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In India, misconceptions about mental illness are pervasive, and a substantial number of patients suffering from severe mental disorders seek non-professional care. 80% of the population still depends on indigenous treatments consisting of religious treatments, prayers, fasting, as also various witchcrafts and magical rituals

Ramesh Kumar Thukral
Dakshi Diagnostic Services Pvt. Limited, INDIA

In our country, the main culprit that is influencing people's attitudes toward mental illness is the stigma associated with mental disorders, which is rooted deep in the cultural beliefs and myths about mental disorders and that result in people avoiding association with individuals who suffer from these ailments. The stigmatization of individuals who are going through psychological distress creates hurdles for people from seeking mental health care; as a result, they may tend to seek help from traditional healers. Some people may visit a general physician for help because it is not as stigmatizing as it is to see mental health professionals. These individuals and their families turn to mental health services as a last resort. There have been many cases where some families have even registered patients under false names at our hospital / clinic to remain anonymous. In India, a substantial number of patients suffering from severe mental disorders seek non-professional care. A study on the treatment of psychiatric disorders in India observed that in view of the paucity of facilities, 80% of the population had to depend on indigenous treatments consisting of religious treatments consisting of prayers, fasting, and so on, as also various witchcrafts and magical rituals. The situation is more or less the same even today, and not surprisingly 68.5% of the cases in our study contacted faith healers as the primary helping agency. Although, the ancient wisdom may have some role in the treatment of mental disorders, there is a need for generating awareness in the psychiatric patients in India to get professional help. When after being tortured by the non-professional helping agencies, the patients avoid the illness and after few months, the symptoms relapse, the psychiatric treatment is then taken as a last resort when all other treatments had failed.

Biography

Ramesh Kumar Thukral, has done MBBS and MD (Psychiatry) from K.G.M.U., Lucknow, INDIA. Further, he has done D.C.M.N. from Delhi, INDIA. He has been in the Practice of Neuropsychiatry in Omnicare House, B-20, Sec-A, Mahanagar, Lucknow since last 30 years and Consultant Neuropsychiatrist in 'Sahara Hospital'. He is the CEO in "Dakshi Diagnostic Services Pvt. Limited": A centre for 3D Brain SPECT for Human Behaviour, Vital Bioenergy & Soul Imaging. He owns 16 Neuropsychiatric satellite centers and sub-centers under the banner of Lucknow Neuropsychiatric Centre. He has Approx 38 Participation in international conferences of Neuropsychiatry, and behavioral sciences, covering almost all the major countries of the world.

rpss2007@rediffmail.com
drrkthukralsoc@gmail.com

Notes:

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