MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY IN THE COMMUNITY PHARMACY

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Objectives

1. Define mental health literacy.
2. Differentiate the clinical features and symptoms associated with 5 types of anxiety disorders.
3. Identify 3 ways low mental health literacy impacts the pharmacist-patient relationship.
**Assessment Question #1**

Which of the following is one of the five components of the definition of mental health literacy?

A. Ability to read, write, speak, and compute and solve problems
B. Capacity to obtain and process basic health information to follow instructions for treatment
C. Identification of symptoms associated with disease onset
D. Understand basic health information needed to make appropriate health decisions

**Assessment Question #2**

For nearly 9 months Ann, a 30 year old administrative assistant, has been experiencing nervousness and excessive fear of being scrutinized or negatively evaluated by her co-workers. She has begun eating lunch in her car to avoid other workers in the breakroom. Her symptoms are characteristic of which mental health disorder?

A. Generalized Anxiety Disorder
B. Major Depressive Disorder
C. Panic Disorder
D. Social Anxiety Disorder
Assessment Question #3

Low mental health literacy impacts the pharmacist-patient relationship in the community pharmacy in which of the following ways?

A. Pharmacists spend more time counseling patients about their mental health medications.
B. The sensitive nature of mental health disorders strengthens the relationship between pharmacy staff and patients.
C. Medication adherence to mental health medications is lower for patients with mental disorders.
D. Low mental health literacy indicates a low level of stigma about mental health disorders.

Outline

• Epidemiology of Mental Disorders in U.S.
• Mental Health Literacy (MHL)
  • Definition
• Overview of 5 Anxiety Disorders
  • Generalized Anxiety, Panic, Social Anxiety, Obsessive Compulsive, Post-traumatic Stress
• Low MHL in the Community Pharmacy
Epidemiology of Mental Illness

Mental Health Definitions

• Mental disorder¹
  • A syndrome characterized by clinically significant disturbances in an individual's cognition, emotion regulation, or behavior that reflects a dysfunction in the psychological, biological, or developmental processes underlying mental functioning

• Serious Mental Illness²
  • A mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder diagnosed within the last year that meets the DSM-V diagnostic criteria, and results in serious functional impairment that interferes or limits one or more major life activities

Mental Health Facts in America¹

Fact: 43.8 million adults experience mental illness in a given year.

1 in 5 adults in America experience a mental illness.

Nearly 1 in 25 (10 million) adults in America live with a serious mental illness.

One-half of all chronic mental illness begins by the age of 14; three-quarters by the age of 24.

Mental Health Facts in America¹

Prevalence of Mental Illness by Diagnosis

1.1%  
1 in 100 (2.4 million) American adults live with schizophrenia.¹

2.6%  
2.6% (6.1 million) of American adults live with bipolar disorder.¹

6.9%  
6.9% (16 million) of American adults live with major depression.¹

18.1%  
18.1% (42 million) of American adults live with anxiety disorders.¹


Mental Health Medication Use By Drug Class

• #3: Anti-depressants
  • #1: cholesterol meds
  • #2: pain meds

• #12: Anxiolytics, sedatives, and hypnotics

• For pediatric patients, #2: CNS stimulants
Literacy Defined by National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL)

- *The ability to use printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one’s goals, and to develop one’s knowledge and potential.*

- Concept has 2 parts: Skills-based and Knowledge

- Measurement scales address 3 types of literacy
  1. Prose
  2. Document
  3. Quantitative

- Ability to read, write, speak, and compute and solve problems
Health Literacy Defined by Healthy People 2020

• The degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions and follow instructions for treatment

• Components
  • Basic literacy skills
  • Health knowledge
  • Numeracy skills

https://health.gov/communication/literacy/quickguide/factsbasic.htm

Jorm’s Mental Health Literacy Definition

• The knowledge and beliefs about mental disorders which aid their recognition, management or prevention.

• Definition moves beyond just knowledge
  • MHL = Knowledge + action
  • 5 components support comprehensive definition

5 Components to Mental Health Literacy

1. Knowledge about prevention of disease
2. Identification of symptoms associated with disease onset
3. Familiarity of treatment options and therapies
4. Information about self-help techniques for milder disease
5. Skills to help others in a mental health crisis

Overview of 5 Anxiety Disorders

Anxiety Disorders

- General Anxiety Disorder (GAD)
- Panic Disorder (PD)
- Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD)
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
- Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
Clinical Features of Anxiety Disorders

• Excessive fear, anxiety, and behavioral changes

• Anxiety is normal response to threatening situation
  • Public speaking, employment evaluation, pending severe weather

• Problematic when
  • Persistent: lasting more than 6 months
  • Excessive: out of proportion to threat

• Differentiation between anxiety disorders
  • Object or situation causing anxiety or avoidance behavior (stimulus)
  • Cognitive ideation (thoughts)

Generalized Anxiety Disorder Symptoms¹

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psych. &amp; Cognitive Sx</th>
<th>Physical Symptoms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Excessive anxiety</td>
<td>• Restlessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Worries that are difficult to control</td>
<td>• Fatigue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Feeling keyed up or on edge</td>
<td>• Muscle tension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Trouble concentrating or mind going blank</td>
<td>• Sleep disturbance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Irritability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Panic Disorder Symptoms

**Psych. & Cognitive Sx**
- Feeling detached from oneself (depersonalization)
- Feeling detached from one’s environment (derealization)
- Fear of losing control, going crazy, or dying

**Physical Symptoms**
- Abdominal distress
- Chest pain
- Chills
- Dizziness, light-headedness
- Feeling of choking
- Heat sensations
- Nausea
- Skin crawling
- Tingling
- Numbness
- Itching
- Shortness of breath
- Sweating
- Racing heart
- Trembling, shaking

**Social Anxiety Disorder Symptoms**

**Psych. & Cognitive Sx**
- Fears of Being
  - Scrutinized or negatively evaluated by others
- Some Feared Situations
  - Eating or writing in front of others
  - Interacting with authority figures
  - Speaking in public
  - Talking with stranger
  - Use of public toilets

**Physical Symptoms**
- Blushing
- “Butterflies in the stomach”
- Diarrhea
- Stumbling over words
- Sweating
- Tachycardia
- Trembling

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Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
Symptoms¹

**Obsessions**
- A recurrent, persistent idea, thought, impulse, or image that is intrusive & inappropriate
- Leads to anxiety
- Example
  - Feeling contaminated

**Compulsions**
- A repetitive behavior or mental act occurring because of an obsession
- Ritualistic behaviors
- Example
  - Excessive handwashing
  - Excessive counting


Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
Symptoms¹

**Traumatic Event**
- Required for diagnosis
- Witness or experience threatening situation involving harm to self or others
- Examples
  - War, natural disaster, assault, violence

**Symptoms**
- Intrusive symptoms
  - Persistent re-experiencing of the event (flashbacks, dreams)
  - State of hyperarousal
- Avoidance symptoms
  - Similar situations, conversations, thoughts, feelings

Treatment Options for Anxiety Disorders\textsuperscript{1,2}

- Goal of therapy
  - Decrease symptom severity and duration
  - Improve quality of life

- Combination therapy is preferred
  - Medications
  - Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
  - Stress management
  - Lifestyle modifications


Pharmacotherapy for Anxiety Disorders\textsuperscript{1,2}

**1\textsuperscript{st} Line**

- Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRI)
  - Venlafaxine
  - Fluvoxamine

**2\textsuperscript{nd} Line**

- Benzodiazepines
  - Buspirone
  - Clomipramine
  - Imipramine
  - Pregabalin


Low Mental Health Literacy (MHL) in the community Pharmacy

Impact of Low MHL on Pharmacist-Patient Relationship

- Less time spent counseling on mental health meds
- Poor medication adherence
- Inappropriate verbal encounters
- Poorly established relationships between staff and patient
- Perpetuation of stigma about mental health disorders
- Poor treatment outcomes
- Less monitoring of adverse effects
Barriers to MHL in the Pharmacy

• Stigma associated with mental health disorders
• High volume dispensing
• Lack of time
• Lack of private space for counseling
• Lack of mental health training for pharmacy staff
• Lack of pharmacy staff confidence
• Patients reluctant to ask questions, discuss side effects

Improving MHL in the Community Pharmacy
Removing Mental Health Literacy Barriers

• Serious mental illness education for all pharmacy staff
  • Mental Health 1st Aid
  • CE through APhA, Pharmacists’ Letter or other sources

• Screening tools
  • Depression screening
    • Patient Health Questionnaire-2 and -9


Mental Health First Aid Course

• https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/
  • ...an 8-hour course that gives people the skills to help someone who is developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis.
  • ...training helps a person assist someone experiencing a mental health crisis such as contemplating suicide.
  • ...the goal is to help support an individual until appropriate professional help arrives

Mental Health First Aid Action Plan

1. Assess for risk of suicide or harm
2. Listen nonjudgmentally
3. Give reassurance and information
4. Encourage appropriate professional help
5. Encourage self-help and other support strategies


Self-help Strategies Likely To Be Helpful For Subclinical Depression

- Physical activity or exercise
- Regular & healthy sleep routines
- Engage is enjoyable activities
- Continue tasks of daily living
- Journal what has worked in the past and carry out observations
- Get out of the house every day
- Eat a healthy diet
- Reward self for small goal achievements
- Learn relaxation techniques
- Reach out to social support network

Helpful Resources

• Mental Health Association Oklahoma
• Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services
• National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
• National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)
• Pharmacist’s Letter
• Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

Assessment Question #1 Answer

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