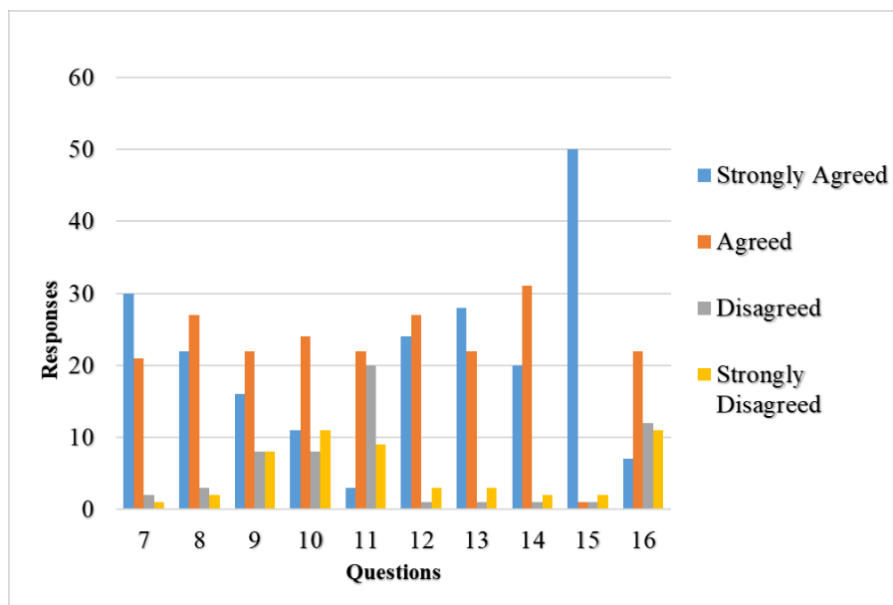| S/N	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed
Question 7	30	21	2	1
Question 8	22	27	3	2
Question 9	16	22	8	8
Question 10	11	24	8	11
Question 11	3	22	20	9
Question 12	24	27	1	3
Question 13	28	22	1	3
Question 14	20	31	1	2
Question 15	50	1	1	2
Question 16	7	22	12	11

Figure 1: Graph of Students Response before and after the awareness program.

From the table 4 and figure 1 above, majority of the respondent responded in affirmation to the 10questions posed at them, which reveals the positive impact of this program.

4. Conclusion

This research was carried out to determine the impact of psychiatric and mental health orientation program on the attitude of student of Alex Ekwueme Federal University Teaching Hospital Abakaliki towards mentally ill patient in Neuropsychiatric Hospital, Enugu. 54 students of Alex Ekwueme federal university teaching hospital who came to do the awareness program at Enugu State were used. No sampling technique was used as the participants were all used for the study. 54 students were sampled using questionnaire as instrument for data collection in which questions were formulated based on the objectives of the study. Data collected were collected and analyzed using frequencies, mean, percentage, and standard deviation. The findings revealed that majority, 30 (55.5%) of the respondents knew that mentally ill patient is someone who lacks insight, has excessive fears and worries, extreme mood changes, and withdrawn from friends and activities, which is in line with the study of 6. Reanna T. Majority of the respondents 24 (44.4%) agreed that they feel anxious and scared relating with mentally ill patients prior to their program, which aligned with the work of 7. Zauder CR. It further revealed that after the program, majority of the respondents 28 (51%) agreed that mental illness can happen to anybody which is in consistent with the statement of 8. Karimollahi M. 50 (92%) of the respondents agrees that the program modified their behavior positively which is in consistent with a similar study by 9. Bakare MO., et.al. Since the program helped in correcting the misconceptions held by the students prior to their training and also helped in inculcating a positive attitude in them, it is therefore important that the medical council of Nigeria ensures that schools of nursing both colleges and universities sends their students for this program as a requirement before the award of registered professional certificate. These findings proved that this program had significant positive impact on the attitudes of the students toward mentally ill patient. The students who were afraid and scared relating with the mentally ill patients prior to the orientation program were able to relate freely with them after the program. It is therefore recommended that the Medical Council of Nigeria should ensure the continuity of this program in the curriculum of medical schools, both in colleges and universities, and incorporate a two months mandatory program for those institutions that haven't incorporated it in their curriculum. Also, the general public should be educated on the importance of having and maintaining a positive mental health, and their relationship with mentally ill patients on the streets.

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