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## PP 24 - Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes of Psychological Counseling among Nursing Officers in Psychiatric Units, Sri Lanka

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**Background:** Professional counselling is a skilled activity that involves assisting others in managing and resolving psychological, emotional, behavioral development, relational, vocational and other personal challenges. Nurses who are working in psychiatric units have major responsibility regarding psychological counselling.

**Objectives:** This study was designed to assess the knowledge skills and attitudes towards psychological counseling of nursing officers of psychiatric units Sri Lanka.

**Methodology:** This is a descriptive cross-sectional study and the data collection was done through a self-administered questionnaire which was distributed randomly among 173 nurses who are working in psychiatric unit in 14 government hospitals in Sri Lanka.

**Results and conclusions:** Out of 173 participants, majority were married females. 65% had more than 10 years of work experience in the field of nursing. Only 69 nurses have worked more than 5 years in a psychiatric ward. 43% satisfied with the knowledge that they received from psychiatric counselling. 92 nurses did not believe that everyone is capable of counselling and only 7% were strongly confident with identifying people who require counselling. More than half of the population (53%) strongly believed that psychiatric counselling workshops are essential for every nurse. But, 71 did not satisfy with psychiatric knowledge which was given during nurses' training period. 65% of population stated that they have the better skill of being active listeners. Majority had the knowledge on managing a proper counselling session and paraphrasing patient's information. But, 42 nurses were not confident of conducting a counselling session though they have knowledge. 73% of population were more confident of counselling patients who had suicidal attempts and 10% could counsel both depressive and schizophrenic patients. 42 participants did not conduct counselling due to lack of psychiatric knowledge. Although many nurses have more than 10 years of work experience in nursing field, they have lack of knowledge and experience on psychological counselling. Many participants stated that adequate knowledge was not given during nurses training period to build up the confident of counselling.

**Keywords:** Academic performance, intelligence quotient, socioeconomic status