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Increasing the research in interventional studies with individuals with severe mental illness suffering from metabolic syndrome: A mental health nursing priority.

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INCREASING THE RESEARCH IN INTERVENTIONAL STUDIES WITH INDIVIDUALS WITH SEVERE MENTAL ILLNESS SUFFERING FROM METABOLIC SYNDROME: A MENTAL HEALTH NURSING PRIORITY.

Abstract

The physical health of mental health patients with severe mental health illness has a high degree of significance in modern healthcare. Unfortunately, the physical health of mental health patients who have severe mental illness is often overlooked due to cultural and systemic factors. There is no clear indication of health professionals' roles, and the fragmented healthcare system contributes to the existing health disparity. Understanding metabolic syndrome concerning physical of patients with severe mental illness is well understood across the health literature. The prevention of metabolic syndrome recommends that physical observation and monitoring occur with patients with severe mental illness when engaging in mental health services. In addition, the literature has shown that brief interventions to physical health promotion strategies performed by mental health nurses have beneficial outcomes in the long term.

Additionally, mental health nurses are both knowledgeable in mental health and physical health. At the same time, the nursing literature has grasped a good understanding of the effect of metabolic syndrome on patients with severe mental health illnesses. However, there is still a lack of understanding of the longitudinal effects of health interventions in promoting physical health with patients affected with severe mental health illnesses.

Keywords

Mental health nursing, metabolic syndrome, physical health, interventions, and severe mental illness.

Text

The physical health in mental health patients with severe mental health illness has a high degree of significance in modern healthcare. The physical health of mental health

patients affected with severe mental health illness appears to significantly affect the patient's quality of life and life expectancy (Happell et al., 2011). The mental health literacy of metabolic syndrome is well understood across patients with mental health across the lifespan (Bolton, Knight, & Kopeski, 2016; NSW Ministry of Health, 2017; Young, Praskova, Hayward, & Patterson, 2017). Metabolic syndrome is significant to mental health patients with severe mental illness. Most of this population is at significant risk of developing metabolic syndrome later in their life due to multifactorial reasons (Bolton et al., 2016). The development of metabolic syndrome shows the striking statistic that consumer is at most risk to develop physical illnesses that lower their life expectancy for 10 – 15 women and 10 – 20 years for men (Clancy et al., 2019; Ehrlich, Chester, Kisely, Crompton, & Kendall, 2018, p. 47; Erginer & Günüşen, 2018, p. 371; Ewart et al., 2017; Lerbæk, Jørgensen, Aagaard, Nordgaard, & Buus, 2019, p. 174; Roberts, Lockett, Bagnall, Maylea, & Hopwood, 2018). However, the health literature only possesses recommendations for the prevention of metabolic syndrome. Furthermore, there is a lack of empirical evidence concerning the effect of such interventions in improving patients' quality of life and life expectancy with severe mental illness.

Physical health with mental health patients with severe mental illness is a priority area directed to a national level in Australia (Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Health Council, 2017). There had been a push that has created a higher degree of clinical governance that led to the development of several guidelines such as the one from the Mental Health Commission of New South Wales [MHCNSW] (2016) and N.S.W. Ministry of Health (2017). These guidelines from MHCNSW (2016) and N.S.W. Ministry of Health (2017) provided a standardised state-wide level of management that translated best evidenced-based practice at the time to implement interventions that could reduce the adverse effects of physical health outcomes with mental health consumers. However, Clancy *et al.* (2019) explain the evidence gap, despite introducing the guidelines.

Mental health nursing plays a pivotal role to improve the physical health of consumers. Mental health nurses are both knowledgeable in mental health and physical

health issues where they play a critical role in early intervention to physical wellbeing (Erginer & Günösen, 2018; Ganiah, Al-Hussami, & Alhadidi, 2017; Happell et al., 2011). However, the implementation of health promotion strategies directed toward the patient with mental health illness physical health appears to be challenging. There is a lack of education on the importance of physical health about mental Health (Vimalanathan & Furnham, 2019; Wickstead & Furnham, 2017). Additionally, poor physical health outcomes are associated with systemic and cultural factors in Australia, as the healthcare system is quite fragmented. There is not a clear indication of the role of health professionals when it comes to looking after a patient's physical health, this results in the mental health patient mental health being prioritised, and their physical health overlooked (Happell et al., 2011; Lerbæk et al., 2019; Sickel, Seacat, & Nabors, 2019).

The health literature and guidelines from local health organisations establish the minimum requirements of physical health monitoring that need to occur with patients engaged with mental health services (Happell et al., 2011; Mental Health Commission of New South Wales, 2016; NSW Ministry of Health, 2017). However, as seen in the author's experience in public and private mental health sector, ongoing monitoring is not often completed as it is not prioritised (Happell et al., 2011; Lerbæk et al., 2019; Sickel et al., 2019). The public and private health sectors started to show an interest in preventing metabolic syndrome with severe mental health illness mental health patients. However, there is a lack of empirical literature on the effects of interventional strategies in preventing metabolic syndrome with severe mental health patients. Researchers need to start focusing on this priority area as it would influence many patients with severe mental health illness affected and at risk of developing metabolic syndrome.

Nursing literature appears to have a grasped understanding that small interventions such a health literacy and coordination of services across the healthcare sector can assist in the improvement of the physical health of mental health patients affected with severe mental health illness (Happell et al., 2011; Vimalanathan & Furnham, 2019). Therefore, researchers

who decide to undertake a longitudinal study in health interventions promoting physical health with patients affected with severe mental health illness would show how this could improve their quality of life and life expectancy.

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