



## Assess the Attitude Towards Mental Illness Among Nurses Working in Selected Tertiary Care Hospital



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**Abstract:** Mental health is an urgent concern in India as every sixth Indian needs mental health help as reported by a recent National Mental Health Survey done by Gururaj in the year 2016. Further, while 20% of Indians suffer from a mental illness, only 10-12% of them seek help from mental health professionals mainly due to ignorance, stigma and discrimination that largely prevail in Indian community. The study aimed to assess the attitude towards mental illness among nurses and to associate the attitude towards mental illness among nurses working in selected tertiary care hospitals with background selected variables. A non-experimental descriptive research design was used in this study. A purposive sampling technique was used to select the samples and 400 samples were taken for the study. The majority of the nurses have negative 310 (77%) attitudes towards mental illness and only 90(23%) of them have positive attitudes towards mental illness. The mean value of attitude is 59.59 with a standard deviation of 4.94. There is no significant association was found between attitudes toward mental illness among nurses working in selected tertiary care hospitals with background variables at  $p < 0.05$ . The study results recommend initiating training programs for the nurses aimed at promoting positive attitudes and making them sensitive to the needs of mentally ill patients.

### Introduction

Nurses assume a significant function in the provision of mental health services, regardless of their assigned location (Sreeraj, 2017). As one of the frontline medical professionals, primary healthcare nurses play a critical role in identifying and assessing early signs of mental health disorders (Shahif, 2019). Stigma and prejudice are key obstacles to achieving excellent mental health and

well-being (Knaak, 2017; Sammut, 2017; Shammari, 2020; Kaur, 2023). Regardless of the level of development of civilization, mental diseases are frequently associated with social stigma (Omar, 2019; AlSalem, 2020; Giralt, 2023). Understanding nurses' disposition is paramount in ensuring the provision of high-quality and comprehensive psychiatric services. This comprehension is also vital for the seamless



integration of mental health into primary health care, fostering an environment of success (Sahile et al., 2019). The presence of an unfavourable mindset and prejudiced conduct among healthcare practitioners poses a significant impediment to the provision of psychiatric care and has been identified as a pivotal concern in the management of mental disorders (Ahad et al., 2023). Gaining comprehension regarding the disposition of nurses is paramount for ensuring the delivery of comprehensive and superior psychiatric services, thereby facilitating the seamless incorporation of mental healthcare into primary healthcare (Gandhi et al., 2019; Sahile, 2019; Madhual et al., 2023). The majority of the research that has been published has concentrated on the attitudes and perceptions of the general public towards mental illness and individuals who have personal experience with it. However, there has been relatively less investigation into the prevalence of stigma among nurses towards this particular population (Ghuloum, 2022; Shiny et al., 2023). Nurses play an important role in the mental health team, and they are more responsible for giving care and rehabilitation to people with mental illness and in early intervention (Sujaritha, 2017; Alsharairi et al., 2023). Mental health is essential to lead a satisfying life. However, negative attitudes towards mental illness among nurses prevent people with mental illness from achieving a better quality of life (Sreeram, 2023; Ramanathan et al., 2023). Improving the attitudes toward people with mental disorders reduces stigma, which is seen as negative emotional, behavioural, or cognitive reactions toward individuals with mental disorders (Román-Sánchez et al., 2022). Healthcare providers are generally expected to be knowledgeable about mental illness and to act humanely toward patients (Knaak, 2017; Pramanik, 2018). Romero et al. (2019) mentioned that mental health professionals showed a positive attitude toward mental illness but also a relative support to coercive treatments. There are differences in attitudes modulated by professional category and setting (Rivas, 2021). Negative perspectives of nurses towards mental illnesses have been documented in multiple nations (Natalia, 2019; Koutra, 2022; Balasubramanian et al., 2023; Li et al., 2023). Based on available research shows that nurses' negative attitudes toward mentally ill patients and mental health care are associated with insufficient mental health knowledge, insufficient training, lack of experience, religious predisposition, and low educational level (Kigozi-Male, 2023). Early introduction to mental health courses and awareness programs focusing on mental health issues may contribute to fostering a favourable disposition among

nursing professionals towards individuals afflicted with mental illness (Puspitasari, 2020; Varma, 2023; Ruqaiya, 2023). So, the investigator aimed to assess the attitude towards mental illness among nurses working in tertiary care settings that would facilitate the creation of awareness programs focusing on mental health illness.

### Material and Methods

A quantitative research approach was the most appropriate to achieve the objectives of this study. A non-experimental descriptive research design was used in this study. A study was conducted at Sri Ramachandra Hospital (SRH) with a sample size of 400 and used a purposive sampling technique. The samples included in this study are males and females aged above 24 years and have a registered nurse and midwifery license number to be registered in the concerned council. The samples excluded in this study are nurses working in the psychiatric unit. The research proposal was submitted to the Institutional Ethics Committee for clearance. All the stated queries were addressed and ethical clearance approval was obtained from the Institutional Ethics Committee with reference number - CSP/23/APR/127/347.

### Measures

Background data includes Age, Gender, Place of residence, educational qualification, years of experience, area of working and designation and Mental Illness: Clinicians' Attitudes Scale- 16 items (MICA-4) developed by Kassam, 2010 were the main components of the survey that were evaluated. This questionnaire has a 6-point Likert scale ("strongly agree, agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, disagree, strongly disagree"). Items 3, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 16 are scored as follows: strongly agree = 1, agree = 2, somewhat agree = 3, somewhat disagree = 4, disagree = 5, and strongly disagree = 6. All other items (1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, and 15) are reverse scored as follows: strongly agree = 6, agree = 5, somewhat agree = 4, somewhat disagree = 3, disagree = 2, and strongly disagree = 1. The scores for each item are summed to produce a single overall score. A high overall score indicates a more negative (stigmatizing) attitude. After obtaining permission from IEC, the medical and deputy nursing superintendent from G Block, SRH and Principal Sri Ramachandra's faculty of Nursing. The basic details, informed consent and questionnaire were converted into Google form and a questionnaire link was generated and forwarded to the nurses. After explaining the purposes of the study WhatsApp number was obtained from the nurses and the link was shared with them. Each nurse was given 20 – 25

minutes to complete the questionnaire. After completing the questionnaire, the auto-generated thank you note was created, and confidentiality was maintained throughout the study. The data was collected without disturbing the patient's care. The duration of the data collection period was one week. The raw data collected were grouped and analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 21. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, such as Frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and Chi-square.

completed their B.Sc. Nursing. With regard to the area of working majority of 229(61%) of them work in ward setup. Most of them 289 (72%), were staff nurses (Figure 1&2).

Table 2 depicts the Mean and standard deviation of attitude among nurses. The mean value of attitude is 59.59, with a standard deviation of 4.94. There is no significant association was found between attitudes towards mental illness among nurses working in selected tertiary care hospitals with background variables at  $p < 0.05$  (Table 3). Figure 1 depicts the Frequency and

**Table 1. Frequency and percentage distribution of background variables of Nurses (N=400).**

S.No	Background Variables	Frequency (n=400)	Percentage (%)
<b>1.</b>	<b>Age in years</b>		
a.	24-34	288	72.0
b.	35-45	89	22.0
c.	>45	23	6.0
<b>2.</b>	<b>Gender</b>		
a.	Male	65	16.0
b.	Female	335	84.0
<b>3.</b>	<b>Educational qualification</b>		
a.	GNM	4	11.0
b.	B.Sc	278	69.5
c.	P.B.BSC	51	13.0
d.	M.Sc	28	7.0
<b>4.</b>	<b>Year of experience</b>		
a.	1-5 years	245	61.0
b.	6-10 years	99	24.0
c.	>10	56	15.0
<b>5.</b>	<b>Area of working</b>		
a.	Ward	229	61.0
b.	OPD	113	30.0
c.	ICU	32	9.0
<b>6.</b>	<b>Designation</b>		
a.	Staff Nurse	289	72.0
b.	Shift in charge	16	4.0
c.	Senior staff nurse	63	16.0
d.	Ward in charge	32	8.0

## Results

Table 1 depicts the frequency and percentage percentage distribution of the level of attitude towards

**Table 2. Mean and standard deviation score of attitude towards mental illness among nurses. (N=400).**

Variable	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Attitude	43.00	74.00	59.59	4.94

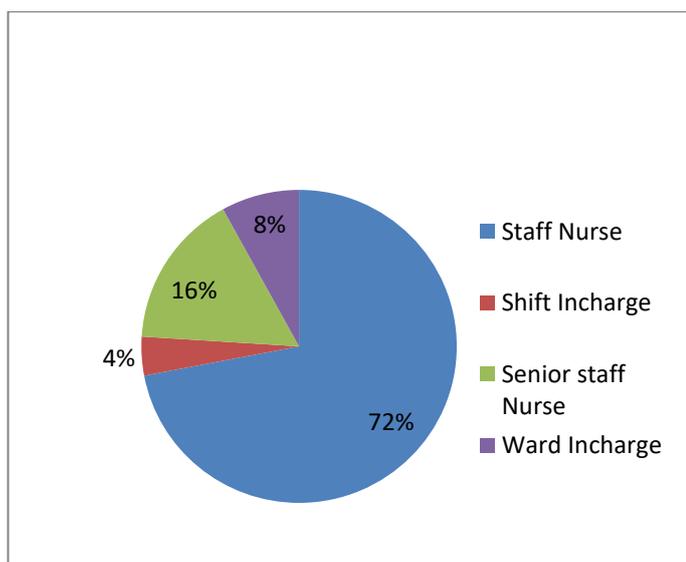
distribution of background variables among nurses working in selected tertiary care hospitals. The majority 288 (72%) of the nurses are 24 to 34 years old. Most of the nurses 335 (84%), were female. While considering the educational qualification majority 278 (70%) of them

had negative 310(77%) attitudes towards mental illness and only 90(23%) of them had positive attitudes towards mental illness.

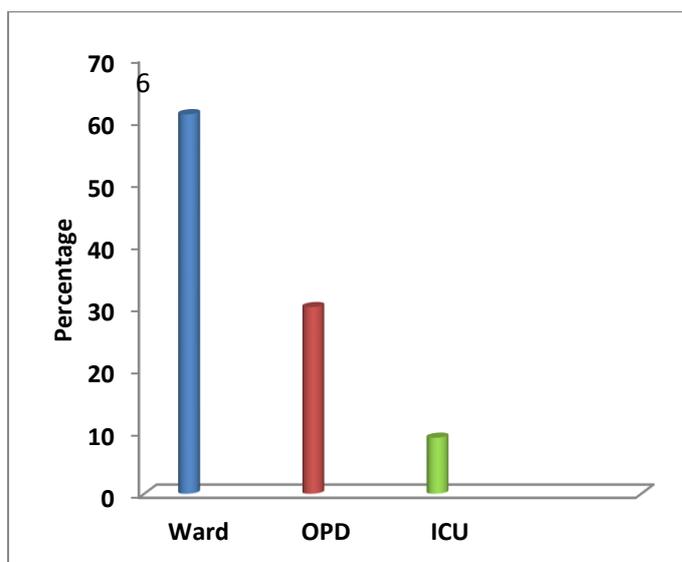
**Table 3. Association between level of attitude among nurses and background variables (N=400).**

S.No	Background Variables	Level of attitude		Chi square test & p value
		Positive	Negative	
<b>1.</b>	<b>Age in years</b>			
a.	24-34	60	228	1.647
b.	35-45	24	65	0.439
c.	>45	6	17	(NS)
<b>2.</b>	<b>Gender</b>			
a.	Male	11	54	1.384
b.	Female	79	256	0.239
				(NS)
<b>3.</b>	<b>Educational qualification</b>			
a.	GNM	8	35	0.742
b.	B.Sc	62	216	0.863
c.	P.B.BSC	13	38	(NS)
d.	M.Sc	7	21	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Year of experience</b>			
a.	1-5 years	51	194	1.613
b.	6-10 years	23	76	0.447
c.	>10	16	40	(NS)
<b>5.</b>	<b>Area of working</b>			
a.	Ward	55	174	1.404
b.	OPD	22	91	0.505
c.	ICU	9	23	(NS)
<b>6.</b>	<b>Designation</b>			
a.	Staff Nurse	66	223	1.493
b.	Shift in charge	2	14	0.687
c.	Senior staff nurse	13	50	(NS)
d.	Ward in charge	9	23	

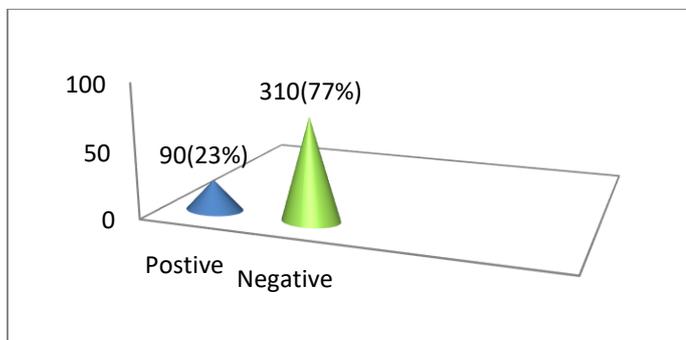
NS: Non-significant, (p<0.05 Significant level) S: Significant



**Figure 1. Percentage distribution of Designation.**



**Figure 2. Percentage distribution of area of work.**



**Figure 3. Frequency and percentage distribution of level of attitude towards mental illness among nurses (N=400).**

Figure 3 depicts the Frequency and percentage distribution of the level of attitude towards mental illness among nurses. The majority of the nurses had negative 310(77%) attitudes towards mental illness and only 90(23%) of them had positive attitudes towards mental illness.

### Discussion

The majority 288 (72%) of the nurses are 24 to 34 years old. Most of the nurses 335 (84%) were female. While considering the educational qualification, the majority 278(70%) of them completed their B.Sc. Nursing. About the area of work majority of 229(61%) of them work in ward setup. Most of them 289 (72%) were staff nurses. The majority of the nurses have negative 310(77%) attitudes towards mental illness and only 90(23%) of them have positive attitudes towards mental illness. The present study results are consistent with the study conducted by Anwar Al-Awadhi (2017) on Nurses' attitudes towards Patients with Mental Illness in a General Hospital in Kuwait. The results highlight that out of 990 nurses, 308 (31%) completed the CAMI questionnaire. The mean scores for the authoritarian (2.85), benevolent (3.66), social restrictiveness (2.97) and community mental health ideology (3.48) subscales reflected a negative attitude of nurses toward mentally ill patients.

The implication drawn from this study is nurses should develop positive attitudes towards mental illness to reduce stigma and they should be role models for other healthcare professionals in caring for and approaching patients with mental illness. The administrators and managers have to pave the way to raise awareness among nurses on how to handle mentally ill patients and can conduct training, workshops, professional development programs and continue nursing education programs on various mental disorders and related treatment modalities to address the knowledge gap in treating the mentally ill patient.

### Conclusion

The study concludes that the majority of the nurses have a negative 310(77%) attitude towards mental illness. Despite the small size and selective nature of the sample, the nurses' negative attitude toward mentally ill patients provides useful baseline data for further large-scale studies. It is, therefore, important to initiate training programs for the nurses aimed at promoting positive attitudes and making them sensitive to the needs of mentally ill patients. Such programs can include interdisciplinary seminars and reflective seminars challenging the nurses' assumptions and attitudes toward mental illness and helping them understand multiculturalism by providing a safe explorative environment through skilled facilitation.

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### Conflict of Interest

The authors disclosed no conflicts of interest.

### Consent

Written consent was obtained from all the participants.

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