

ABSTRACT

Background: According to Stuart H & Arboleda - Florez (2001), of all the health problems, mental illnesses are poorly understood by the general public. Such poor knowledge and negative attitude towards mental illness threatens the effectiveness of patient care and rehabilitation.

Objective: The aim of this study was to explore the attitudes towards mental illness and help seeking behavior of family members of mentally ill patient.

Method: The study was an explorative and descriptive study. Purposive sampling method was used. There were 100 participants (male=62 & Female=38). Semi structured interview, Attribution of causes of psychological disorders (ACPD), Belief about psychological disorder (BPD), Mental health locus of control (MHLC) and Treatment seeking behavior (TSB) were used as the measure tools.

Results: Significant difference was found between psychosocial and supernatural cause. Likewise, significant difference was found among untrustworthiness & embarrassment, incurability and dangerousness. Findings on types of treatment seeking behavior (TSB) for mental illness showed significant differences ($p=.000<0.05$), except between folk treatment and family support ($p=.161>0.05$). No difference was found in internal and external locus of control ($p=.837>0.05$). There was no gender difference in belief, attribution, locus of control for mental illness and treatment seeking behavior in the study sample.

Conclusion: Mentally ill person was perceived untrustworthy & embarrassing, incurable and dangerous. Participants attributed psychosocial factors to cause mental illness and mostly preferred psychosocial and medical treatment than traditional, family help and no treatment. Mental health locus of control was neither internal nor external.