

# **The prevalence and clinical presentation of psychiatric illness in a rural setting in Kenya.**

## **Abstract:**

One hundred and forty patients seen in a suburban walk-in walk-out clinic over a period of 30 days were studied. Twenty-eight (20 per cent) of them were found to be primarily psychiatrically disabled, 83 (59.3 per cent) primarily physically disabled and the diagnosis of the rest (20.7 per cent) was uncertain. The psychiatric patients were found to be suffering from anxiety and depressive states. Their sex, age, education, economic status, symptomatology and duration of the illness were analysed. The findings suggest among other things that the prevalence of psychiatric disorders in the rural setting in Kenya is high and therefore calls for a proportionate provision of mental health care facilities. They also suggest that anxiety and depression in African patients are masked by somatic symptoms, often leading to unnecessary delays in diagnosis and management.