

2nd International Conference on

Adolescent Medicine and Child Psychology

October 06-07, 2016 London, UK

Frequency of major mental illness among the referrals to GBV unit of a psychiatric tertiary referral centre in Sri Lanka

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Introduction: IPV is a major public health challenge in Sri Lanka. It can trigger mental illness in vulnerable and mental illness can result in IPV. Studies on association of mental illness and IPV are scarce in Sri Lankan and South East Asian settings.

Purpose: The purpose of the study is to identify association of Mental Illness and IPV in Sri Lankan setting.

Methods: Survey Analysis of health records of Gender Based Violence Unit (GBV) at NIMH, Angoda. Two independent medical and nursing reviewers analyzed all referrals since the inception of the unit in 2012.

Results: Total of 853 clients referred showed 45.6% had an ICD/DSM diagnosis of mental illness, out of which 32% had unipolar depression, 15.9% schizophrenia, 13.8% bipolar illness, 10% substance use disorders, 5.9% neurosis/PTSD, 6.9% delusional dis. jealous type, 6.9% adjustment dis, 2, 5% post natal MI and 2.5% personality disorders respectively. 50.9% did not have a mental illness as per ICD/DSM criteria. 3.3% of the records could not be analyzed effectively.

Conclusions: IPV shows a significant association with major mental illnesses. Therefore, health professionals play a key role in addressing IPV in this population

Research Practice or Policy Implications: Further studies are required to identify effective methods to intervene IPV in mentally ill population. It is also imperative to look in to how IPV would respond to effective treatment of mental illness. Policy should expand to allocate funding and establishment of GBV services in Sri Lankan health sector as a response to this emerging challenge.

Biography

Ravimal Galappaththi is both a Freelance Psychiatrist and a General Practitioner, working closely with Families and Children affected by intimate partner violence. He has worked in many child and adolescent mental health posts, across UK, Australia and Sri Lanka. He gained his MBBS and Doctor of Medicine (MD) from University of Colombo, Sri Lanka and further completed specialist training in United Kingdom gaining MRCPsych in 2008. Later he obtained a Diploma in Strategic Psychotherapy from AICH, Sydney Australia and currently a Post-graduate student in International Health Policy London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM). His academic interests spans from psychological distress of children among couples with mental illness, IPV and psychological effects of children, among women leaving Sri Lanka, for International Labour Market (ILM). He would also like to explore the use of social and cultural capital in child development.

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