MENTAL HEALTH AND RISK PROFILE OF CLIENTS ATTENDING THE ELDERLY CLINICS AT MAWLAMYINE TOWNSHIP

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ABSTRACT

Aging is not entirely a negative process, but old age is undoubtedly a difficult period, worsened by the inadequacy of social support to care for their aged. The elderly is faced with several health and social challenges which created a gap in traditional family system that carters the well-being of aged. The study examined and focused the risk profile of the socio-demographic, behavioral, physical diseases, disability, adverse life events and social problems of the elderly that affect the mental well-being of the elderly with the outcome of cognitive impairment, anxiety and depression. A cross sectional study was carried out among 196 elderly attending the elderly clinics at Mawlamyine Township to assess mental health and risk profile. The research instrument was Mini-mental State Examination, Geriatric Anxiety Inventory and Geriatric Depression scale. The factors associated with cognitive impairment are the socio-demographic characteristics such as age (p=0.002), sex (p=0.01), income (p=0.003), education (p=0.009), occupational status (p=0.047), marital status (p=0.045), religion (p=0.01), number of children (p=0.036),betel chewing (p=0.044), physical disease of hypertension (p=0.031), heart disease (p=0.009), adverse life events of financial crisis (p=0.022), social problems of isolation (p=0.013), lack of family support (p=0.027). Furthermore the anxiety in the study was statistically significant associations with socio-demographic characteristics of age (p=0.02), sex (p<0.001), educational status (p=0.03), religion (p=0.008), number of children (p=0.02), behavioral risk profile of betel chewing (p=0.024), reported heart disease (p =0.007), diabetes mellitus (p=0.045), adverse life events of experience of violence (p =0.023), financial crisis (p=0.003), social deprivation (p=0.02), and social problems of isolation (p<0.001). Moreover, there are significant associations between age (p=0.02), sex (p=0.035), educational status (p=0.045), occupational status (p=0.025), religion (p=0.01), betel chewing (p<0.001), reported heart diseases (p value<0.001), disability p=0.039), experience of violence (p=0.004), financial crisis (p=0.002), social deprivation (p =0.026), social problems of isolation (p<0.001) and depression. This findings showed that risk profiles of socio-demographic, physical diseases, adverse life events and social problems has significant effect on the psychological well-being of the elderly. The findings of the study emphasize the importance of the mental health among the elderly and the need of health promotion interventions to address the risk profile for mental health. Screening the elderly for cognitive impairment, anxiety and depression is mandatory to get early diagnosis of individuals and promote mental health referral system. Social support both community and family members should show more love, care and attention to the elderly.