

Psychiatric Disorders Among Patients Attending Semi-urban And Rural General Out-patient Clinics In Kenya.

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Abstract:

The prevalence of psychiatric morbidity (PM) was studied among general hospital out-patients in a rural and in a semi-urban area of Kenya. There were no significant differences in the demographic features of psychiatric patients from the two areas, so the results were pooled: this gave a PM prevalence rate of 29 per cent among 388 patients. Anxiety and depression were the most frequent diagnostic categories. Alcoholism was more common in the rural than in the semi-urban area. There was no sex difference in the prevalence of PM and possible reasons for this, which is in contrast to western findings, are discussed. Psychiatric symptoms could be readily elicited when present. Patients showing them had been ill longer than non-PM patients. The study suggests that clinic staff not psychiatrically trained should be able to identify and treat psychiatric morbidity, even when it is presented as somatic illness.