Treatment of Patients with a Mental Illness in a Primary Care Setting: Does it Increase the Provider’s Stress?
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Background/ Significance

- Accessibility to mental health care is a growing problem in our country and it is increasingly becoming common for patients with a mental illness to present for treatment in a primary care setting.
- Factors such as presenting symptoms, chronic conditions, stigmas involved with mental illness, and untimely access to mental health facilities lead patients with a mental illness to seek treatment in a primary care setting.
- Primary care providers are often uncomfortable addressing mental health issues (Butler & Kane, 2008).
- Staff in primary care settings have received very little previous training in mental health, and an urgent need exists to ensure that these staff can address the mental health problems within their communities (Williams, Ryzhkova, Gask & Goldberg, 2012).
- Without proper knowledge and experience, the providers may not have the necessary confidence in their abilities to know that they are correctly caring for and treating their patients with a mental illness.
- The lack of confidence and comfort in accurately treating and diagnosing patients with a mental illness may affect the stress levels of primary care providers.

Purpose/ Objectives

- The purpose of this study is to survey primary care providers regarding their perceived stress related to treating patients with a mental illness.
- The specific aim is to determine whether or not primary care providers experience stress while treating patients with a mental illness.

Instrument

Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) (Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermelstein, 1983)

The PSS uses a likert scale with response options that range from never, almost never, sometimes, fairly often, and very often.

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- Without proper knowledge and experience, the providers may not have the necessary confidence in their abilities to know that they are correctly caring for and treating their patients with a mental illness.
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Acknowledgements

- East Tennessee State University
- ETSU College of Nursing
- ETSU Honors College

References