



A STUDY ON CHANGES OF ATTITUDE OF INTERNS TOWARDS PSYCHIATRY AFTER CLINICAL ROTATION IN A TERTIARY CARE HOSPITAL

Psychiatry

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: Psychiatry has undergone several developments in the past 50 years. It is important that more and more psychiatrists were required to fill the gap.

AIMS: The aim of our study was to find any difference in the attitude (MCRS) of interns towards psychiatry before and after clinical rotation in psychiatry and also find any association among male and female interns.

MATERIALS AND METHODS: The study was conducted in the Department of Psychiatry at R. G. Kar Medical College from March 2018 to January 2019.

The sample comprised 110 interns who consented to participate in the study. Those interns who had not completed their 2 weeks' posting in psychiatry and those with major psychiatric illnesses/substance use disorders, family history of psychiatric illness, and who had previous contact with psychiatrists were excluded from the study. Increase in MCRS score was considered as an indication of improvement in attitude toward psychiatry.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION: We found that in MCRS score before postings, the mean of MCRS score (mean \pm s.d.) of the patients was $4.2091 \pm .1045$. In MCRS score after postings, the mean of MCRS score (mean \pm s.d.) of the patients was $4.9627 \pm .2949$. Mean MCRS score was significantly higher after posting ($p < 0.0001$). It was found that in female, the mean of MCRS score before postings (mean \pm s.d.) of the patients was $4.2500 \pm .0990$. In male, the mean of MCRS score before postings (mean \pm s.d.) of the patients was $4.1964 \pm .1035$. Mean MCRS score was significantly higher in female interns compared to male interns ($p = 0.0217$).

CONCLUSION: We concluded that attitude of interns significantly improved toward psychiatry patients and the specialty after 2 weeks of clinical rotation and attitude of female interns toward psychiatry were significantly higher compared to male interns.

KEYWORDS

Attitude, Intern, MCRS score, Before and After postings.

INTRODUCTION

Psychiatry has undergone several developments in the past 50 years. The occurrence of major mental and behavioral disorders in India is estimated to be 65 per 1000 population, which translates to approximately 70 million patients. In one study showed that only one trained psychiatrist is presented for every 100,000 people with mental illness in the country.² It is important that more and more psychiatrists were required to fill the gap.

Internship is a vital and mandatory component of undergraduate medical curriculum in India. Interns are exposed to different specialties during the tenure of 1 year, which not only helps them in thoughtful different specialty-related aspects, but also their own preferences and attitudes.

Psychiatry, as a specialty, has been plagued by stigma³ and a negative attitude,⁴ which is not only limited to the general public,⁵ but also very common among the doctors.^{6,7} This is despite the incredible advancements that have been made in the neurobiological thoughtful and treatment of psychiatric illnesses. The reasons for persistence of stigma could be many, as well as relative lack of objectivity compared to other medical illnesses such as diabetes mellitus.⁸ There are many reasons for these negative attitudes especially towards psychiatric illness⁹:

- Lack of correct information about mental illness.
- Lack of contact with persons with mental illness.
- Lack of knowledge with mental illness.

The aim of our study was to find any difference in the attitude (MCRS) of interns towards psychiatry before and after clinical rotation in psychiatry and also find any association among male and female interns.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in the Department of Psychiatry at R. G. Kar

Medical College from March 2018 to January 2019.

The sample comprised 110 interns who consented to participate in the study. Those interns who had not completed their 2 weeks' posting in psychiatry and those with major psychiatric illnesses/substance use disorders, family history of psychiatric illness, and who had previous contact with psychiatrists were excluded from the study.

Exclusion Criteria:

- Interns with main psychiatric illnesses/substance use disorders
- Interns with previous exposure to psychiatry which might have influenced their attitude toward psychiatry (as patients/as patients' relatives/as relatives of psychiatrists)

TOOLS:

The attitudes of interns toward psychiatry (represented by psychiatric illness) was evaluated using the Medical Condition Regard Scale (MCRS) which is basically a noncondition-specific scale to capture biases, emotions, and expectations generated by medical condition descriptors. It contains 11 items rated through a 6-point Likert's scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = not sure but probably disagree, 4 = not sure but probably agree, 5 = agree, and 6 = strongly agree). A total of 5 of the 11 items are worded negatively; therefore, these items are reverse-scored for analysis. The item number seven is slightly modified to suit Indian context (from wastage of medical dollars to wastage of money). Interns were assessed before and after completion of 2 weeks' compulsory rotational posting in psychiatry. Increase in MCRS score (minimum score-6, maximum score-66) was considered as an indication of improvement in attitude toward psychiatry.¹⁰

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

The mean of age (mean \pm s.d.) of the patients was $23.3182 \pm .9855$ years. The mean of MCRS score before postings (mean \pm s.d.) of the patients was $4.2091 \pm .1045$. The mean of MCRS score after postings (mean \pm s.d.) of the patients was $4.9627 \pm .2949$.

In MCRS score before postings, the mean of MCRS score (mean \pm s.d.) of the patients was 4.2091 \pm .1045. In MCRS score after postings, the mean of MCRS score (mean \pm s.d.) of the patients was 4.9627 \pm .2949. Distribution of mean MCRS score vs. group was statistically significant ($p < 0.0001$).

In female, the mean of MCRS score after postings (mean \pm s.d.) of the patients was 4.9577 \pm .2873. In male, the mean of MCRS score after postings (mean \pm s.d.) of the patients was 4.9643 \pm .2989. Distribution of mean MCRS score after postings vs. sex was not statistically significant ($p = 0.9212$).

In female, the mean of MCRS score before postings (mean \pm s.d.) of the patients was 4.2500 \pm .0990. In male, the mean of MCRS score before postings (mean \pm s.d.) of the patients was 4.1964 \pm .1035. Distribution of mean MCRS score before postings vs. sex was statistically significant ($p = 0.0217$).

DISCUSSION

The study was assessing the changes in attitude of interns toward psychiatry after a 2-week clinical rotation in psychiatry. The interns' exposure during clinical rotation typically includes supervised evaluation of patients in outpatient department and wards, involvement in management planning and execution and clinical discussions during daily ward rounds. For the purpose of assessment, psychiatric illness for which the attitude was assessed by using MCRS. A study at Nigeria by Adebowale et al.¹¹ suggested that the 4-week clinical rotation in psychiatry resulted in increased mean attitudinal score. Another study in Spain by Bulbena et al.¹² revealed improvement of attitude toward psychiatry after training in psychiatry.

We found that in MCRS score before postings, the mean of MCRS score (mean \pm s.d.) of the patients was 4.2091 \pm .1045. In MCRS score after postings, the mean of MCRS score (mean \pm s.d.) of the patients was 4.9627 \pm .2949. Mean MCRS score was significantly higher after

posting ($p < 0.0001$).

There are limited data available on the impact of medical education and training on the attitude toward psychiatry in the Indian scenario. Yadav et al proved that interns had an overall favorable attitude toward psychiatric patients when compared with MBBS students. In this study, the degree of change in attitude was higher among interns when compared with 1st year MBBS students.¹³

It was found that in female, the mean of MCRS score before postings (mean \pm s.d.) of the patients was 4.2500 \pm .0990. In male, the mean of MCRS score before postings (mean \pm s.d.) of the patients was 4.1964 \pm .1035. Mean MCRS score was significantly higher in female interns compared to male interns ($p = 0.0217$).

Gulati et al.¹⁴ in their study concluded that 2 weeks' exposure to psychiatry as per the current curriculum seems to have a limited influence in bringing a positive change in attitudes toward psychiatry. This disparity in the findings could be due to various factors like the extent of engagement of interns in clinical care, orientation provided by the faculty, and the types of patients seen. Even the treatment response of the patients seen by the interns in the short duration of 2 weeks can have a bearing on the young impressionable minds.

The attitude of interns towards Psychiatry improved following a 2 week clinical rotation in Psychiatry. Further studies are needed to better understand the factors that may influence the attitude of interns.¹⁵

CONCLUSION

This study found that attitude of interns significantly improved toward psychiatry patients and the specialty after 2 weeks of clinical rotation. We also showed that attitude of female interns toward psychiatry were significantly higher compared to male interns.

Future studies are helpful for better understand the factors that may influence the attitude of interns.

Table: Distribution of mean Age, MCRS score before postings and MCRS score after postings

| | Number | Mean | SD | Minimum | Maximum | Median |
|----------------------------|--------|---------|-------|---------|---------|---------|
| Age | 110 | 23.3182 | .9855 | 22.0000 | 25.0000 | 23.0000 |
| MCRS score before postings | 110 | 4.2091 | .1045 | 4.0000 | 4.4000 | 4.2000 |
| MCRS score after postings | 110 | 4.9627 | .2949 | 4.5000 | 5.3000 | 5.1000 |

Table: Distribution of mean MCRS score vs. Group and mean MCRS score after postings, MCRS score before postings with sex

| | | Number | Mean | SD | Minimum | Maximum | Median | p-value |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------|--------|-------|---------|---------|--------|---------|
| MCRS score | MCRS score before postings | 110 | 4.2091 | .1045 | 4.0000 | 4.4000 | 4.2000 | <0.0001 |
| | MCRS score after postings | 110 | 4.9627 | .2949 | 4.5000 | 5.3000 | 5.1000 | |
| MCRS score after postings | Female | 26 | 4.9577 | .2873 | 5.3000 | 4.4000 | 5.0500 | 0.9212 |
| | Male | 84 | 4.9643 | .2989 | 5.3000 | 5.3000 | 5.1000 | |
| MCRS score before postings | Female | 26 | 4.2500 | .0990 | 4.1000 | 4.4000 | 4.2000 | 0.0217 |
| | Male | 84 | 4.1964 | .1035 | 4.0000 | 4.4000 | 4.2000 | |

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