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Title

Clinical Strategies and Challenges of Psychiatrists in Accra, Ghana

Priority 1 (Research Category)

Behavioral, psychosocial, and mental illness

Presenters

Samuel Ofei-Dodoo, PhD, MA, MPA, CPH, Tayita Abudu, MPH, Mabel Oti-Boadi

Abstract

Introduction. While Ghana has made rigorous efforts to expand psychiatric care for hard-to-reach communities, there is limited knowledge about the experiences of the country's psychiatrists regarding their current clinical approaches and the barriers they face in delivering care. The authors aimed to determine these approaches and barriers to better understand the scope of mental health delivery from the perspective of psychiatrists working in the capital city of Accra. By understanding their insights on psychiatric care, we hoped to recognize their successes with patients and address the challenges they face more effectively.

Methods. The authors used a qualitative research design, interviewing five psychiatrists from Pantang Psychiatric Hospital and two psychiatry residents rotating at Pantang and Accra Psychiatric Hospital in Accra, and Ankaful Psychiatric Hospital in Cape Coast. These volunteers were individually interviewed about their experiences with current clinical approaches and barriers they face in delivering care. Interviews continued until saturation, where further interviews did not yield new insights. The authors analyzed interview content using an immersion-crystallization approach, both individually and as a group.

Results. The responses from seven participants (two females and five males) are summarized. The majority (86%, $n = 6$) were under the age of 40, with 57% ($n = 4$) having been in practice for five years or less. Four major themes emerged regarding clinical strategies for diagnosing and treating patients: patient history, use of ICD-10, application of the biopsychosocial model, and in-patient care. Additionally, five major themes emerged regarding barriers in delivering care: finance, infrastructure, staff shortages, limited community connections, and delayed care.

Conclusions. These findings highlight the clinical strategies employed by psychiatrists in Ghana and the significant barriers they face in delivering care. Understanding these challenges can inform interventions and policies to improve mental health care delivery in the country.

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