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Nursing Students' Attitudes towards Seeking Psychological Professional Help

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**Abstract**

Psychological help-seeking means to benefit different sources of support system for the difficulties people have. The aim of this study was to investigate nursing students' attitudes towards seeking psychological help. **Methods:** A cross-sectional Study institutional based was used, using a standardized instrument Attitudes toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help Scale. **Subjects:** The study included all available nursing student at the time of data collection (n=50) in Hafr Al-Batin university. **Results:** Obtained data were evaluated with variance analysis 50 undergraduate students overall response, The majority 80 % showed positive attitude, while 20 % showed negative attitude toward Psychological Help .The implications of the findings of this study were discussed and suggestions for future research were made.

***Keywords: Attitudes; psychological help-seeking, Professional.***

**Introduction**

Seeking psychological help means benefitting from different sources of support to cope with difficulties. It is also defined as receiving support from informal (e.g. parents and friends) and formal (e.g. counselor and mental health professionals) sources of support (to solve emotional and behavioral problems. Individuals seeking help expect people who give support to be tolerant, to offer recommendations, information and support and to cure their conditions. Seeking help is an effective coping skill **(Kumcagiz, 2013)**.

Individuals have different attitudes and beliefs about overcoming psychological problems. There are several factors influencing psychological help-seeking behavior. To cope with emotional problems, people prefer sharing them with a friend or family member rather than seeking help from a professional. Some individuals easily consult a professional while some feel discomfort to do this. Its most important reason is the anxiety about being labeled **(Atik G, 2011)**.

It is obvious that individuals do encounter difficulties throughout their lives. Similarly, university students experience several problems they need to cope with and have some responsibilities they need to take. Young people studying at university are expected to act like an adult, to effectively solve the problems they encounter as well as to succeed academically. They may need psychological help to overcome difficulties arising during this process **Salim S (2010)**.

Many factors affect seeking psychological help such as severity and type of a given problem, gender, age social support, parents' education, knowledge of psychological services, factors playing a role in availability of the services, prior experience in receiving psychological help or knowing someone receiving psychological help **(Rickwood et al., 2005)**

This is associated with the society’s negative attitudes toward mental disorders and the use of mental health services (Mahmoud J, 2011). An individual’s such negative attitude is explained by their irrational beliefs. An individual’s irrational beliefs define the meanings and comments they attribute to their experiences, and their emotional and behavioral responses.

Needing psychological help and applying for it does not always follow each other. Several people who can benefit from psychological help either does not prefer to take it or even if they begin, they cannot fully participate. One reason for this discrepancy is “stigma”. Stigmatization anxiety leads to two dangers that can hamper participation in psychological help process: decreasing self-esteem of the individual or taking away the social opportunities **(Alonso et al., 2008)**.

In recent years, researchers have pointed that, before taking an action, individuals first make an assessment of stigmatization by people close to them and then stigmatization by the society they live in before deciding on whether they will attempt to receive help or not. While it has been known that perceived social stigma is associated with the decision to seek help, the complex role played by stigmatization in this process has not been fully understood since it has been made clear by Corrigan **(Fleishman, 2009)**.

**Cankaya P, 2010** mentioned two types of stigmatization that affects an individual’s decision to seek help: social stigmatization and self-stigmatization. According to the researcher, increased risk of social stigmatization leads to increased possibility of self-stigmatization. When compared with social stigmatization, self-stigmatization more closely predicts attitudes towards seeking psychological help and willingness to do it.

It is deemed important that nurses who have a major part in health improvement and behavior change define their own attitudes while performing their roles. Attitude change involves a process **(Çankaya, 2008)**. Thus, identifying attitudes of nursing candidates when they are still students will be helpful to develop programs for changing students’ attitudes.

**Material and Methods**

***Research Design:*** Descriptive cross sectional Institution-based design was utilized in this study.

***Subjects:***The present study included all available student at the time of data collection (n=50). The inclusion criteria for respondents was agreement of the student to participate in the study, and completion of the questionnaire.

***Setting:*** The study will conducted at hafr al- batin university college of applied medical science.

**Tool of data collection:**

Data was collected by using self-administrated& Attitude to seeking psychological prof help scale [Adapted from Whittlesey, V. (2001). Diversity activities for psychology. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, and Fischer, E., and Farina, A. (1995). Attitudes toward seeking psychological professional help: A shortened form and considerations for research

**Sampling technique:**

Non probability sampling method will be utilized)

Ethical Considerations

Official approvals from dean of the college

**Objectives**

To assess nursing student attitude to seeking psychological professional help

**Results**

**Table (1): Demographic characteristics of student under study in Hafar Albatin University.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Items | No. | % |
| **Marital status**  Married  Single | 2  98 | 1  49 |
| **Economic status**  High level  Moderate level  Poor level | 1  49 | 2  98 |
| **Father level of education**  Illiterate  Primary  Secondary  University | 6  43  1 | 12.0  86.0  2.0 |
| **Mother level of education**  Illiterate  Primary  Secondary  University | 15  14  12  9 | 30.0  28.0  24.0  18.0 |

The socio-demographic characteristics of the student in the study sample, table 1 revealed that the majority of the student were married and moderate income level, 98%. Meanwhile, almost of them husbands education (86.6%) had Primary education, when only (18.0%) of their mothers were significantly more likely to Higher education

**Table 2: Distribution of Students According to their Seeking Attitude of Psychological Prof Help**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Items | Disagree | | Partly disagree | | Partly agree | | Agree | |
| No | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| If I believed I was having a mental breakdown, my first inclination would be to get professional attention | 10 | 20.0 | 2 | 4.0 | 17 | 34.0 | 21 | 42.0 |
| The idea of talking about problems with a psychologist strikes me as a poor way to get rid of emotional conflicts. | 23 | 46.0 | 3 | 6.0 | 14 | 28.0 | 10 | 20.0 |
| If I were experiencing a serious emotional crisis at this point in my life, I would be confident that I could find relief in psychotherapy | 13 | 26 | 5 | 10 | 17 | 34 | 15 | 30 |
| There is something admirable in the attitude of a person who is willing to cope with his or her conflicts and fears without resorting to professional help | 5 | 10 | 2 | 4 | 11 | 22 | 32 | 64 |
| I would want to get psychological help if I were worried or upset for a long period of time | 18 | 36.0 | 2 | 4.0 | 11 | 22.0 | 22.0 | 62.0 |
| I might want to have psychological counseling in the future | 4 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 14 | 28 | 31 | 62 |
| A person with an emotional problem is not likely to solve it alone; he or she is likely to solve it with professional help. | 2 | 4 | 6 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 42 | 84 |
| Considering the time and expense involved in psychotherapy, it would have doubtful value for a person like me. | 19 | 38 | 2 | 4 | 11 | 22 | 19 | 38 |
| A person should work out his or her own problems; getting psychological counseling would be a last resort | 17 | 34 | 5 | 10 | 15 | 30 | 13 | 26 |
| Personal and emotional troubles, like many things, tend to work out by themselves | 19 | 38 | 6 | 12 | 11 | 22 | 14 | 28 |

**Table 2** show that, 46.0% from study subjects were disagree about the idea of talking about problems with a psychologist, 62.0% from study population were want to have psychological counseling in the future and 84% from study sample were agree.

**Table 3: Total Score of Attitude to Seeking Psychological Prof Help.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Attitude | Frequency | Percent |
| Negative attitude |  |  |
| Positive attitude | 40 | 80.0 |

**Table 3** Show Total Attitudes Score Majority of the participants’ 80% were positive attitude while 20% were negative attitude to seeking psychological help.

**Discussion**

Understanding of nursing students’ attitudes to seeking psychological prof help is very important, because as future practitioners, they might come across patients who would benefit from professional psychological support. Table one summarizes information about participants’& families, including marital status, parent educational level, economic status. Majority of the participants’ were un married (98%). Majority of participants moderate income level (98%), regarding parents level of education most of the participants’ fathers (86%) had the equivalence of a primary level while mothers level of education distributed ( 30% Illiterate, 28% primary ).Thus, most of the participants were the first generation of their families to attend college. the aims of the study was to assess nursing students’ attitudes towards professional psychological help the 10-item ATSPPH-SF (Fischer and Farina, 1995) was used to measure general ATSPPH for mental health issues. Items are rated on a 4-point Likert-type scale (3 = Agree, 0 = Disagree), where items 2, 4, 8, 9, and 10 are reverse scored. Scores are then summed together, with higher scores indicating more positive attitudes toward seeking professional help. The findings from this study reveal that majority of nursing students have positive attitudes (80%) &20% were negative attitude. This finding is in contrast with study done in Technical University of Kenya with objective to determine the attitudes towards professional psychological help seeking among young adults student the result showed Unfavorable attitude .to seeking psychological help.

**Conclusion & Recommendations**

The purpose of this study was to investigate to nursing students’ attitudes towards professional psychological help. The findings of this study indicate that majority of student were positive attitude, so the researcher recommended New university students can be trained in order to have much more positive attitude towards seeking psychological help, students should be encouraged to receive professional psychological help when they need finally suggestion for future research is to address demographic of groups used in the study more specifically Individuals from different educational level.

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