
WORKING WITH PEOPLE WITH ANXIETY DISORDERS – THE NEED OF TRAINING FOR NURSES

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Abstract: Anxiety disorders are a common problem in modern society, as the number of people suffering from this type of psychological problems, has grown drastically in recent years. People with anxiety disorders often seek medical specialists for examinations or running tests, due to the physical and psychological discomfort that accompanies the condition. One of the most serious problems that we face is the wrong approach and communication of medical staff to them.

Nurses are the type of health care professionals, who most often have to communicate with people with anxiety. The lack of sufficient knowledge and skills to work with people with anxiety disorders complicates all prophylactic and therapeutic activities aimed at this type of patients, whether they are related to their mental or physical health.

Practice shows that in Bulgaria this process of developing the communication between the nurse and the patient is troubled and is accomplished incorrectly or ineffective. Many nurses often lack the necessary skills to maintain proper psychological and medical perspective towards patients with anxiety disorders. Misunderstanding and lack of proper approach makes the patient with anxiety to avoid medical assistance and to turn to self-medication, whether it is physiological or psychological problem. That puts him at risk and impedes the healing process in general. Simultaneously, patients with anxiety disorders endure the implementation of various manipulations much more dramatic, as they experience their interventions way more painful and at increased rates of anxiety. As a result, the stress level increases and so does the danger of unlocking an extra mental disorder such as depression, specific phobia, addiction, suicidal action.

This study aims to establish awareness among the students specialty "nurse" concerning the characteristics of anxiety disorders, their knowledge and their skills to work with this type of patients. It shows the need to introduce additional classes or independent training for working with people with anxiety disorders in a wider aspect.

Specific recommendations have been prepared to correct deficiencies in the education system. They are about the teachers in classes of Medical Psychology, Educational institutions and the subject "Medical psychology" in the Universities.

Keywords: anxiety disorders, nurses, education, medical psychology

INTRODUCTION

For only a century the total globalization, technological revolution and dynamic life have changed drastically the society and its characteristics in general. As a result, the values and priorities of the modern man are now quite different, which reflects life in all its aspects. Despite the many positive changes that concomitant this evolution, it is also accompanied by numerous negatives. Some of them are associated with worrying by a psychological point of view trend - growing number of people suffering from anxiety disorders. Proof of this is the following statistical fact - those born after 1945 are affected by depression, anxiety and similar psychiatric disorders 10 times more often than those born before.

According to latest data, anxiety disorders are the most common psychological problems in modern society. Per information of the American Association for anxiety and depressive disorders, about 18 percent of the US population, or more than 40 million adults over 18 are diagnosed with "Anxiety Disorder". It was also found that anxiety disorders affect between 5 and 7% of the entire population of the planet and that 29% of people suffer from an anxiety disorder at least once in their lives.

According to statistics, patients suffering from anxiety disorders more often attend medical specialists for examinations or to conduct various studies, compared to other patients. For this reason, they often have to communicate with nurses - during the processing of documents, for carrying out manipulations, during the examination itself, during accommodating for hospital treatment, etc. The specifics of the condition of people with anxiety disorders require a special attitude and behavior from the medical team. This type of patients is much more sensitive, respond rapidly to different emotions, their anxiety is drastically bigger and they are inclined to

hypochondria and obsessive thoughts. Wrong approach and communication in working with patients with anxiety disorder may worsen mental condition of the patient and cause serious emotional and psychological trauma. The therapeutic process and trust in the health system could also be affected in a bad way. For this reason, great importance is the implementation of an appropriate communication process and maintaining maximum adequate communication between patient with anxiety and nurse.

Practice shows that in Bulgaria this process is troubled and is accomplished incorrectly or ineffective. Many nurses often lack the necessary skills to maintain proper psychological and medical perspective towards patients with anxiety disorders. Misunderstanding and lack of proper approach makes the patient with anxiety to avoid medical assistance and to turn to self-medication, whether it is physiological or psychological problem. That puts him at risk and impedes the healing process in general. Simultaneously, patients with anxiety disorders endure the implementation of various manipulations much more dramatic, as they experience their interventions way more painful and at increased rates of anxiety. As a result, the stress level increases and so does the danger of unlocking an extra mental disorder such as depression, specific phobia, addiction, suicidal action.

In the curriculum of nurses for completion the degree "Bachelor" according to the unified state requirements is provided 30 classes medical psychology. Practice shows that in most universities in Bulgaria, in which are trained nurses, managers adhere to this legally regulated minimum. Classes in psychology, however, appear to be insufficient. In theoretical and practical sessions is covered a huge volume of material that can hardly be presented qualitatively in the provided by schedule time. In it, anxiety disorders and communicating with patients with anxiety is given very little space. As a consequence, nurses acquire only the common knowledge of psychology in general and anxiety disorders in particular. This gives the hypothesis that if the nurses have received more serious training in medical psychology or additional specialized training for working with patients with anxiety disorders, they would build a better strategy for the practical use of the acquired knowledge and skills. Their knowledge in this area would be more and there would be more professional and effective behavior towards people with anxiety. As a result, the communication of patient to medical staff would be more effective, and the therapeutic process - quick and successful.

This study explores the need for the introduction of additional training for nurses to work with patients with anxiety disorders. Based on the results and conclusions of the research are made recommendations for improving the knowledge of nurses concerning anxiety disorders and characteristics of patients suffering from them.

AIM OF THE STUDY

Identifying the need for additional training for nurses working with people with anxiety disorders.

METHODS

To achieve the goal of the study were used the following methods:

- Questionnaire method held among students in second, third and fourth year of study for a degree Bachelor, specialty "nurse." It is used a questionnaire consisting of 23 open, closed and semi-closed questions.
- Documentary method - different norms are explored, documents and literature, related to the issue.
- Statistical method - the data is processed using the computer program EXCEL and specialized product processing statistics SPSSv19.

COVERAGE AND RUN TIME OF THE SURVEY

The study included 150 students of second, third and fourth training course for degree Bachelor, specialty "nurse" in the branch "Prof. Dr. Ivan Mitev "-Vratsa part of the Medical University of Sofia. First-year students are not included, since the study authors assessed their training as insufficient to accumulate enough knowledge to work with people with anxiety. In support of this decision is the fact that the subject "medical psychology", which should provide the most knowledge in this field, is studied in the first year.

In the questionnaires are involved students aged 19 to 45. The survey was held in the period from October 2014 to April 2015.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results show that a bigger part of the surveyed students do not yet have acquired a single higher education. 72.7% of respondents answer that by this moment have not completed higher education. The remaining 27.3% indicate that they already have a diploma for completed higher education with another specialty. (Fig. 1)

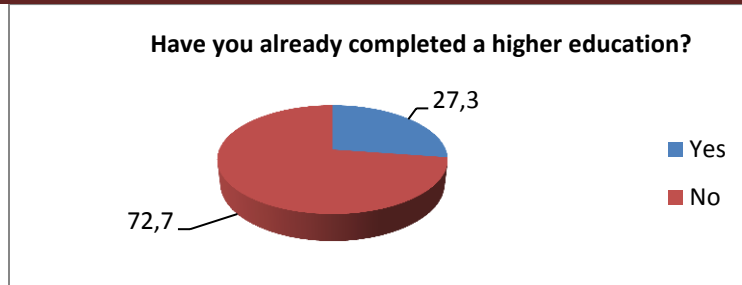


Fig. 1 Completed higher education

100% of the students surveyed said they have not completed any independent training in psychology or psychiatry. (Fig. 2)

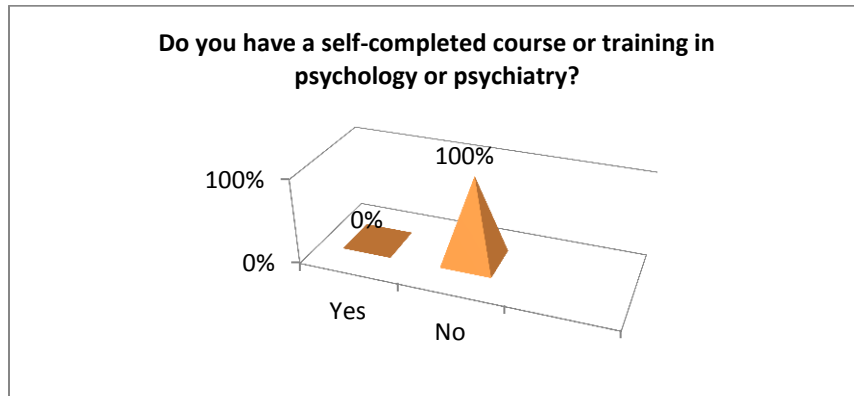


Fig. 2 Self-training in psychology

Although students are second, third and fourth year of study, almost half of them say they are only slightly familiar with the specifics of anxiety disorders - 48.7%. "Yes, I am aware partly" meet 27.3% of respondents and "yes, absolutely" - 21%.As unable to determine if they are familiar with the characteristics of anxiety disorders are defined 5.3% of respondents and 1.4% answer with "I am not aware." (Fig. 3)

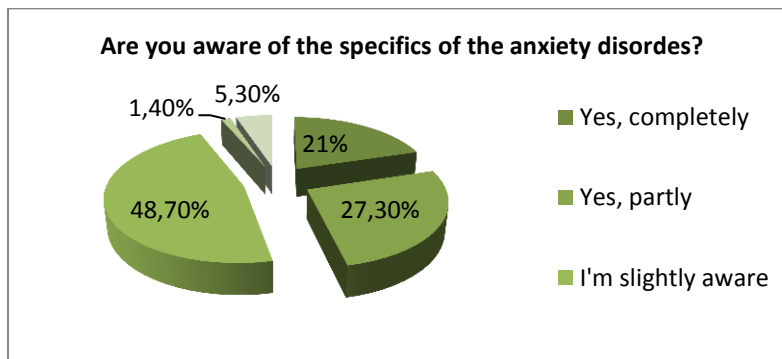


Fig. 3 Knowledge of the specifics of anxiety disorders

Serious problems encountered surveyed students in response to the open question "What are the risks about patients with anxiety disorders?". Only 30% of the respondents answer with two or more correct guesses about the risks about people with anxiety disorders, as they most often state a possible development of another mental disorder, suicide and depression. One correct answer is stated by 11.3 percent of the surveyed students. Wrong answer gave 21.3 percent of respondents, while 7.4% were recorded as a response "I can't answer" or "I can't determine". The remaining 30% did not record any answer. (Fig. 4)

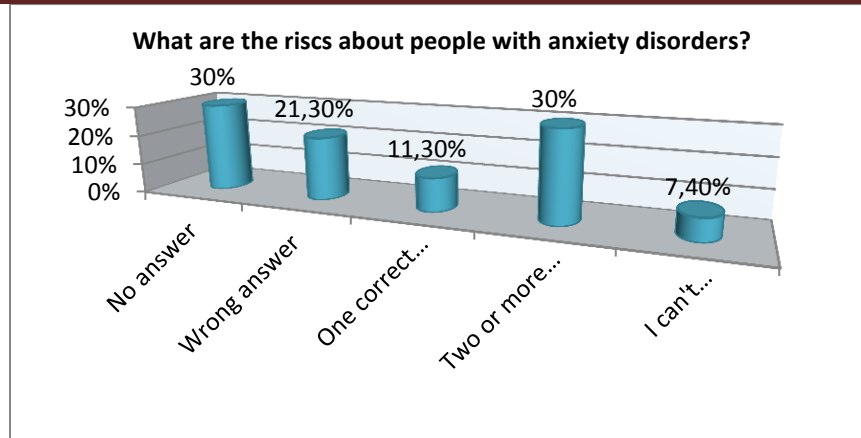


Fig. 4 Awareness of the risks about people with anxiety disorders

The statistics on responses to the question where most students have received the knowledge of patients with anxiety disorders and the mental illnesses themselves is quite interesting. Most respondents - 74.7%, state the response "of classes in medical psychology." Secondly by frequency is the answer "personal contact with people with anxiety," which was selected by 20.7%. On the same question 8.7% stated that the most knowledge received from the classes of Psychiatry, 2.7 % - other subjects, 4.7% - from the TV, 6% - from books and literature and 14% - from the Internet. It is a concerning fact that 10.7 percent of the respondents said they have no such knowledge. The sum of percentages exceeds 100 because the respondents were able to choose more than one response. (Fig. 5)

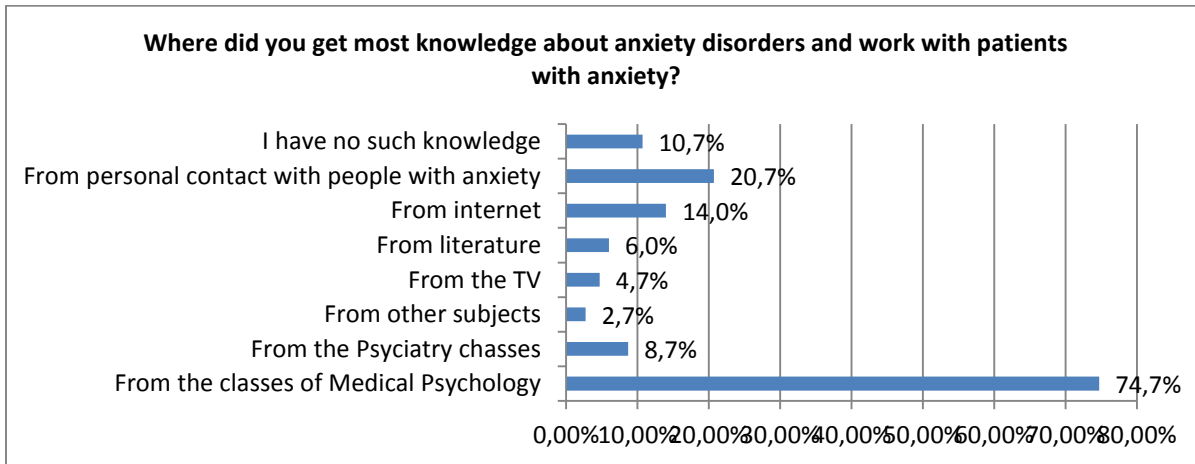


Fig. 5 Best source of knowledge about anxiety disorders and patients with anxiety

More than half of the respondents judged as insufficient the Medical Psychology classes - a total of 52.6%. Of these, 27.3% believe that the classes were not enough, while 25.3% assess them as highly insufficient. As enough define them only 10% of respondents and partially enough - 24.7%. The answer "do not know" is given by 12.7% of respondents. (Fig. 6)

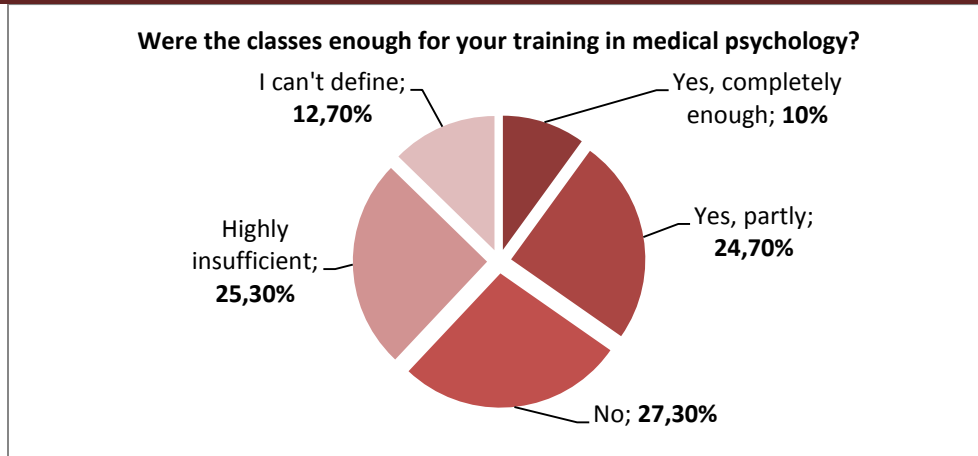


Fig. 6 Assessment of the classes of Medical Psychology

Most of the students surveyed were on the opinion that the training of nurses should include special classes of training in working with people with anxiety disorders - 60.7%. Of these, 38.7% are on the opinion that the need for such classes is enormous and 22% define it as partial. The answer "rather no need" indicated 14% of the respondents and "definitely not" - 12%. How great is the need can't determine 13.3% of respondents. (Fig. 7)

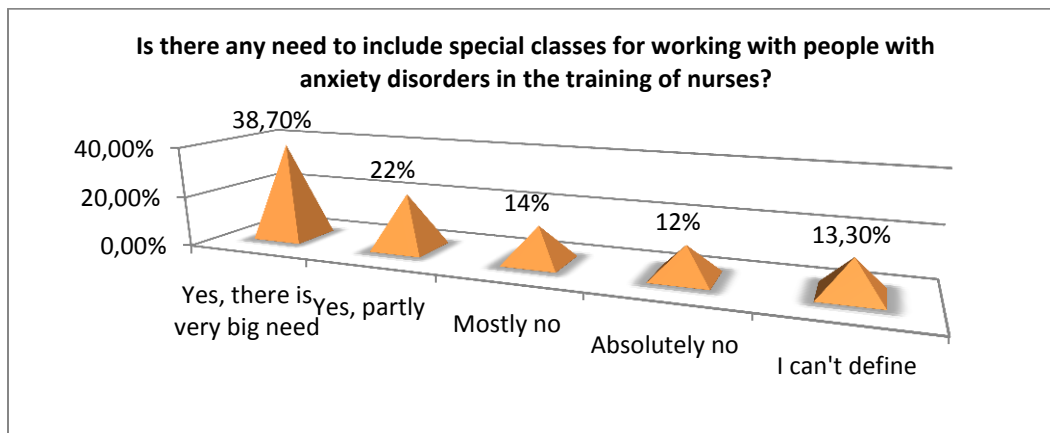


Fig. 7 Need for special classes on working with people with anxiety disorders

If there was opportunity to participate in additional specialized training for working with people with anxiety disorders very high percentage of respondents said they would participate. Definitely would participate in such training 44.7% of the students and 22.7 percent - would rather take part. Rather not take part 14.7% of respondents and definitely would not participate only 7.3%. The answer "do not know" was given by 10.7 percent. (Fig. 8)

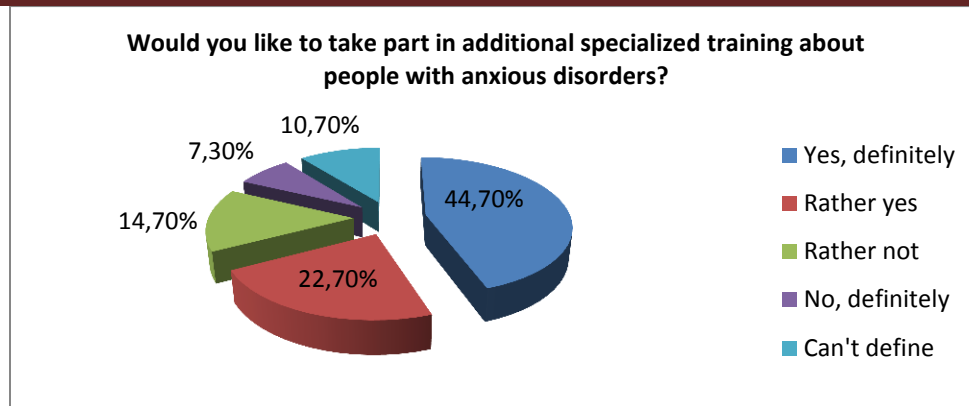


Fig. 8 Willingness to participate in additional training

CONCLUSIONS

1. The respondents students have insufficient knowledge of the specifics of anxiety disorders, although they are second, third and fourth year of training for educational and qualification degree and bachelor and should already have sufficient knowledge and skills in various fields of medicine. That means that in real situations when working with patients with anxiety nurses might encounter difficulties in the implementation of professional behavior and communication with a patient with anxiety disorder.

2. Students are not sufficiently informed about the risks in people with anxiety disorders. This means that they could not work towards prevention and prophylaxis, and they do not have a clear strategy to support the therapeutic process.

3. The results show that most information on anxiety disorders students of the specialty "nurse" receives classes in medical psychology. Also, it is accounted that the lectures and practical exercises on the subject have been rather not enough than enough. This proves how significant is the Medical Psychology as a component of the curriculum and is an occasion to think about increasing the number of the classes.

4. The survey shows that there is a need to add special classes for working with people with anxiety disorders as part of the training in Medical Psychology.

5. Students of the specialty "nurse" are willingness to participate in additional specialized training on work with people with anxiety disorders. This proves that they are willing to develop their knowledge and skills in this direction.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In the state requirements for the specialty "nurse", educational and qualification degree "Bachelor", more hours on the subject "medical psychology" can be set as a minimum.

2. In order to increase the knowledge and skills for working with people with anxiety disorders to be provided more space for this type of mental disorders in the content of the subject "Medical Psychology".

3. Teachers in classes of Medical Psychology, carefully selected by pedagogical and psychological techniques, to work towards building adequate professional behavior and attitude of a nurse to a patient with anxiety.

4. Educational institutions to provide the opportunity of including additional specialized trainings about working with people with anxiety disorders as nurses during their training for educational and qualification degree "Bachelor" and so as to already graduated bachelors or masters graduated specialty "nurse".

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