

Profile of Recipients of Holistic Health Counselling in a Psychiatric OPD in South India

Sailaxmi Gandhi**, Krutideepa Mohanty*, Maya Sahu*, M Krishna Prasad***

*Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Nursing, **Professor & Head, Department of Nursing, *** Additional Professor, Department of Psychiatry, NIMHANS

INTRODUCTION

- Persons with Mental Illness (PwMI) are likely to engage in unhealthy lifestyle that cause physical inactivity and unhealthy diets, that contribute for non-communicable diseases (NCD) (WHO, 2018).
- Lack of regular physical activity, poor nutrition, overeating, irregular sleep and failure to visit health care practitioners regularly leads to reduced life expectancy.
- Unhealthy behaviours add to the burden of antipsychotic medication side effects that increase the risk of cardiac and metabolic diseases.
- Obesity, a key risk factor for NCDs among PwMI, might be caused by unhealthy lifestyle behaviours and side-effects of antipsychotic medications.
- The aim of this study was to identify the pre-counselling profile of the subjects like BMI, diet, physical activity, medication adherence, expressed emotions and technology use among PwMI, attending the Holistic Health Clinic as part of follow up services in the psychiatry OPD

METHODS

Design

- Cross sectional descriptive design used in the study

Sample

- Fifty-six patients receiving antipsychotics, with symptom control (self-reported) and overweight, assessed and counselled from July 2018 to February 2020, were considered for the study.

Procedure

- The participants were assessed for the dietary pattern, exercise, technology use and family emotional climate. Need based counselling was given on healthy diet, exercise, sleep hygiene, healthy use of technology, therapeutic family emotional climate and medication adherence.

Data analysis

- Data were analysed using SPSS-22.

RESULTS

- Fifty-six patients who were the attending follow up outpatient psychiatric services at NIMHANS and referred to the HHC were counselled. The patients referred to the HHC had abnormal BMI with a mean of 29.51 ± 5.15 .
- Weight has significant association with gender ($t= 2.52, p=0.015$).
- Association of weight with educational status also shows a trend towards significant relationship ($\chi^2 = 7.685, p= 0.053$).
- Majority of the patients who came for counselling were diagnosed with schizophrenia and related disorders (60.7%) and were receiving atypical antipsychotics (69.64%).
- Majority (89.2%) said that they ate three meals a day and didn't skip any meal.
- 48.21% performed some kind of exercise mostly walking.
- 57.14 % used mobile more than usual and their sleep was affected by this.
- Around 66 % reported the constant urge to have their phone close to them and reported increased use of their mobile phones.

Distribution of subjects who received need-based counselling



DISCUSSION

- Our study showed that almost all (91.1%) patients referred to the HHC suffered from severe mental illnesses and the mean BMI was 29.51 ± 5.15 . This agrees that Prevalence of obesity among persons with the psychotic disorder is 41-50%, that is substantially higher than in the general population (Dickerson et al., 2006, Gurusamy, Gandhi, Damodharan, Ganesan, & Palaniappan, 2018).
- Males had higher BMI (29.69 ± 7.29) than females (28.86 ± 4.34). This result contradicts the study by Giddhar et.al., which reported higher prevalence of obesity in women.
- Persons with higher BMI intend to lose weight. These lend support for persons with mental illness being distressed about their weight and being motivated for weight reduction efforts (Simkin-Silverman, et.al., 2005).
- An unhealthy dietary pattern like skipping meals (10.71%), not taking fruits and vegetables (69.64%) and taking commercial foods can contribute substantially to weight gain. (Jakobsen et. al., 2018)
- Exercise is considered as an important means of energy expenditure. In the present study, 51.78% PwMI didn't perform any type of exercise. Those who had performed, only reported walking. This was similar to the study by Daumit et. al., who reported that PwMI are overall less physically active, and face difficulties regarding healthy food choices, cooking and physical exercise (Jakobsen, et. al., 2018).
- The Novelty in this study is that this is the first report on nurse-led counselling among outpatient.
- The Limitation of this is a cross sectional descriptive study design based on convenience sampling, and Majority of the assessments have been done without using standardized tools.

• In a busy psychiatric OPD, in continuation with the service providers focus on the patient's symptoms and prescribing medicines, focusing on health parameters such as weight, BMI, diet, exercise technology use, expressed emotion and medication adherence by nurses may help in reduction of co-morbidities among PwMIs and aid in better recovery.

CONCLUSION

Counselling during the follow up visit helps the PwMI in identification of their unhealthy behaviours and can motivate them to adopt healthy behaviours.

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