

Mental health stigma in the middle east: A systematic review and meta-analysis

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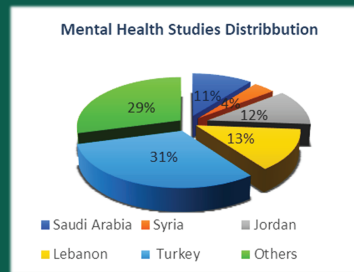
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Introduction:

Mental health issues are the most common in the US and globally. 20% of Americans have mental illnesses. This study examines the Middle East region's mental health and its effects because it's stigmatized. Mental Health remains an extremely taboo topic in this region. Mental illness are frequently said to be victims of demon possession or in some situations, advised to be more religious.

Methods:

For a better understanding of mental health in the Middle East, a comprehensive study and meta-analysis were carried out. The EBSCO and PubMed databases were evaluated by experts and were restricted to the Middle East region geographically. A total of 105 studies were located with 11 for Saudi Arabia, 4 for Syria, 12 for Jordan, 14 for Lebanon, 32 for Turkey, and 30 following thorough reviews, we selected 27 studies to include.



References:

1. Alqassim A, Makeen A, Ahmed A, et al. Exploring awareness, attitude, and practices toward mental illnesses: A cross-sectional survey among university students in Saudi Arabia. *J Family Med Prim Care.* 2022;11(8):4568-4575.
2. Abonassir AA, Siddiqui AF, Abadi SA, et al. Mental health literacy among secondary school female students in Abha, Saudi Arabia. *J Family Med Prim Care.* 2021;10(2):1015-1020.

Result:

There is still a great deal of stigma in the Middle East surrounding mental health. Only 52.2% of 800 Saudi Arabian college students had a good attitude toward mental health, according to research. In separate research of 350 female high school students in Abha, Saudi Arabia, the majority did not know how they felt about people with mental and psychological diseases, despite their extensive knowledge of mental health concerns. Yet, more than three-quarters of them disagreed that it is embarrassing to reveal that a family member has bipolar disorder.

Prejudice and stigma are typically the results of a lack of knowledge about mental health and damaging preconceptions about individuals with mental health disorders. This can lead to neurodiverse and mentally ill individuals being shunned, rejected, treated as children, and treated poorly in other ways.

Conclusion:

According to the findings, the COVID-19 epidemic has contributed to a rise in the prevalence of mental diseases in the Middle East, where mental health is still stigmatized. The phrase 'mentally sick' carries a heavy stigma in today's culture; in order to encourage more people to seek help, we must work to reduce this discrimination.

