

Stigma related mental health knowledge among community health workers - a cross sectional assessment

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Introduction: The accreted social health activists (ASHAs) or the community health workers have been involved in improving maternal and child health over a decade in rural India. There is growing evidences that in mental health resource poor settings, a 'task-shifting' strategy would be advantageous, where the community or the lay health workers (like ASHAs) provides front-line mental health care, instead of mental health professional at a primary care level. However, there is limited data on delivering the mental health services delivered through ASHAs in mental health resource scarce urban slums setting.

Aim: The aim of the present study is to assess the knowledge and attitude towards mental illness among ASHAs serving in government primary health centers in urban Bengaluru, India.

Materials & Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted among randomly selected ASHA workers (n=150) in urban Bengaluru in the Karnataka state. Data were collected through mental health knowledge schedule (MAKS), and reported and intended behavior scale (RIBS), self-administered questionnaire designed assess mental health knowledge and attitude towards mental illness. Data were computed using SPSS. The mean age of the participants was 38.6±5.68 years and educated at least tenth grade (66.1%) or above (20.2%). The mean year experience in the health field as ASHAs was 4.27±2.36 years. The ASHAs had lower score on MAKS. **Results:** Our results show relatively lesser knowledge about mental health among ASHAs. Thus, indicating the need to develop training module to train the ASHAs for early identification of mental illness from the community and refer to available mental health service.

Care assistant workers (CAWs) are a part of a new pattern of mental health care providers in China and play a significant role in bridging the human resource shortage. CAWs in China mainly include community cadres, community mental health staff, and community policemen. The mental health related knowledge and attitudes of CAWs could influence their mental health care delivery. This study aimed to assess mental health related knowledge and attitudes of CAWs in Guangzhou, China. In November 2017, a study was conducted among 381 CAWs from four districts of Guangzhou, China. Participants were assessed using the Perceived Devaluation and Discrimination Scale (PDD), the Mental Health Knowledge Schedule (MAKS), and the Mental illness: Clinicians' Attitudes (MICA) Scale. Data were analyzed by descriptive statistics, ANOVA, Bonferroni corrections and multivariable linear regression. The mean scores (standard deviation) of PDD, MAKS and MICA were 36.45 (6.54), 22.72 (2.56), and 51.67 (7.88), respectively. Univariate analyses showed that the older

CAWs, community policemen and those who were less willing to deliver care to people with mental illness had significant higher MICA scores when compared with other staff ($P < 0.001$). Multivariable linear regression showed that after controlling for key variables, care willingness and PDD total score were positively associated with the MICA total score (all $P < 0.05$), while attitudes on additional items were significant negatively with the MICA total score (all $P < 0.01$). These findings suggest negative attitudes towards people with mental disorders among CAWs are common, especially among older staff. Community policemen suggest that they applied stereotypes of "violent mentally ill" people to all people they deal with who have mental disorders. The results also indicate human rights are being paid some attention to now, but need to be further continually improved in the future. Strategies for improving such negative attitudes and reducing the perceived stigma and discrimination should be carried out towards particular staff groups in an anti-stigma programme in Guangzhou, China.