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Describing nurses' stigmatising attitudes towards persons with mental disorders in a selected District Hospital setting in Rwanda

Vedaste Baziga

University of Rwanda, Rwanda

Aim: The purpose of the study was to describe mental disorder stigmatising attitudes held by nurses, in a selected district hospital in Rwanda, and to analyse the potential mediating effects of person variables, specifically familiarity, on these stigmatising attitudes.

Methodology: A quantitative, non-experimental, descriptive research design was used. A self-report questionnaire included person and two scales; Level of Contact Scale (LOC) and Community Attitudes towards Mental Illness - Swedish version (CAMI-S). A sample of 104 (n=102) was achieved and ethical approval was obtained. Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 21 whereby non parametric tests were used, Mann-Whitney U Test, Kruskal-Willis H Test and Spearman's rho correlation coefficient test and significance was determined by Cohen's guide lines.

Results: Participants reported negative stereotypes, in all items on the CAMI-S, related to persons with a mental disorder. Statistical results indicated associations between negative stereotypes and; the younger age group and the less experienced participants are reported as statistically significant. Also, a negative correlation is reported between familiarity and stigmatizing attitudes.

Conclusion & Recommendation: Results suggest that familiarity has a positive mediating effect on negative stereotypes. To address the issue of stigma, curriculum for undergraduate nursing education should be reviewed to include mental health nursing and clinical practice within psychiatric health facilities. Also, the School of Nursing and Midwifery should organize workshops, seminars, conferences and discussions which could include MHCUs to provide testimonies, which will in turn increase the level of contact amongst students and their lecturers.

Biography

Vedaste Baziga a holder of Masters in Mental Health Nursing from University of KwaZulu Natal; Lecturer in University of Rwanda, College of Medicine and Health Sciences, School of Nursing and Midwifery, in the Department of Mental Health Nursing. I am an experienced teacher/ Nurse educator and specialized in Mental Health Nursing and I am actively involved in academic activities including mainly teaching modules such as Health Measurement and Research, Mental Health Nursing, Psychiatry, Fundamentals of behavioral sciences, clinical placement and he is also an experienced clinician in the field of psychiatric/ mental health and has worked as practitioner and supervisor in the Psychiatric Reference Hospital and District Hospitals. Also, I am involved in research activities having many research projects (1 already published, and another 1 accepted for publication and remaining 3 in the process of data collection). In addition, I participate also in community outreach and he is always increasing knowledge and skills through Continuous Professional Development (CPD) in different areas".

vedastebaziga1@yahoo.fr

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