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ARTICLE

INVESTIGATION AND RESEARCH ON THE NEEDS OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE FOR THE AGED PEOPLE IN JIAXING CITY, CHINA

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ABSTRACT

Objective to understand the current situation of mental health service needs of the aged people in Jiaxing city, so as to explore the construction mode of mental health service system. Methods: a self-designed questionnaire was distributed to the aged people over 55 in 5 communities of Jiaxing city by random sampling. Results: 184 questionnaires were issued, returned 184, 174 were valid, the effective rate was 94.6%. 146 people (83.9%) did not receive/do not know what is psychological counseling. The primary choice of the aged people for psychological distress was to communicate with contemporary, while only 29 (16.7%) of the aged people sought help from medical staff. There was significant difference in the frequency of communication with medical staff among different educational levels ($\chi^2=38.898, P=0.001$), and different educational levels in seeking help for psychological distress from medical staff ($\chi^2=9.633, P=0.022$). Conclusions: the aged people have a poor understanding of mental health services, and they often digest for themselves or seek help from medical staff in psychological distress. In order to improve the mental health of the aged people, it is necessary to strengthen the publicity and raise the awareness of the mental health services among aged people.

KEYWORDS

Aged people, mental health services, psychological needs.

1. INTRODUCTION

There are mainly three kinds of needs in Chinese aged people, including medical care health, daily care, spiritual comfort^[1]. With the development of medical and health services and the improvement of welfare security measures, the medical care and daily care of the aged people have been greatly improved. However, the spiritual needs are still in the state of late start and slow development. In December 2018, the state administration of disease control and prevention issued a document entitled "notice on the issuance of the pilot work plan for the construction of a national psychosocial service system", which clearly pointed out the establishment of a mental health service system for the aged people. This study conducted a questionnaire survey in Jiaxing city of China, in October 2019. It was in order to learn the current situation of mental health needs of the aged people, and provide data support for the improvement of mental health services for the elderly.

2. OBJECT AND METHOD

2.1 Subjects

The subjects were randomly selected from five communities in Jiaxing city from October to December, 2019, including Liang-lin-fan-ying village, Baimiao community, Dashu sanatorium, Youquan community and Funan community. Inclusion criteria: (1) voluntary investigation after oral informed consent; (2) local residence at least 1 year; (3) those

aged above 55 years old; (4) those with mental illness, communication disorder, or could not understand the contents of the questionnaire were excluded. In total, 184 questionnaires (54 males and 120 females) were issued, 184 questionnaires were collected, 174 were valid, and the effective rate was 94.6%.

2.2 Survey methods

Based on literature review and expert interviews, a questionnaire on the social and psychological health needs of the aged people in Jiaxing was compiled. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. Part 1 was the basic information, including gender, age, education, marital status, previous occupation, source of income and other general information. Part 2 was a survey of mental health needs, including four dimensions. The first dimension was daily life: it included main activities and main communication objects in daily life. The second dimension was physical health: including sleep quality. The third dimension is psychological burden: including problems and causes of emotion. The fourth dimension was psychological counseling: including whether you know the place of psychological counseling, the frequency of counseling, the satisfaction with psychosocial services, the way to seek psychological help and other projects.

Face-to-face interview was conducted one by one. The respondents who met the selection criteria briefly explained the requirements for filling in the questionnaire and then completed the questionnaire by themselves.

Respondents who cannot complete the questionnaire independently will be assisted by the investigator.

2.3 Data processing

Data was double entered and carried out by Epi Data software, statistical analysis was carried out by SPSS 16.0 software, descriptive statistics was carried out by $\bar{X} \pm s$ and frequency, and statistical analysis is carried out by χ^2 test for rate comparison.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Demographic data of respondents

174 respondents were divided into 5 age groups. There were 54 males, accounting for 31%, 120 females, accounting for 69%. It was described in detail by table 1 for age, education, marital status and previous occupation. There was no significant difference in age ($X^2=1.009, P=0.076$), education level ($X^2=1.107, P=0.084$), marital status ($X^2=1.856, P=0.141$), occupation ($X^2=2.034, P=0.154$) between different gender.

Table 1: General information of respondents.

Item	Classification	N	Percent (%)
Age	60 or less	15	8.6
	61-70	49	28.2
	71-80	53	30.5
	81-90	53	30.5
	90 or higher	4	2.3
Education	Illiterate	66	37.9
	Primary school and below	51	29.3
	Junior high school	34	19.5
	Technical school and above	23	13.2
Marital status	Married	113	64.9
	Unmarried	3	1.7
	Divorced	3	1.7
	Widowed	55	31.6
Occupation	Farmers	89	51.1
	Party and government organs	8	4.5
	Unit worker	60	34.5
	Self-employed	6	3.4
	Unemployed people	2	1.1
	Other	9	5.2

3.2 Contact with medical personnel

Among the 174 cases, 11 (6.3%) mainly communicated with medical staff at ordinary times, and 29 (16.7%) were willing to seek help from medical staff due to psychological distress. Gender ($X^2= 0.078, P=0.781$), age ($X^2=0.408, P=0.377$), income source and other items showed no significant difference with the communication status of medical workers. There were significant differences between the level of education and the level of communication among medical workers ($X^2=38.898, P=0.001$). 44.3% of the aged people had insomnia. There is a significant difference between the psychological distress seeking for medical staff with the level of education. The higher the overall level

of education, the higher the frequency of communication with medical staff. See table 2 for details.

Table 2: Comparison of people with different levels of education seeking help from medical staff when they have psychological troubles.

Education	Seek help from medical staff if you have psychological problems		X^2	P
	Yes	No		
Illiterate	6 (9.1%)	60 (90.9%)	9.633	0.022
Primary schools and below	7 (13.7%)	44 (86.3%)		
Junior high school	8 (23.5%)	26 (76.5%)		
Technical school and above	8 (34.8%)	15 (65.2%)		

3.3 Status of psychological counseling

Among the 174 samples, 61 (34.9%) had seen the psychological counseling site and 112 (64%) had not 28 people (16.1%) had received psychological counseling, and 146 people (83.9%) had not received or did not know what psychological counseling was.

Age ($X^2=7.696, P=0.808$), gender ($X^2=2.299, P=513$), education level ($X^2=15.141, P=0.441$), marital status ($X^2=19.674, P=0.074$), and other factors had no significant difference with the location of psychological counseling, and there was a significant difference between previous occupation with the location of psychological counseling ($X^2=35.736, P=0.023$). There was no significant difference between gender ($X^2=3.224, P=0.521$), education level ($X^2=27.040, P=0.134$), marital status ($X^2=20.697, P=0.190$), previous occupation ($X^2=40.187, P=0.064$) and psychological counseling.

4. DISCUSSION

Nowadays, China has entered the aging society, the health problems of the aged people are increasingly concerned more and more. The mental health of the aged people is also a subject that can not be ignored. According to the survey, the incidence of anxiety among the elderly in China's community is 21.6%, and the incidence of loneliness is as high as 87.6%^[2,3]. But mental health services for the aged people are relatively scarce. Chinese scholars pay more attention to the influencing factors of mental health of the aged people, but there are few studies on psychological intervention on old people^[4]. This study shows that 83.9% of the old people do not know or have not listened to psychological counseling. The usual communication object of aged people is the same age-old people. Therefore, it is necessary to enhance the publicity of mental health services for the aged people, so that the aged people can have some understanding of mental health and mental health services, and can actively demand professional help when they encounter psychological distress.

The results of this study showed that the medical staff was the first one to seek help by aged people when they suffered psychological distress, which may be related to the physical discomfort. When dealing with medical staff for a long time, the satisfaction of the main demands comes from medical staff. At present, community health centers are the main places for the aged people to realize prevention and health care, disease diagnosis and treatment. Strengthening the construction of mental health service projects in community health centers is the basis and important way to ensure the physical and mental health of the elderly^[5]. At the same time, it is also necessary to improve the mental health service capacity of community health service personnel, which can help the aged people correctly understand the disease, so as to eliminate or reduce the worry or anxiety about the disease.

To sum up, the awareness of mental health among the aged people in jiaxing needs to be improved, so it is necessary to strengthen the

publicity and education of mental health among the elderly and improve the awareness of psychological counseling so as to provide better mental health protection for the elderly.

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