

Abstract

Nurses' Perceptions Regarding Comorbid Insomnia for Patients within an Acute Psychiatric Ward: A quantitative Study

**By
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Despite sleep being an important physical need for all individuals, sleep complaints are very common especially amongst mentally ill patients. However in contrast there is a dearth in literature both foreign and local in nature which is directed to nursing interventions on improving sleep quality in patients with mental health problems.

The aim of the present research study was to establish the nurses' perceptions about comorbid insomnia with acute mentally ill patients. The research objectives were to explore the nurses' skills in recognising the clinical features related with insomnia, to determine whether nurses believe that insomnia is a significant problem within acute psychiatry, to establish the nurses' perceptions about different strategies to deal with insomnia and to explore whether insomnia is perceived to be associated particularly with certain mental health conditions.

These perceptions were further analyzed and found to differ by gender of participants and also by the years of nursing service in the mental health setting.

The author utilized an exploratory inferential cross-sectional research design for this quantitative study and data was collected by means of a self-designed questionnaire. The statements in the tool were based on information collected during a review of literature on the aim and objectives of the study. The tool was provided to the whole accessible population (n=67) of nurses working in acute psychiatric wards. Sixty two questionnaires were returned rendering a response rate of 92.5%. vi

Data findings revealed that nurses generally feel the importance of being knowledgeable about insomnia. Results in this study generally concur with similar studies carried out abroad which also revealed the lack of education being currently given at undergraduate courses regarding the subject. Despite being able to recognise the clinical features of insomnia, nurses lack knowledge regarding alternative non-pharmacological sleep promoting interventions even though nurses perceive that alternative strategies for insomnia should not be used as a last resort when medication is not working. The present study also demonstrated that the nurses' perception is that „Mania“ is the most common psychiatric condition associated with insomnia. This is unlike foreign literature that shows „Depression“ to be the most common perceived condition.

This dissertation helped identify the need to better prepare nurses academically regarding the treatment and management of insomnia.

This study concludes with further recommendations regarding both research and clinical practice in an attempt to address the present situation and ways of improving it.