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Help Seeking Attitude for Depression among Nursing Undergraduates in a Private Education Institute in Gampaha District, Sri Lanka

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Background: Depression is a psychological problem which affects undergraduates. Studies have shown that nursing undergraduates are more prone to have depression due to clinical training, academic workload, and night shifts.

Objectives: To study the attitudes of help seeking for depression among nursing undergraduates in a private institute in Gampaha district.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted at International Institute of Health Science, Welisara, a private educational institution, in Gampaha district by recruiting 151 nursing undergraduates. A vignette describing a peer suffering from depression was presented and participants were given a questionnaire based on the case vignette, constructed according to Amarasuriya, et al., 2018. Attitude towards seeking help for depressions was evaluated using the response given for vignette.

Results: The participants were between 18 to 28 years of age and among them 68.2% (n=103) were females. The majority (70%, n=106) of the participants were willing to reach professional help rather than informal help for the issue depicted in the case vignette. Respondents who preferred to get help from a psychologist and counsellor were 62.7% (n=95) and 73.3% (n=111), respectively. A fewer number of participants preferred to seek help informally through parents (48%, n=72) and from friends (34.7%, n=52). However, 5.3% (n=8) reported they are reluctant to communicate the problem with anyone if they ever suffered from depression while a majority (94.7%, n=143) preferred to share the problems and seek necessary help.

Conclusions: Nursing undergraduates of the sample intended to communicate regarding problems and willing to seek professional psychological help. The participants have a positive attitude towards seeking help for depression.

Keywords: Attitudes, Depression, Help seeking, Psychological, Vignette