

Abstract

Introduction: Mental illness is a global health crisis which results in significant morbidity and is a major factor that influences the social determinants of health of individuals, families, and communities. In Kenya, the Mental Health Act cap 248 (Laws of Kenya) prescribes procedures that must be followed in the admission of patients to a mental health hospital. This calls for the nurses to be skillful when handling the mentally ill patients at the OPD during admission. The aim of this study was to determine attitude and practice on admission procedures among nurses working at the National Teaching and Referral mental health Hospital.

Methods: This was a descriptive cross-sectional, with the National Teaching and Referral mental health Hospital being purposively selected. Systematic sampling was used to select the sample size of 132 nurses for the purposes of documenting participant's attitude on admission process while purposive sampling was used to observe participants for the purposes of documenting the admission practices at the outpatient department. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to document the participants' attitude whereas a checklist was used to document observations during the patient admission process. The collected data was analyzed using SPSS version 20 and presented in form of charts, tables, and narratives.

Findings: Majority of the respondents (67%) demonstrated a positive attitude in relation to handling mentally sick patients during admission. Various challenges to the implementation of the prescribed admission procedures were also identified by the respondents. Some 38 (29.7%) of the respondents cited inadequate staff per shift and suggested that the management should increase the number of staff per shift.

Recommendations: Measures to promote positive attitude by the nurses towards patient admission procedures should also be implemented. The study also recommends that the number of staff per shift should be increased in the OPD and the department expanded.