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### Attitudes of nursing students towards individuals with mental illness before doing the mental health nursing course

The aim of this study was to examine the undergraduate nursing students' attitudes toward individuals with mental illness. Furthermore, it was important to study the perception, attitude, of our students regarding mental illness, which will help in improving the care given to the mentally ill in the hospitals or in the community. A total of 110 undergraduate students were selected using the stratified random method. Data for the study were collected through the use of a questionnaire. The data were coded and entered into SPSS version 20. The findings of this study indicated that 30% of the nursing students agreed that "the best way to treat the mentally ill is to keep them at the hospital for years", 59% disagreed with the statement. "Whenever a person starts showing signs of mental illness they should be taken to the health facility for treatment", and 34% reported that the mentally ill should not be spoken about their sexual practices. It is noteworthy to report that 61% of the respondents from this study would not be comfortable working with a mentally ill co-worker who is maintaining their treatment regimen. Reducing the stigmatization of mental illness continues to be an important goal for mental health professionals. Every student nurse needs to be grounded in the basic principles of communicating with the mentally ill patients and provide patient-centered care in a culturally sensitive way. Considering the results of the present study, it seems that revision of the teaching strategies and modification of mental health educational programs of nursing schools are necessary.

### Biography

Andrea Pusey Murray is a Senior Lecturer and Program Director for Undergraduate Nursing Program at the Caribbean School of Nursing, University of Technology, Jamaica (Papine Campus). She has published peer reviewed articles in journals such as *International Journal of Nursing Science*, *Journal of Biomedical Science and Engineering and Mental Health in Family Medicine*. She has authored a book chapter entitled, "Attendance and performance of undergraduate students in two nursing courses in a University in Jamaica", in *Advancing Education in the Caribbean and Africa* and co-authored "Cultural Voices and Human Rights: Case Exemplars" in the *Routledge Handbook of Global Mental Health Nursing*. Currently, she serves on the Curriculum and Development Committee - Nursing Council of Jamaica. She holds membership with the Nurses Association of Jamaica and Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing - Theta theta Chapter. Her research interests' focus on mental health, public health sexually transmitted infections and education.

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