

2nd International Conference and Expo on

Holistic Medicine and Nursing

August 14-15, 2017 Toronto, Canada

Medication challenges for patients with severe mental illness: Experience and views of patients, caregivers and mental health care workers in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Ambikile Joel Seme

Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences, Tanzania

Background: Management of patients with mental disorders is inadequate in the majority of low and middle income countries. The main treatment modality for patients with severe mental disorders in these countries is *psychopharmacology*. Patients face a lot of challenges in meeting medication needs and high percentages of individuals who have severe mental disorders are not treated. Psychotropic medications are an important component of holistic care that provides treatment options for those suffering from mental illnesses. In Tanzania, mental health services face many challenges including inadequate mental health care providers, infrastructure, and medication supply, and relapse is a common problem among patients. This study aimed at exploring health facility psychotropic medication situation in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Method: A qualitative study was conducted, involving two focus group discussions with seven and nine caregivers in each group. Eleven in-depth interviews with four patients and seven mental health care providers at Temeke Municipality, Dar es Salaam, were conducted. Convenient sampling procedure was used. Interviews were audio-recorded in *Swahili* and transcribed, and qualitative content thematic analysis was used to analyze data.

Results: Four identified themes were attitudes of patients towards psychotropic medication, availability of psychotropic medications, financial concerns towards psychotropic medications, and coverage of free treatment policy.

Conclusion: There is a need to ensure adequate supply of psychotropic medications in the health facilities in order to address the public health problem of untreated mental illnesses. This calls for the government and other stakeholders to increase funding for essential psychotropic medications.

jambikile@muhas.ac.tz