

Knowledge and practice (KAP) of mental illness among staff in general medical facilities in Kenya: practice and policy implications.

Ndetei, DM; Khasakhala, LI; Mutiso, V; Mbwayo, AW

Abstract:

OBJECTIVE: To determine the knowledge, attitudes and beliefs about mental illness among staff in general hospitals. **METHOD:** A descriptive cross-sectional study conducted on staff in ten medical facilities in Kenya on their socio-demographic characteristics, professional qualifications and knowledge, attitudes and practice (KAP) toward mental illness. **RESULTS:** A total of 684 general hospital staff: nurses (47.8%); doctors (18.1%); registered clinical officers (5.1%); students (9.5%) and support staff (19.5%) were recruited. About three quarters were under 40 years of age; most thought mental illness could be managed in general hospital facilities; the older the doctors were (age 40 years and older) the more they were aware of and positive towards mental illness. Most of the workers did not suspect any psychiatric symptoms among the patients they treated resulting in low referral rates for psychiatric services. **CONCLUSION:** There are gaps in knowledge on mental illness which could be constructively filled with Continued Medical Education (CME).