Assessing the Knowledge of Universal Student about Mental Illness in Al-Najaf City

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Abstract--- Mental health and mental illness are important topics for every individual, family, and every one in society. Increasing this knowledge about mental illness is important and necessary for all members in society. A cross-sectional study was included (80) universal students. The study aimed to assess the students knowledge about mental illness, as well as, to find any significant relationship among the level of knowledge and their demographic characteristic. Purposive sample used to select students to participate in study. A tool of study contain two main parts. First part included question related to demographic characteristics of students. Second part related to assess the knowledge of mental illness on student. The results revealed (57.5%) of students had moderate level of knowledge about mental illness, while (18.75%) had good level of knowledge. More than the study result showed non significant relationships between selected demographic characteristic of students and their knowledge. The study is recommended to establish special multidisciplinary plan among Ministries of Health and Education to increasing the knowledge about mental illness and Further study should be conducted on large representative sample to know the public knowledge in society about mental illness, especially focusing on young people.

Keywords--- Mental Illness, Mental Disorder, Psychiatric Disorder, Knowledge, Student.

I. INTRODUCTION

Mental disorders are one of challenges facing the world today, and it is universal affect all societies regardless of gender, age, or income. The community showed poor knowledge concerning mental illness, inability to identify types of illness, and have negative perception about mental illness (ARC, 2016).

There are some people who believe that mental illness can not be treated or cured and they are dangoures and aggressive, so that many people keep long distance away from patients with mental illness and avoid the relationships with them (Ando, et al, 2013).

The perception of the causes of mental illness and detection of the early manifestation of mental disorders by the patient relatives is of utmost importance in treatment and control of behavior disorders. Also ignorance of the knowledge of mental illness will delay referring the patient to the official resource. Instead different and traditional approaches will be used for the treatment of psychotic patients(Alkhafaji.A.M, 2011).

The challenges faced to people with mental illness are many, including the disability and a weakness they suffered from mental illness, as well as their misunderstanding and awareness of the psychiatric illness that afflicted them. (Mohammed and Khudair, 2014).

Youth are back bone to the nation. They can change their community if they are learn and have a good knowledge, so they function as an effective member of society. Empowering youth and engaging them in

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community allows to interact with adults and have guidance as they develop the knowledge and skills needed to make decisions about mental illness in the community.

Distinguish the diagnosis of psychiatric disorders also depends on assessment of customs and traditions and cultures of the original community. Each society have special beliefs about psychiatric disease and these concepts affect their understanding and treats patients with mental illness, however. According to this understanding of these diseases is determined by the extent of their cooperation or avoid the psychiatric patients as well as those who link the stigma attached with the diseases or they have the wrong understanding of psychiatric diseases, these will not be looking for the treatment and will have negative attitude toward psychiatric patients. (Chaudhury et al., 2011).

In the subject of Mental illness, the majority of the members of the community carry the wrong beliefs and misconceptions of psychiatric diseases where they deem as mad where they consider that psychiatric patient is crazy, risk and aggressive, and therefore must be isolated away from society (Fresó et al., 2012).

Generally, in deferent societies there are negative attitudes and faulty conceptions regarding mental disorder due to the social stigma which surrounding it, also most people may feel uncomfortable to talking about topic of mental illness with their family or others. so this will lead to depending on other traditional sources of information such as news stories, dramatic representations in movies , overheard conversations, television commercials advertising, without any evidence base (DeSocio et al., 2006).

II. METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional study was conducted on university students in Najaf governorate to assess their knowledge about mental illness. This was done by using of a questionnaire which was designed by the researcher with value of Cronbach's alpha 0.80. It included information on the knowledge about the causes and treatment of mental illness.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sample size of the sample who participated in the study is (80) students who were randomly selected to participate and complete the questionnaire and they should not be from the medical group. the data were collected during April 5th 2017 to April 26th 2017.

III. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

By using computer software SPSS v.22 and Microsoft Office Excel (2010) to analysis data and determine whether the study will achieve their goals or not. The researchers checked data void of mistakes and missing, then used computer software to analyze and extract the results.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Statistics of demographical characteristic of students

Variables	Statistics	
Age	Frequency	Percent
18-20	62	77.50
21-23	18	22.50
Total	80	100.0

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	**47**	**58.75**
Female	33	41.25
Total	80	100.0
Marital Status	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Single	**77**	**96.25**
Married	3	3.75
Total	80	100.0
Residence	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Urban	**53**	**66.25**
Urban & Rural	22	27.50
Rural	5	6.25
Total	80	100.0
Monthly Income	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Enough	14	17.50
Not quite enough	**41**	**51.25**
Not Enough	25	31.25
Total	80	100.0

This table shows the distribution of demographic characteristics of studied and control groups. This table shows that more than half of participants are in age group of (18-20) years old,(77.5%). Regarding variable gender most of student were male(**58.75** %,).

According to marital status the table shows that most of them are single (96.25%).In regard to residence the table shows that highest percentage of students (66.25%) from urban area and. Also it appear from the table that (51.25 %) of participants had not quite enough monthly income, while(17.5%) of them had enough monthly income.

Table 2: level of knowledge about mental illness

Level of knowledge	frequency	Percentage
low	19	23.75
Moderate	**46**	**57.50**
High	15	18.75
Total	80	100.0

This table indicated that most of participants in current study are have moderate level of knowledge about mental illness (57.5%), while just (18.75%) has high level of knowledge.

Table 3: The relationships between level of knowledge and demographic characteristics of students.

Demographic and related data with aspects correlations	chi-square accounted	chi-square tabled	df	p-value	Assessment
Age	**0.847**	**1.20**	**2**	**0.655**	**NS**
Gender	**1.905**	**2.70**	**2**	**0.386**	**NS**
Marital status	**4.411**	**0.30**	**2**	**0.110**	**NS**
Residence	**7.876**	**0.30**	**4**	**0.096**	**NS**
Monthly income	**3.814**	**0.90**	**4**	**0.432**	**NS**

The table presented non significant association between the ages, gender, and knowledge of mental illness, also there are non significant association among marital status, residence, monthly income with the total score of knowledge about mental illness.

V. DISCUSSION OF KNOWLEDGE

The results of the present study showed that the level of knowledge of students regarding mental illness was moderate level (57.5%).The study results were identical to the results of (Sadik S et al, 2010), who found that the knowledge in fairly reasonable rate, also results of (Alkhafaji A, 2011), who found that there are lack of knowledge regarding causes, management and prognosis of mental disorders. While other studies founded that there are poor knowledge about mental in their societies (Gureje O, et al, 2005; Ganesh K, 2011; Yongsi H, 2015; Parikh N et al, 2016), this differences in results may be due to the differences in selected sample and also difference in some aspect of culture.

The Relationships between The Demographical Characteristics of Participants and Levels of Knowledge.

The results of the present study showed that there is no significant correlation between some selected demographical variables of the study participants (age, gender, marital status, residence, and monthly income) and their response to knowledge about mental illness in the control group of the study. While there is a significant relationship between variables (age and gender) relative to the response to the program that has been tested for the purpose of increasing the effectiveness of knowledge about mental illness in the experimental group of the study. This results contradicting the findings of the study of (Durand-Zaleski I, et al, 2012),who found that in general about mental illness more recurrently aware were women ($p<0.01$), it is likely that the reason for this difference is the nature of the sample that was selected during the study.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

- Most of participants are male from age group(18-20) years, single, live in urban area, and have not quite monthly income
- There are no significant associations among selected demographical characteristics (age, gender, marital status, residence, and monthly income) and level of knowledge about mental illness in control group.
- The level of knowledge about mental illness for participants are moderate.

VII. RECOMMENDATION

A.   Activating the role of health education for mental health & illness subjects in specialized units in the primary health care centers as well as in centers and units in hospitals dedicated to the care of mental illnesses.

B.   Further study should be conducted on large representative sample to know the public knowledge in society of about mental illness, especially focusing on young people.

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