

## “A Comparative Study of Nurses Attitude Towards Criminal Psychiatric Patients”

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**Abstract:** - The study was conducted to assess the attitude of nurses towards criminal psychiatric patients. The comparison was between the nurses who have not given care to criminal psychiatric patients (Group I) and nurses who have given care to criminal psychiatric patients(Group II) working in NIMHANS Bangalore.

A questionnaire was used to elicit the socio-demographic back ground of nurses. To assess their attitude, a semi structure attitude scale consisting of 52 items under 3 sub-scales ‘Criminal psychiatric patients in general’, ‘Nursing care’ and ‘physical, psycho-social and rehabilitative interventions’ were used. This was a 4 point likert type scale. Further, to explore the nursing care activities an open-ended questionnaire with 18 questions was administered to the nurses who have given care to criminal psychiatric patients. Results indicated that nurses who have given care to criminal psychiatric patients have better attitude than those nurses who have not given care to criminal psychiatric patients, both on the score of the sub-scale as well as the total attitude score. The result also show that nurses who are more than 40 years, head nurses and Christian nurses who have given care to Criminal Psychiatric patients have better attitude than the nurses who are less than 40 years of age, staff nurses and Hindu nurses of the same group respectively. The findings of this study have implications in understanding the nature of attitude of nurses towards Criminal Psychiatric patients and in planning appropriate intervention strategies.

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### I. INTRODUCTION

The problem of crime, mental abnormality and the combination of both is not new. These problems are expected to occur in some individuals at the same time. The inpatient psychiatric unit often cares for this kind of patients who are mentally with legal charges. It is generally agreed that a person’s attitude towards another person constitutes a predisposition to respond favourably or unfavourably to that person. Also it is recognized that two people may have similar attitude towards a third person but the specific way in which they express their attitudes will depend on several factors, such as the knowledge they have pertaining to that person or any previous experience with that person. In any particular case, the attitude may be similar but their expression with a third person may differ. Thus the first encounter can create a lasting impression and the development of attitude on what believe. The term attitude comes from the Latin words ‘apto’ (apitude or fitness) and ‘acto’ (posture of the body) both of which have their origin in the Sanskrit ‘ag’ meaning to do or act. Webster’s dictionary defines “attitude as a predisposition to act either positively or negatively towards a person, group, object, situation or value. Herbert Spencer (1865) and Alexander Bain (1868) were among the first to introduce the ‘attitude ‘in psychology.

### II. AIM OF THE STUDY

To study the attitude of nurses towards criminal psychiatric patients.

### III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To assess the attitude of nurses who have not given care to criminal psychiatric patients. (Group I)
2. To assess attitude of nurses who have given care to criminal psychiatric patients (Group II).
3. To compare the attitude of group 1 and group 2 nurses towards criminal psychiatric patients.
4. To assess the socio demographic characteristics of the nurses and to correlate with their attitudes.
5. To explore the nursing care activities that could be provided to criminal psychiatric patients.

### IV. METHODOLOGY

#### Research design

used for this study was descriptive design.

#### Setting of the study

It was conducted with the nursing personnel at National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences, Bangalore. The setting has two closed wards, one for male and one for female with bed occupancy of 68 and 62 respectively.

#### **Tools**

for the study were: **part A** semi structured schedule focusing on background information of respondents such as age, gender etc.

#### **Part 2**

Based on the tool to assess the attitude towards ‘criminally Insane’ which was developed by Kanna, Prat and Gardnier (1962) a semi structure tool to assess the ‘nurses attitude towards the criminal psychiatric patients’ was developed. The scale consists of 52 questions. The tool was rated on 4 point scale; ‘strongly agree’, ‘agree’, ‘disagree’ and strongly disagree. The 52 statements are further divided into 3 sub-scales with 27, 14 and 11 statements in each sub-scale.

Sub scales are titled as

1. ‘Criminal psychiatric patients in general’
2. Nursing care’
3. Physical, psycho-social and rehabilitative interventions’

#### **Part 3**

A questionnaire was prepared by the investigator on the basis of literature review and experts opinion, consisting of 18 item open ended questionnaire, to elicit the feasible and practical nursing care activities of the nurses who have given care to criminal psychiatric patients.

The investigator herself distributed the tools to the nursing personnel at their work place and tools were used for obtaining data according to the stated objectives.

#### **Sample and Sampling technique**

Sample size was 80. Purposive sampling method was used. 66(82.5%) questionnaires were returned back for analysis.

### **V. FINDINGS**

1. Socio-demographic findings show that the mean age group of nurses who took part in the study is 39.4 for group I and 39.9 for group II. The male and female ratio is 1:15, majority of the nurses are married. 90.9% of the nurses are staff nurses. Nurses belonging to Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhist religion were represented in the sample. Majority of nurses i.e 63.7% have their professional qualification as general nursing and 57.6% have their general qualification as P.U.C. In the total nursing experience 30(45.5%) of the total population have experience for more than 10 years as nurses. Of the nurses who have given care to criminal psychiatric patients majority of them i.e., 18 (54.61) have their experience with criminal patients for about 1 – 5 years.
2. Group II nurses have better attitude in certain items of the sub-scale I i.e. criminal psychiatric patients in general.
3. Group II nurses have scored more on 4 items and on the total score of the sub-scale II. i.e. ‘Nursing care’
4. Group II has better attitude on few items of the sub-scale III i.e. ‘Physical, psycho-social and Rehabilitative Interventions’
5. In group II, nurses who are aged more than 40 have better attitude when compared to the attitude of nurses less than 40 years of age of the same group, on the total score.
6. Head nurses of group II have better attitude than the attitude of the staff nurses of the same group on sub scale II i.e. ‘Nursing Care’
7. The Christian nurses of group II have better attitude on the sub scale III i.e. ‘Physical, Psycho-social and Rehabilitative Interventions when compared to the Hindu nurses of the same group.
8. Group II nurses have better attitude towards Criminal Psychiatric patients when compared to group I on the total score.

### **VI. CONCLUSION**

There is a comprehensive data on the number if mentally ill in jails. Once mentally ill offenders are admitted in the hospital they experience the sense of loss which creates a continual state of crisis. Psychosocial consequences include anger, anxiety, depression, despair, and learned helplessness. Not surprisingly the nurse must come armed with an arsenal psychosocial tool, a strong solid interventions theories and techniques is an absolute pre-requisite. All these issues require a creative approach using humanist, non judgmental philosophy with a positive attitude.

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