Mental illness is a growing global health issue. The existing theories including Emotional Contagion might suggest a potential family cluster of mental disorders. However, there is a dearth of nationally-representative research on the Familial Proportion (prevalence) of mental disorders among married couples. This study aimed to investigate the concordance of mental disorders among married couples and the associated factors. This retrospective cohort study used one million randomly sampled beneficiaries recorded from the National Health Insurance Databases from 2002 to 2013, which included 5,643 couples (11,286 individuals). The case and control groups were matched by identical gender and age. Mental disorders were defined by ICD-9-CM. Logistic regressions were performed in SAS 9.3. The Familial Proportion of mental disorders among the couples was 3.12%. Mental disorder status, age, beneficiary category, premium, comorbidity, and region of the independents were the factors significantly associated with the mental disorder onset of the dependents. The results identified the family clustering of mental disorders among the couples. If one spouse was diagnosed anxiety, the other was significantly more likely to suffer the same anxiety disorders (OR=2.516); with the same phenomena found in mood disorders (OR=2.915) and other mental disorders (OR=1.186). The findings were named “the Phenomena of Parallel Contagion” among the married couples. The characteristics of independents are the risk factors affecting the mental disorders status of their spouses. The authorities and healthcare organizations should utilize this “Parallel Contagion” and target the spouses of high risk to establish preventive intervention measures for mental disorders among couples.

Biography

Jong-Yi Wang completed his PhD from University of South Carolina and Post-doctoral studies from South Carolina Rural Health Research Center. He is an Associated Professor in the Department of Health Services Administration, China Medical University, Taiwan. He has published more than 17 SCI/SSCI papers in reputed journals. His specialties include mental health, health policy, health promotion, health disparities, and health care quality.

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