

Gender differences in mental health literacy among Chinese-speaking Australians in Melbourne, Australia

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Reference:

Key Words:

gender, Chinese, mental illness, characteristics, perceptions, cultural norms

Research aim:

This study attempted to understand gender differences in knowledge of mental illness, preference for professional help, and medications and treatment methods among Australians of Chinese-speaking background by presenting participants with two vignettes describing an individual with acute depression or acute schizophrenia and then questions were asked to assess their understanding of the conditions, preference for professional help, medications and treatment methods.

Results/Conclusion:

More female than male respondents could correctly identify the conditions in the two vignettes. Female participants also perceived medications to be relatively more harmful than their male counterparts. In contrast, there were significantly more males than females who adhered to traditional views on the causation of mental illness; had significantly higher percentages of endorsement of 'deal with it alone'; believed 'traditional Chinese medical doctor' and 'Chinese herbal medicines' to be helpful to the person in the schizophrenia vignette; and significantly endorsed 'psychiatric ward', 'electro-convulsive treatment', 'changing fengshui' and 'traditional Chinese worship' to be helpful for the persons in both vignettes.

Implications:

A combination of factors, which included age, duration of migration and traditional Chinese cultural values, were put forward to explain the above differences.

Cultural Group(s):

Chinese

Location of study:

Victoria (Melbourne)

Age group:

not specific to older people (mean age 57 males, 45 females)

Number included in study:

200

Type of participants:

Chinese-speaking Australians

Research approach:

Mixed methods

Type of data:

Primary

Secondary data sources used:

Specific scales or analytical techniques used:

Implications/ Recommendations:

Notes: