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The experience and impact of stigma in Saudi people with a mood disorder

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Stigma plays a powerful role in an individual's attitude towards mental illness and in their seeking psychiatric and psychological services. Assessing stigma from the perspective of people with mood disorders is important as these disorders have been ranked as major causes of disability. Our aim in this study is to determine the extent and impact of stigma experiences in Saudi patients with depression and bipolar disorder, and to examine stigma experiences across cultures. Ninety-three individuals with a mood disorder were interviewed at King Saud University Medical City using the Inventory of Stigmatizing Experiences (ISE). We detected no significant differences in experiences of stigma or stigma impact in patients with bipolar vs. depressive disorder. However, over 50% of respondents reported trying to hide their mental illness from others to avoiding situations that might cause them to feel stigmatized. In comparison with a Canadian population, the Saudi participants in this study scored significantly lower on the ISE, which might be due to cultural differences. More than half of the Saudi participants with a mood disorder reported avoiding situations that might be potentially stigmatizing. Comparing stigma there are higher levels of stigma in Canada and Korea than in Saudi Arabia. Our results suggest that cultural differences and family involvement in patient care can significantly impact self-stigmatization. The ISE is a highly reliable instrument across cultures.
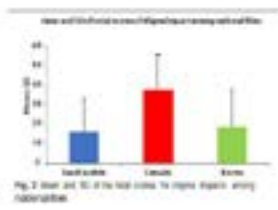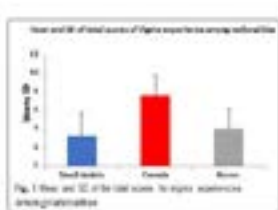
Biography

Hanoof Alkhalaf is a graduate of King Saud Medical School. She trained in psychiatry at the University of Saud department of psychiatry .Hanoof interested in mental health researches and awareness. She is planning to build up program of stigma awareness in Saudi Arabia .Hanoof is member in National committee for mental Health promotion. She is active participant in Empowerment Program, which aims to empower medical students to face and overcome their psychological stressors that affect their academic performance. She is volunteering in program and research about Prevalence of stress &Psychiatric illness among residents of the Saudi commission for Health Specialties.

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