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Nigila Ravichandran

Institute of Mental Health, Singapore

Does educational level influence sustained employment in patients with schizophrenia

Background & Aim: Schizophrenia is a chronic mental illness causing significant socio-occupational impairment. Although occupational opportunities usually correspond with educational qualifications, research shows that several factors influence employment among mentally ill. Higher education correlates with better outcome with rehabilitative measures like cognitive training. An observational study was conducted at the Institute of Mental Health (IMH), the tertiary mental healthcare and rehabilitation center at Singapore, to identify major variables associated with employment among patients with schizophrenia. In Singapore, all residents receive at least primary level education. The study aims to explore whether educational status determines employability and job sustainability in persons with schizophrenia.

Method: Residents of Singapore with DSM-IV diagnosis of Schizophrenia attending IMH clinics were included for study. Relevant data was collected from 120 consenting participants.

Result: Of the 120 participants, 49.2% had attained secondary education and 18.3% employed; 31.7% had university education and 15% were employed. In total, 38.3% were working at time of study and 60.8% in the past. 87.5% (43% secondary and 30% university educated, respectively) participants had rehabilitation potential as expressed by self-interest and past employment.

Conclusion: Educational level only facilitates initial job-seeking and does not ensure long-term employment; but it improves potential for rehabilitation, which in turn enhances job sustainability in mentally unwell persons.

Biography

Nigila Ravichandran MBBS (India), Master of Medicine (Psychiatry) (NUS Singapore), Dip Hypnotherapy (LCCH) Adjunct Assistant Professor, Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine (Singapore) Senior Lecturer, Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine (Singapore) Consultant, Psychiatrist, Institute of Mental Health (Singapore) 17 years of experience working in the field of mental health, in areas of clinical psychiatry, academic teaching and research Passion for community causes, speaker at Community events and forums, television and health fairs on mental wellness and mental health conditions Board member of Club2Care, charity organization, geared towards creating awareness about mental health, training and counselling community partners and building a mentally healthy society

nigila_ravichandran@imh.com.sg

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