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*by* Bbb Lit

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Mental Illness in Women and how their Treatment differs from their Male Counterparts

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### **Problem Statement**

Women and men are treated differently in the psychiatric setting. Though both women and men experience mental health disorders in different ways, women require a different approach when it comes to treatment (Regis College, 2020). <sup>1</sup> Gender inequality and stereotypes play an essential role in how individuals are perceived and treated, and gendered experiences within the behavioral health care system often reveal detrimental mental health outcomes (Friehe, 2020)

### **Literature review**

Friehe (2020) did a research on how women who had been diagnosed with serious mental illness were being treated in the society because of their gender. It was evident that those female patients were stigmatized more often by the society based on their gender. They also faced institutionalization which was based on their social status in the society. The trauma that were given unto them was mostly due to their female gender and the society viewed them as weak beings. Most of the women reported being pushed away by the society and that made them vulnerable to victimization from members of the society. Most of the female patients who were hospitalized reported being rejected by their families after they were admitted in their current psychiatric hospital.

The study included 55 women in the psychiatric hospital in U.S. the aim was to discern the various experiences that the psychiatric patients had based on gender and how trauma, stigma or even attitude was imparted to them based on sexuality. The issue of masculinity and perception about men was highlighted by those patients who were sexually assaulted. From the study, the Author established congruent differences based on the interview responses that were given by the women who had been traumatized and those who had not gone through such scenarios. Those who

had been traumatized or stigmatized had low self-esteem, feared for their safety and had less trust to people especially those with masculine sexuality. Generally, the recovering of female psychiatric patients depended on the highlighted factors since most of them were psychosocial.

Ghebrehwet et al. (2020) identified a great variation on mental illness on the basis of gender in the research done in Butajira, Ethiopia. The area of study represented low and middle income countries that were thought to exhibit the variation based on gender. The results indicated that the prevalence ratio for male and female was 5:1. The research done was meant to give the reasons as to why the variation was so great. The research addressed the observed differences that were recorded in the estimates for the prevalence ratio and the sociocultural factors that affected the variation. The gender experiences showed variation due to difference in the visible signs and symptoms, the responses that were recorded from the community and there was variance in support from the family members for the individuals. The responses recorded indicated that the various sociocultural factors subjected the female gender to more social and physical isolation compared to their opposite gender. This makes it hard for the health workers in the community to identify the female patients and further provide the appropriate care for those suffering from mental illness. Ghebrehwet et al. (2020) further highlighted that the methods that were to be used to detect serious mental illness needed to incorporate the patient's family members in order to have early detection of the signs and symptoms to facilitate early initiation of psychiatric management.

Lacey et al. (2015) indicated that people who had been diagnosed with Serious mental illness faced stigma from their fellow members of the public. Since there was no enough data that showed the various experiences that the fathers and mothers who had mental illness had gone through the research was meant to give out the findings on the specific research questions. The research work compared the experience that the male and female parents had once they were

diagnosed with serious mental illness as well as the various gender effects that were evident following the stigmatization acts. They also ruled out the effects that the stigmatization had on parenting. The research involved use of telephone surveys. The research participants involved in the survey were 93 who had SMI and were having parenting roles.

The findings indicated that mothers perceived more stigmatization compared to fathers. The second finding was that fathers faced less stigmatization but were key perpetrators of stigmatization to others since they held more stigmatizing attitudes (Lacey et al., 2015). There were poor parenting experiences due to stigmatization among the parents who had SMI.

Rezaie & Phillips (2020) did a research that was meant to give thorough information on the needs for psychiatric female patients once they get discharged from hospitals. The justification for the study indicated that the information would be important in having better treatment outcomes for the female psychiatric patient. The targeted study group was the Iranian women who had been diagnosed with severe mental illness. The aim for the study was to determine the post discharge needs that the Iranian patients had. The interviewed patients were receiving in patient services in Iranian hospital and it grouped the needs into support, information and skill acquisition. The study found out that women needed illness related information as well as information that was linked to their health. The given findings indicated that the family members of the female psychiatric patients needed to be incorporated in the management to ensure that there was improved care and the outcomes generally. That was also important to reduce the stigma that was inclined towards women. The findings indicated that there was need to have interventions that would empower both the female patients as well as their families. The patients needed to be prepared well for employment as well be incorporated in various initiatives in public health that would have reduction of stigmatization and better access to psychiatric care.

Rodolpho et al. (2015) did a study that aimed at identifying various factors that had influence to the experience and the attitudes that women had more so those who had severe mental illness. The study used analysis of articles that were published between 2000 to 2014 and it was an electronic form of analysis. Integrative methods were used to screen the primary studies. The study analyzed 15 articles and the factors that were identified were 21 which were further regrouped into five categories. There was a strong relationship of the factors with SMD patients' experiences as well as their daily attitude. The grouping consisted of factors that addressed the gains as well as the challenges that the patients had regarding motherhood, factors related to adoption to the various strategies of coping up with their condition and the psychosocial vulnerabilities that the patients displayed. There were also factors that addressed the unmet healthcare needs for the patients and the various strengths and limitations that patients had regarding to their self-care behavior as well as the healthcare delivery. The findings indicated that there were several barriers that the healthcare providers had to overcome in order to have better psychiatric care to severe mental illness patients.

Miller & Ghadiali (2015) did a research that aimed at looking at the various needs that females had that were to be addressed during psychiatric care. The study looked at the various premenstrual influences that affected their psychiatric care, the post menstrual or and perinatal influences that had impact on ladies' mental health. There were various factors that impacted the female's health that included unplanned pregnancy, some gynecological changes that needed to be addressed and issues of rape or prolonged menstruation. Most of the ladies seemed to be depressed when such issues happen. For the psychiatric hospitals, they were supposed to offer extra general medical services whether gynecological or general medical ones in order to root out some of the stressors that would prolong the hospital stay for the patient.

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