

Article: 1290

Topic: EPV07 - e-Poster 07: Cultural Psychiatry

Key Informant's Perspective On Barriers and Facilitators in Access to Mental Health Services for Women with Depression in Urban Area of a Low-income Country

B. Fatima¹, B. Ulrike¹, S. Foster¹, F.G. Feeley¹

¹School of Public Health, Boston University, Boston, USA

Purpose: Studies from Pakistan reveal a high prevalence of depression in women. Evidence based and effective treatments are available, yet there is a significant gap between the number of women in need of treatment for depression and those who receive the services. This qualitative study identifies the barriers in access to mental health services for women with depression in Karachi from key informants' perspectives.

Method: 19 key-informant interviews were conducted with psychiatrists, psychologists, general health practitioners, pharmaceutical representatives, a government health department official and NGO workers working on women health issues.

Results: Key-informants reported lack of awareness, misconceptions, self-medication, being young and unmarried and financial status as barriers for women in accessing mental health services. In addition, provider's lack of medical education about depression, mismanagement of cases by GPs, opposing mental health care and lack of referral system are also considered barriers to mental health services. Larger societal issues are stigma, gender bias, as well as poor resource allocation and management.

Key-informants considered women's education, mental health literacy and referrals as facilitators for women.

Conclusion: The study highlights the need for multipronged and multi-sector approach for increasing the access to mental health services for women in an urban context of developing country where mental health services are present but not accessed by women.