

Abstract

PURPOSE:

To estimate the prevalence, types and comorbidity of the most common mental disorders and the spread of suicide risk in a primary care practice in Kenya.

METHODS:

This was a cross-sectional descriptive study. A total of 300 adult outpatients were randomly selected while they were consulting their general practitioner. The M.I.N.I. Plus interview five was used to diagnose psychiatric disorders and suicide risk.

RESULTS:

Thus, 56.3 % of the sample (n = 169) presented one or more psychiatric disorders. The most prevalent disorders were Affective (39.0 %), Anxiety (31.3 %), and Somatoform (13.0 %). Regarding specific disorders, the most common were Major Depressive Disorder (26.3 %), Agoraphobia (16.7 %), Pain Disorder (12.5 %), Generalized Anxiety Disorder (9.3 %) and Bipolar Disorder (9 %). We found three cases of Bulimia Nervosa (1 %); 29.7 % had more than one current mental disorder. Suicide risk was present in 12.7 % of participants. No associations were identified between socio-demographic factors and the presence of mental disorder. Suicide risk was higher in women and in patients who came from slum areas. Gastric pain was positively associated with presence of mental disorder.

CONCLUSION:

High prevalence of mental disorders and suicide risk calls for integrating mental health services in primary health care; in particular, this study highlights the importance of differentiating between specific types of mental disorders (which require different therapeutic approaches), and of diagnosing comorbidities.