

**ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE**

DOI: 10.26727/NJRCM.2019.8.4.262-268

Year: 2019 Vol: 8 Issue: 4. Oct.-Dec. Page: 262-268

**Attitude of medical students towards psychiatry and person with psychiatric disorders: A comparative descriptive study from a tertiary health care institution in Puducherry**

Varsha Marimuthu<sup>1</sup>, Bijaya Nanda Naik<sup>2</sup>

**Affiliation:** 1MBBS pre-final year MBBS student, 2 Assistant Professor, Dept. of Community medicine, SVMCH & RC, Pondicherry

**Date of Submission** : 25-10-2019

**Date of online Publication** : 14-12-2019

**Date of Acceptance** : 26-11-2019

**Date of Print Publication** : 31-12-2019

**\*Author for correspondence:** Dr Bijaya Nanda Naik, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Community Medicine, Ariyur, SVMCH & RC, Pondicherry – 605102. E-mail; drnnbijaya@gmail.com

**ABSTRACT**

**Background:** The inadequacy in knowledge, attitude and skill acquired during undergraduate medical training hinders the primary care physicians to detect and manage mental illnesses. **Objective:** To compare the attitude of medical students towards psychiatry and individuals with mental illnesses based on their exposure to clinical psychiatry postings. **Methodology:** This cross section comparative descriptive study was conducted among medical students of a medical college in Pondicherry. A total of 123 third semester (comparison/unexposed group) and 109 seventh semester MBBS students were self administered the pre-tested study tool. (using OMS-HC). **Results:** Proportionally more participants in unexposed group attributed personal level factors as aetiology of mental illnesses. No significant difference was noted on feeling towards mentally ill patients between the two groups. However, nearly 30% of the total participants reported feeling of nervous, anger, hatred and fear towards mentally ill patients. Higher proportions of exposed students were found to have right knowledge about manageability of patients with psychiatry illnesses. Significantly higher proportion of exposed students were reported to consider psychiatry as career option (48% vs 28%,  $p < 0.05$ ). The exposed group of students were also found to have less stigmatization attitude towards mentally ill patients. **Conclusion:** Most of medical students in our study population have indifference or negative attitude towards psychiatry and mentally ill patients which was found to be improved slightly upon exposure to clinical psychiatry posting. Hence, proper implementation of psychiatry in undergraduate medical curriculum and increasing the duration of exposure to clinical psychiatry posting can change the attitude of medical students towards psychiatry and mentally ill patients, thereby increasing the mental health manpower.

**Key Words:** attitude, psychiatry, mental illness, medical undergraduates, OMS-HC