



## **Comparative study to assess the attitude towards mental illness between second year and fourth year B.Sc. Nursing students in selected colleges in Vijayapur**

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### **Abstract**

Nursing as a profession has to meet the needs and/or the problems of the society. Mental health problems are on the increase and it is imperative that all nurses be prepared to deal with people who are having mental health problems. Hence mental health nursing was incorporated into the undergraduate nursing programme with the purpose or objective of creating awareness, among nursing graduates, regarding mental disorder, and thereby developing a positive attitude towards mental illness. The present examination system emphasizes on the evaluation of change in knowledge and skill rather than attitudinal change after a prescribed course. Attitudinal change being an important objective of the mental health nursing course, the investigator had undertaken a study to compare the attitude towards mental illness, of a group of B.Sc. Nursing students who have not undergone mental health nursing course with that of another group of B.Sc. Nursing students who have completed the said course. This study reveals the effectiveness of variables like a Mental Health Nursing course, in terms of bringing out an attitudinal change in students towards mental illness.

**Method:** A descriptive survey approach was used for the study. The setting was under taken in Bldeas Shri B M Patil Institute of Nursing sciences Vijayapur Karnataka. Multi staged Proportionate Random Sampling was used to select the colleges and simple random sampling by lottery method was used to select the subjects. Opinion about Mental Illness (OMI) scale by Cohen and Strueing was used to collect the data. The domains covered are namely Authoritarianism, Benevolence, Mental Health Ideology, Social Restrictiveness, and Interpersonal Etiology which measures the attitude towards mental illness. On the OMI scale, the subjects respond to each item by checking one of the six alternatives: Strongly agree, Agree, Not sure but probably agree, Not sure but probably disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree. The tool was administered to 100 second year B.Sc. Nursing students and 100 fourth year nursing students.

**Results:** The collected data was analyzed by descriptive and inferential statistics. Majority 99% of the second-year students and 96% of the fourth year students belonged to the completed age group of sixteen to twenty one years at the time of admission. Most of the subjects (78%; 89% respectively) belonged to Christian religion. Less than half (39%) of the both groups had previous exposure with mental illness.

Majority of the students of the second year and fourth year nursing students possessed a moderate attitude towards the five factors on the OMI scale. Majority (93%) of the fourth year students felt that mentally ill people need some amount of restriction, even after the completion of mental health nursing course.

All the hypotheses were accepted. There was a significant difference between the second year and fourth year B.Sc. Nursing students with regard to the mean scores obtained on factors like authoritarianism ( $t=0.024$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), mental health ideology ( $t=0.036$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), social restrictiveness ( $t=0.001$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and interpersonal etiology ( $t=0.011$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). No significant difference was found between the second and fourth year nursing students in benevolence ( $t=0.697$ ,  $P>0.05$ ).

**Interpretation:** Findings of the study indicate that most of the students of second- and fourth-year B.Sc. Nursing students held a moderate or neutral attitude towards the five factors on the OMI scale. Also it was revealed that the group who have undergone the mental health nursing course differ significantly from the other group, who have not undergone the said course in the matter of their attitude towards mental illness on the five domains of attitude as given in the OMI scale.

**Conclusion:** Nurses are expected to provide holistic care to the mentally ill patients and their relatives for that they should have sound theoretical and practical backing provided through specialized training in the respective field.

**Keywords:** Attitude, mental illness, B.Sc Nursing

### **Introduction**

Mental health is the balanced development of the individual's personality and emotional attitudes which enable him to live harmoniously with himself, his fellow human being and his environment. Unfortunately the

mentally ill have lost this equilibrium and need help from the health personnel<sup>[1]</sup>. Psychiatric patients often have low self esteem and an awareness of social stigma and are particularly vulnerable to the attitudes and behaviour of mental health professional who are directly involved in their

care<sup>[11]</sup>.

Though the magnitude of mental illness and mental health problems are fast increasing, the attention given to this area of health by the society, political system and even the health care agencies are minimal. The reason for this can be attributed mainly to the existing attitude of the society towards mental illness and the mentally ill.

The current reports on mental health statistics show that there is as an acute dearth of psychiatric services in India, hence maximizing the health care delivery has become a priority<sup>[2]</sup>. There is therefore a need to concentrate upon undergraduate mental health nursing course as means to increase the available number of professional nurses to manage persons who are mentally ill. The nurses thus trained have to work as 'change agents' to change the attitude of people who are directly and indirectly involved with the care of the mentally ill. For this, each nurse should first develop a realistic and positive attitude towards mental illness and the mentally ill.

Nursing profession also has given serious consideration to the increasing mental health problems and the resulting needs of the society. Mental Health Nursing course was incorporated into the under graduate programme in nursing with the aim of meeting the increasing mental health problems of the society effectively<sup>[8]</sup>. On completion of the course, students are expected to become aware of the common mental disorders, develop a positive attitude towards mentally ill and demonstrate initial skill in caring people who are suffering from mental disorders.

One of the major trends seen during the last few decades is a change from "Close" system to "open" system of psychiatric care, which is from a traditional autocratic secure mental hospital system to an "open" system with a wide range of flexibility. General hospital psychiatry is a part of this open system<sup>[8]</sup>.

The acute dearth of psychiatric nurses, as reported by the current mental health statistics indicates that for some reason or other, nurses are hesitating to opt for this specialty area for their practice. It means that our profession has failed to meet the growing mental health needs of the country by producing inadequate number of specialized nurses. The fears of psychological and physical assault are wrongly anticipated even though they are full-fledged nurses responsible to meet the health needs of society, including mental health needs. The inadequate facility available in India for higher studies in mental health nursing shows that there is a less demand for

this specialty area. The above discussed factors indicate the negative attitude of nurses towards mental illness or mental health problem, which keeps perpetuating to community as well as to the junior students who work with nurses<sup>[9]</sup>.

Today's nursing students are tomorrow's nurses. Nurses are expected to provide holistic care to the mentally ill patients and their relatives for that they should have sound theoretical and practical backing provided through specialized training in the respective field. It is presumed that in the absence of such a background these nurses may still carry with them misconceptions about the mental illness due to the superstitions, ignorance and stigma<sup>[1]</sup>.

The investigator, from his past experience has found that eh student nurses who are posted in the psychiatric ward express dissatisfaction and difficulty in caring for mentally

ill patients. They are often puzzled and frustrated by the bizarre and unpredictable behaviour of these patients. There is a feeling of insecurity arising out of lack of knowledge and skills in caring of these patients and they are often preoccupied by concern for their own safety.

## Materials and Methods

### Statement of the Problem

Comparative study to assess the attitude towards mental illness between second year and fourth year B.Sc. Nursing students in selected colleges in Vijayapur.

### Objectives of the Study

#### The objectives of the study were to

- To determine the attitude towards mental illness of fourth year B.Sc. Nursing students who have completed the mental health nursing course by OMI scale.
- To assess the attitude towards mental illness of second year B. Sc. Nursing students who have not undergone the course of mental health nursing by OMI scale.
- To compare the attitude of fourth year B. Sc. nursing students with that of second year B. Sc. Nursing students towards mental illness.

### Assumptions

#### This study assumes that

- Attitude can be measured and it varies from individual to individual.
- Students response will indicate the attitude towards the mental illness.
- Learning of mental illness will influence the attitude towards the mental illness.
- Knowledge helps in the development of attitude.

### Hypotheses

The study is based on the following hypothesis and this will be tested at 0.05 levels of significance

H<sub>1</sub>: The mean authoritarian score of the second year students on the OMI scale will be significantly higher than the Fourth year students.

H<sub>2</sub>: There will be a significant difference between the mean benevolence score of the second year and fourth year of B.Sc. Nursing students.

H<sub>3</sub>: The mean score of mental health ideology factor of fourth year B.Sc. Nursing students will be significantly higher than the second year B.Sc. Nursing students.

H<sub>4</sub>: The mean score of the second year B.Sc. Nursing students on social restrictiveness will be significantly higher than the fourth year B.Sc. Nursing students.

H<sub>5</sub>: The mean score of interpersonal etiology factor of fourth year B.Sc. Nursing students will be significantly higher than the second year B.Sc. Nursing students.

### Population

A population is any group of individuals that have one or more characteristics in common that are of interest to the researcher. In this study, population includes In this study the population consists of second year B.Sc. Nursing students and fourth year B.Sc. Nursing students

**Sample**

Sample refers to a subset of a population selected to participate in a research study [13]. In this study, the sample consists of 100 second year B.Sc. Nursing students and 100 fourth year B.Sc. Nursing students.

**Sampling Technique**

Sampling defines the process of selecting a group of people or other elements with which conduct a study. In the present study the samples were selected by using simple random technique.

**Criteria for Sample Selection**

The following were the inclusive and exclusive criteria for the selection of the samples.

**Inclusion criteria**

**The study will include the patients who are**

- Students who are studying in the selected colleges.
- Students who are interested to participate in the study.
- Fourth year B.Sc. Nursing students who have completed mental health nursing course in terms of attendance as per the university rules
- Second year B.Sc. Nursing students who have not undergone prescribed mental health nursing course

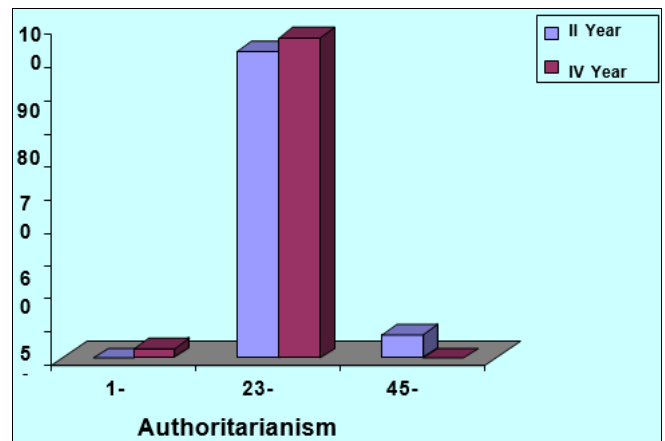
**Exclusion criteria**

The study will not include the patients who are Fourth year students who do not have attendance in the mental health nursing course as per the university requirement.

**Results**

**Table 1:** Frequency and percentage distribution of sample characteristics of B.Sc. Nursing second year and fourth year students. N= 100 +100

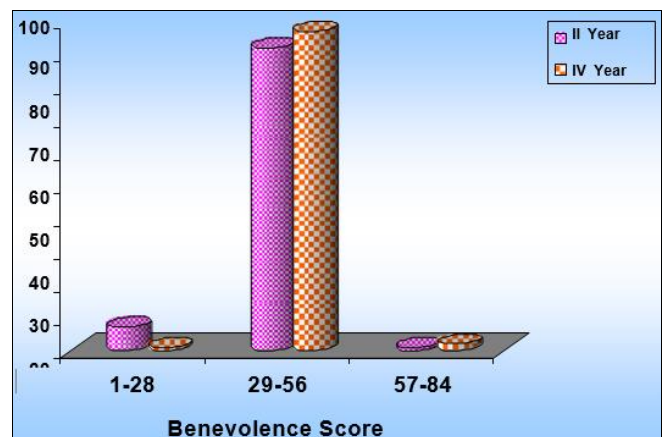
| Sl. No. | Variable                 | B.Sc. Nursing II year |            | B.Sc. Nursing IV year |            |
|---------|--------------------------|-----------------------|------------|-----------------------|------------|
|         |                          | Frequency             | Percentage | Frequency             | Percentage |
| 1.      | <b>Sex</b>               |                       |            |                       |            |
|         | Male                     | 19                    | 19         | 16                    | 16         |
|         | Female                   | 81                    | 81         | 84                    | 84         |
| 2.      | <b>Age (in years)</b>    |                       |            |                       |            |
|         | 16-18                    | 82                    | 82         | 75                    | 75         |
|         | 19-21                    | 17                    | 17         | 21                    | 21         |
|         | 22-24                    | 01                    | 01         | 04                    | 04         |
| 2.      | <b>Religion</b>          |                       |            |                       |            |
|         | Hindu                    | 22                    | 22         | 11                    | 11         |
|         | Christian                | 78                    | 78         | 89                    | 89         |
|         | Muslim                   | -                     | -          | -                     | -          |
| 3.      | <b>Previous Exposure</b> |                       |            |                       |            |
|         | Yes                      | 31                    | 31         | 31                    | 31         |
|         | No                       | 69                    | 69         | 69                    | 69         |
| 4.      | <b>If Yes,</b>           |                       |            |                       |            |
|         | Family                   | 9                     | 29.03      | 13                    | 41.94      |
|         | Neighbour                | 6                     | 19.35      | 5                     | 16.13      |
|         | Friends                  | 4                     | 12.92      | 6                     | 19.35      |
|         | Society                  | 12                    | 38.70      | 7                     | 22.58      |



**Fig 1:** Authoritarianism

The students obtained in the OMI scale. The authoritarianism scores were divided into three groups i.e. 1-22, 23-44 and 45-66 which indicated negative attitude, neutral attitude and a positive attitude towards that factor, or it indicated that the higher score, more positive will be the attitude towards the factor.

Majority, 93% of second year students and 97% of fourth year students showed a neutral attitude towards authoritarianism. 3% of the fourth year students showed a negative attitude towards authoritarianism and 7% of second year students showed a positive attitude towards authoritarianism.



**Fig 2:** Benevolence score

The attitude scores were divided into three groups i.e. 1-28 (not benevolent); 29-56 (moderately benevolent); 57-84 (highly benevolent). Most of the subjects, 92% of second year and 97% of fourth year students were moderately benevolent; whereas 1% of the fourth year students were not benevolent as against 7% of not benevolent of second years. It infers that less number of students in fourth year possessed a highly benevolent attitude to mentally ill patients.

Table 4 and figure 11 was grouped into three groups i.e. 1-15 (poor mental health ideology); c16-30 (moderate mental health ideology); 31-46 (good mental health ideology). Most of the subjects, 81% of second year and 82% of fourth year students were obtained moderate mental health ideology; whereas 17% of the fourth year students and 10% of second year students possessed good mental health ideology. It

infers that more number of students in fourth year possessed a highly benevolent attitude to mentally ill patients. 9% of second year students and 1% of fourth year students secured score between 1-15. It shows that more number of students of the fourth year students possessed a good mental health ideology when compared to the second year students.

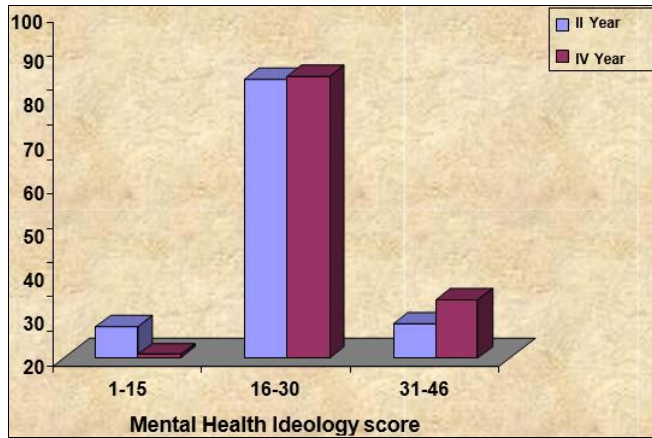


Fig 3: Mental health ideology score

Table 2: Comparison of the Mental Health Ideology attitude of the second and fourth year students towards mental illness N=100+100

| Group   | Mean  | S.D  | 't' | Remarks              |
|---------|-------|------|-----|----------------------|
| II Year | 24.55 | 4.90 |     | Significant at 0.036 |
| IV Year | 25.98 | 4.64 |     | 0.05 level           |

The data collected on the mental health ideology factor, as presented in Table 9, showed that the mean scores of both the groups were almost the same ( $X_1=24.55$ ;  $X_2= 25.98$ ). 't' test was run to find out any significant difference between the scores obtained by the two groups, and the calculated 't' value was obtained as 0.036. Since this value is greater than the table value ( $p>0.05$ ) the null hypothesis was not accepted. That is, the data showed a significant difference between the mental health ideology of both groups of the students.

**Nursing Implications**

The findings of the study have certain important implications for the nursing profession- service, education, administration and nursing research of all, the role of nurse in improvement and maintenance of mental health in client and family members is very important.

**A. Nursing Practice**

If the students show a positive attitude to mentally ill patients, the quality of care provided to the patients will improve. Patients will feel comfortable and satisfied with the holistic care. It will bring more job satisfaction to the nurses and will attract more professionals to the field of mental health.

**B. Nursing Education**

Findings of the present study have an implication in nursing education. This study highlights the need to instill in the students a more positive attitude towards mental illness, which will help in attaining the educational objectives. Curriculum can be revised by increasing the theory and

practical hours so as to bring out students with more positive attitude. A curriculum in which mental health strands are integrated throughout the course may have a more lasting effect on the upbringing of a positive attitude in the students. The faculty members who may not have had a chance to be exposed to mental health nursing in the programme of study or during their experience after completion of the study may be oriented to the growing mental health problems and the significance of having a better attitude for managing those problems effectively through seminars, lectures, workshops etc., so that they will have a positive influence on the development of a positive attitude in the students.

**C. Nursing Administration**

The findings of the present study will help nurse administrators to organize and plan for various programmes to maintain positive mental health of the students. They can be aware of the attitude of the students towards mental illness and can formulate policies to improve the attitude and can make modifications accordingly. Various clinical methods of teaching can be planned which enables students to give better patient care and there by improve their attitude. Nurse administrators can organize continuing nursing education, workshop, and discussions for nursing students and motivate them to give holistic care.

**D. Nursing Research**

The present study is an attempt to assess the attitude of nursing students towards mental illness. On the basis of this descriptive study nurse researcher can design further research to develop new problem solving and prevention strategies. Implication of this study for nurse researcher can be viewed from the clinical experience of the students in psychiatric wards.

**Conclusion**

The researcher felt a deep sense of satisfaction and fulfillment for having undertaken the study. The study provided the investigator with deeper insight about the students. The direction from the guide and expert opinions and help from the staff, students made the study fruitful and interesting.

**Conflict of Interest**

Not available

**Financial Support**

Not available

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