

Abstract

To determine the effectiveness of psycho-education on symptom severity in depression, hopelessness, suicidality, anxiety and risk of substance abuse among para-medical students at Kenya Medical Training College (KMTTC). A clinical trial drew experimental (N=1 181) and control (N=1 926) groups from different KMTTC campuses. Self-administered questionnaires were used to collect data: the researcher-designed social demographic questionnaire was used at baseline only, while Beck's Depression Inventory, Beck's Hopelessness Scale, Beck's Suicide Ideation Scale, Beck's Anxiety Inventory and World Health Organization alcohol, smoking and substance involvement screening test (ASSIST) (for drug abuse) were used for baseline, mid-point and end-point assessments at 3-month intervals. The experimental group received a total of 16 hours of structured psycho-education. All study participants gave informed consent. Overall, there was no significant reduction in symptom severity between the experimental and control groups at 3 months ($p>0.05$) but there was a significant difference at 6 months ($p<0.05$). Psycho-education was effective in reducing the severity of symptoms of depression, hopelessness, suicidality, anxiety and risk of substance abuse at 6 months