

Response Analysis of Teens towards Mentally Ill Patients

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Abstract
Mental health programs are designed to prepare teenagers in medical training to learn the better ways of relating with mentally health patients. The aim of this research is to analyse the response of teens in medical training towards mentally ill patients. This research was done among the nursing students of Alex Ekwueme Federal University Teaching Hospital Abakaliki Nigeria, during their medical training in federal neuropsychiatric hospital Enugu. A sample size of 54 respondents were used. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire. Test retest statistics was used to establish internal consistency which gave a reliability of 0.897. Data was analyzed manually using calculator and presented in frequency, table, mean and standard deviation. The result of this research revealed that 30(56%) of the respondents understands a mentally ill patient to be someone who lacks insight, has excessive fears and worries, extreme mood changes, withdrawn from friends and activities. 22(41%) respondents feel that mentally ill patients are dangerous and can kill or injure someone at any time. 24(44%) respondents feel anxious and scared relating with them. 22(41%) respondents are friendly with mentally ill patients. 20(37%) of the respondents agreed that they feel free and happy relating with the patients, 28 (51.9%) agreed that it wasn't difficult for them to initiate a conversation with the patients, 27(50%) agreed that senior nurses helped them to relate well with the patients, while 26(48%) agreed that the teachings from the lecturers and senior nurses helped them to relate well with the patients. Most of the respondents, 50 (92%) of them agreed that the program exposure modified their behavior positively. The Researcher therefore recommends that this program should be a mandatory program for medical schools both in universities and colleges.

Keywords: Response, Teenagers, Medical, Program, Mental, Patients

Introduction

Mental health remains a global concern, with emphasis on improving healthcare professionals' attitudes and interactions with mentally ill patients. Adolescents in medical training, such as nursing students, represent a crucial group whose perception and preparedness can significantly influence patient care outcomes. Research have showed that teenage nurses shows some level of fear and anxiety in their relationship with mental health patients.

Corrigan *et al*., 2021 [2] in their studies showed that misconceptions about mental illness, such as associating it with violence or unpredictability, can lead to stigmatization (Corrigan *et al*., 2021) [8]. Training programs are essential in addressing these biases among healthcare providers. Thornicroft *et al* revealed that educational exposure significantly improves the understanding of mental health conditions. For instance, structured training programs help students recognize mental illness symptoms and offer appropriate care. Teenagers often face unique challenges in overcoming stigma and fear regarding mental illness, which impacts their willingness to engage with such patients (Rickwood *et al*., 2020) [7].

Kitchener & Jorm, 2020 showed that clinical programs in psychiatric hospitals enhance empathy and reduce anxiety toward mentally ill patients, as shown in similar studies conducted in low-resource settings Happell *et al*., 2019 [4] showed that senior nurses can play a critical role in guiding nursing students. Their mentorship fosters a more accepting attitude and equips students with practical communication skills. Repeated exposure to mentally ill patients under supervised settings positively modifies students' behaviors and reduces anxiety (Pinfold *et al*., 2021) [6]. Initial fear and anxiety are common among nursing students interacting with mentally ill patients. These emotions diminish with effective training and supportive mentorship. Stigma, whether self-directed or societal, hinders effective care. Anti-stigma campaigns integrated into training programs have shown promising results (Corrigan & Watson, 2020) [1]. Initiating conversations with mentally ill patients is often a hurdle for students. However, role-playing and real-life scenarios during training build confidence (Henderson *et al*., 2021) [5]. Improved attitudes and knowledge among healthcare providers lead to better patient outcomes, reducing the recurrence of mental health crises (Rüsch *et al*., 2021) [8]. Behavioral changes are evident when structured programs expose students to mental health environments, instilling confidence and reducing stigma (Schulze, 2020) [20].

This study therefore focuses on analyzing the responses of teenage nursing students toward mentally ill patients during their clinical training. This research was conducted among the teenage nursing students of Alex Ekwueme Federal University Teaching Hospital, Abakaliki, Nigeria, during their clinical program at Federal Neuropsychiatric Hospital, Enugu, Nigeria.

2. Methods

Design, study area, target population, sample size and technique, data collection instrument, validity and reliability of instrument, data collection method, data analysis method, and ethical consideration are the subheadings that address the many techniques and procedures employed in this work.

2.1. Research Design

A descriptive survey design was selected for the study. This method was chosen because it offers details about the situation under study. Thus, it helps the researcher assess how the program improved the students' relationship with the mentally ill patients at Neuropsychiatric Hospital Enugu and how the Alex Ekwueme Federal University Teaching Hospital, Abakaliki students responded to them.

2.2. Area of Study

The study was carried out in the Neuropsychiatric and Mental Health Hospital in the state of Enugu. As a tertiary institution, the hospital focuses on diagnosing and treating mental health issues. It includes a drug ward, female acute ward, female extension, male acute ward, male extension, emergency room, and outpatient department. The basic psychiatric and mental health nursing section of the school is housed in the administration, school, and hostel blocks. A number of nursing schools and institutions required the teens, who are nursing students, to complete the program in order to be granted a practicing license. At the hospital, there is a place of worship for patients, employees, and students.

2.3. Target Population

The target population consisted of 54 teenagers (nursing students) from Alex Ekwueme Federal University Teaching Hospital in Abakaliki who came to Neuropsychiatric Hospital in Enugu for their training program in psychiatry and mental health.

2.4. Sample Size and Technique

Due to their rarity, the entire population was studied. According to Leard J the full population is needed when the population is small and the subjects share similar characteristics. All of the teenagers who were enrolled in the program at Alex Ekwueme Federal University Teaching Hospital in Abakaliki during the study period participated, hence no sampling approach was used. No sampling approach was used because every participant was used for the study.

2.5. Instrument for Data Collection

A two-point Likert scale questionnaire with 15 structured items divided into two sections (A and B) is the tool used to gather the data. Section A contains six demographic data points. Nine questions about how teenagers (student nurses) react to mentally ill patients during their training program are included in Section B.

2.6. Validity of the instrument

The instrument's face and content validity were assessed to see if it could collect the required data. Following a thorough screening, the required adjustments were made. After the required adjustments were completed during the work, the instrument's use was authorized.

2.7. Reliability of the Instrument

The instrument's pilot experiment involved five teenagers (nurses in training), or 10% of the total population, from Alex Ekwueme Federal University Teaching Hospital Abakaliki. The reliability of the instrument was evaluated using the test-retest method. Two weeks later, the identical respondent was given the questionnaire once more, and the reliability coefficient was calculated by utilizing Pearson's correlation coefficient (r). The 0.897 level of significance indicated that the tool was dependable.

2.8. Method of Data Collection and Analysis.

A week after it was delivered in person, the questionnaire was picked up by the respondents. The data was manually assessed using a calculator and presented as tables, percentages, frequency, mean, and standard deviation.

2.9. Ethical Consideration

Strict adherence to all ethical principles was maintained when

performing research at Neuropsychiatric and Mental Health Nursing, Enugu.

3. Results and Discussion

The results and analysis of the data collected from the Responders are shown below. 54 surveys in all were sent out, collected, and presented using tables, frequency, mean, and standard deviation.

3.1. 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%) teens fall under the age of 15-18, 34(62%) fall under the age of 19-20, 8(14%) fall under the age of 21-23, none is above 24 years.

3.2. 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 feel they are dangerous and can kill or injure someone at any time.	16	22	8	8	2.9	2.5	Accepted
9	I feel anxious and scared relating with them.	11	24	8	11	2.6	2.3	Accepted
10	Mentally ill patients are friendly.	3	22	20	9	2.4	1.9	Rejected
11	I feel free and happy relating with them.	8	20	20	6	2.6	2.2	Accepted
12	It wasn't difficult for me initiating a conversation with a mentally ill person.	18	28	6	2	3.1	2.7	Accepted
13	The senior nurses helped me to relate well the patients during my clinical posting.	27	23	1	3	3.5	2.9	Accepted
14	The teaching from the lecturers and senior nurses helped me to relate well with the patients the clinical posting.	24	26	2	2	3.3	2.8	Accepted
15	Psychiatric and mental health nursing program modified my behavior toward mentally ill person	50	1	1	2	3.8	3.5	Accepted
	Average mean					**3.1**		

Criterion mean = 2.6

With a mean score of 3.5, table 2 above demonstrated that respondents agreed that a mentally ill patient is someone who lacks insight, exhibits excessive concerns and worries, experiences strong mood swings, and withdraws from friends and activities. With a mean score of 2.9, the respondents concurred that a mentally ill individual can kill or harm someone at any time. With a mean score of 2.6, the respondents also concurred that they experience fear and anxiety when relating to them. With a mean score of 2.4, the respondent disputed that people with mental illnesses are

amiable.

Furthermore, the respondent agreed that they feel free and happy relating with mentally ill patients with the mean score of 2.6 during the exposure. The respondents confessed that it wasn't difficult for them to initiate a conversation with a mentally ill person, with the mean score of 3.1. The mean score of 3.5 revealed that for most of the respondents, the senior nurses helped them to relate well with the patients, while others responded that the teaching from the lecturers and senior nurses helped them to relate well with the patients with a mean score of 3.3.

3.4. Answering of hypotheses

There is a significant relationship between mental health program and the response of teens toward mentally ill patients.

3.5. Summary of student's response before and during the clinical exposure

Table 3: Summary of student's response before and during the clinical exposure

S/N	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed
Question 7	30	21	2	1
Question 8	16	22	8	8
Question 9	11	24	8	11
Question 10	3	22	20	9
Question 11	8	20	20	6
Question 12	18	28	6	2
Question 13	27	23	1	3
Question 14	24	26	2	2
Question 15	50	1	1	2

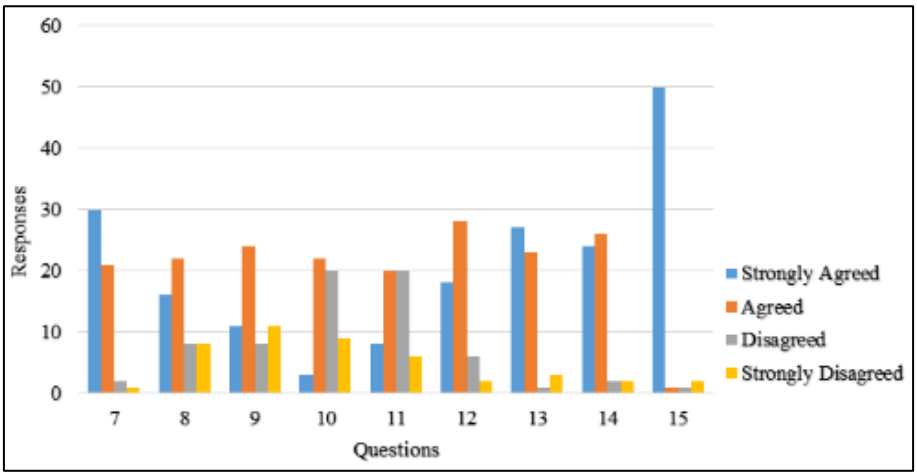


Fig 1: Graph of Students Response before and during the clinical exposure

The majority of respondents responded in the positive to the nine (9) questions that were asked to them, as seen in table 3 and figure 1 above.

4. Conclusion

This study highlights the importance of structured mental health training programs in shaping the attitudes and behaviors of teenage nursing students toward mentally ill patients. Conducted among nursing students from Alex Ekwueme Federal University Teaching Hospital and Federal Neuropsychiatric Hospital, the research reveals critical insights into their understanding, fears, and willingness to engage with mentally ill patients. Findings indicate that while misconceptions and anxieties are common initially, exposure to clinical environments and guidance from senior nurses and lecturers significantly improve students' perspectives and interactions. The high reliability of the data collection instrument (Cronbach's alpha = 0.897) ensures the credibility of the results. Key findings, such as 92% of respondents agreeing that the program exposure positively modified their behavior, underline the transformative potential of hands-on training and mentorship. Despite 41% of students expressing fear of mentally ill patients, over 50% reported improved ease in initiating conversations and building rapport, emphasizing the success of the program in reducing stigma and anxiety. This research has significant implications for mental health education as it underscores the need for incorporating targeted training modules in nursing curricula to address stigma, promote empathy, and foster effective communication skills. These efforts are essential for preparing future healthcare providers to deliver compassionate and competent care to mentally ill patients. The findings contribute to global conversations on improving mental health education and patient outcomes, reinforcing the role of young healthcare professionals in reducing stigma and enhancing mental health care systems. Further studies could explore long-term impacts of such training on professional practice and patient satisfaction.

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