

Knowledge and opinions of families about mental illness and mental patients

El-Sherbini, A. F. El-Genidi, M. Redha, S.

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Aim of the work: To explore families' knowledge about mental illness and their opinions about mental patients in general and their hospitalized ill member in particular.

Study design: not mentioned but can be described as Cross- sectional study.

7-Method: Families of 60 psychiatric patients admitted for the first time, 2 family members for each patient were interviewed at their home. These 2 members were the emotionally concerned member and the financially responsible one. They are subjected to an interview schedule questionnaire.

Results: As regards families opinion about mental patients; they tend to view the psychiatric patient as a person with bizarre and irresponsible behavior and one who is excited and dangerous to others. Excitement appears to be the most common cause of hospitalization as mentioned by 73.33% of the concerned and 71.05% of the responsible family members, Insomnia and refusal of food are the next mentioned causes of hospitalization. They explain the nature of their patients' illness to be due to psychological troubles by 43.34% of the concerned and 42.11% of the responsible. As regards families' knowledge about mental illness; 73.33% of the concerned and 81.38% of the responsible family members believe that disturbed family relationship is a direct factor in the causation of mental illness. Figures are much lower when talking about their own patient with 8.33% and 10.53% respectively.

Conclusion: family members tend to reflect the general community view of mental patients, describing them as unreasonable, odd and bizarre. They also tend to deny psychotic illness among their patients. Their knowledge about mental illness is very limited and greatly influenced by the stigma attached to mental illness.