

Characteristics of Schizophrenic Patients

¹Rameshwar S Manhas, ^{2*}Manu Arora, ³Rukhsana Akhter, ⁴Jagdish R Thappa, ⁵Angli Manhas, ⁶Gaurav S Manhas

¹Senior Resident, Department of Psychiatry, Government Medical College, Jammu, J&K, India.

²Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatry, Government Medical College, Jammu, J&K, India.

³MA in Psychology, Intern, Department of Psychiatry, Government Medical College, Jammu, J&K, India.

⁴Prof & HOD, Department of Psychiatry, Government Medical College, Jammu, J&K, India.

⁵Senior Resident, Department of Ophthalmology, Government Medical College Jammu, J&K, India.

⁶Senior Resident, Department of Radiodiagnosis, Government Medical College Jammu, J&K, India.

Corresponding Author: Dr Manu Arora, MBBS,MD (Psychiatry), Assistant Professor, Government Medical College, Jammu, J&K

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Abstract

Background: Schizophrenia is one of the severe mental disorder which is characterized by fundamental disturbances in emotions, perception and thinking.

Aims: To find the sociodemographic characteristics of schizophrenic patients.

Materials & Methods: The present study which is a cross-sectional and observational, was carried over a period of two months and conducted in the outpatient department (OPD) of Government Psychiatric Diseases Hospital Jammu and involved about 150 patients. Sociodemographic characteristics like age, sex etc were studied.

Results: 68.7% patients were below 40 years compared to 31.3% who were above 40 years. There were 64.7% males, 63.3% from rural areas, 88% Hindu and 52% unmarried. Majority i.e. 51.3% patients live in joint families. 49.3% patients had studied above 10th standard and 52.7% patients were unemployed. Maximum percentage of patients i.e. 52.7% belongs to lower socioeconomic class.

Conclusion: From present study, it has been concluded that majority of the schizophrenic patients were below 40 years of age, males from rural areas living in joint families, were unmarried, educated but unemployed and belongs to low socioeconomic class.

Keywords: Rural, Schizophrenia, Stigma.

Introduction

Schizophrenia is one of the severe mental disorder which is characterized by fundamental disturbances in emotions, perception and thinking. This illness was first described by Emil Kraepelin (1896) who named it dementia praecox and separated it from manic depressive illness. Later on the term schizophrenia was coined by Eugen Bleuler in 1911.¹ Though the prevalence of schizophrenia is low, it produces tremendous economic, social and health burden not only on the patients but on their family members as well as on the society. It is becoming increasingly difficult for the communities and societies to offer support to schizophrenic patients through social and family bounds.²

In 2016, schizophrenia was ranked 12th as the most disabling disorder worldwide.³ According to the global burden of disease study, schizophrenia causes a high degree of disability that accounts for 2.8% of YLDs (YLD=years lived with disability) and 1.1% of the total DALYs (DALY = disability-adjusted life year).¹

The lifetime prevalence of schizophrenia is about 1% and the annual incidence ranges from 0.5 to 5 per 10000. There may slight geographical variations but it is found nearly in all societies and geographical areas.⁴ Schizophrenia is slightly more frequent in men than in women, with a risk ratio of 1.4/1. Individuals who experience an excess of complications in fetal life and at birth have an increased risk of developing schizophrenia. The disorder is also more severe in men. In addition, men tend to develop severe schizophrenia earlier than women; the peak age of onset of frank psychotic symptoms is 20–24 years in men, but 5 or more years later in women.⁵ Sociodemographic characteristics of schizophrenia have been studied in various parts of world but not in our setup. Hence we conducted this study to find various sociodemographic characteristics of schizophrenic patients.

Methodology

The present study which is a cross-sectional and observational, was carried over a period of two months and conducted in the outpatient department (OPD) of Government Psychiatric Diseases Hospital Jammu which is the only tertiary care psychiatric hospital of the Jammu division of Jammu and Kashmir state and caters the population even of the nearby states. Only those patients were selected for the study who were initially diagnosed by the consultant psychiatrist by using DSM 5 diagnostic criteria.⁶ The first 3 alternate patients who were diagnosed as schizophrenia on OPD days were selected and a total of 150 patients were

involved in the study. Sociodemographic characteristics like age, sex, religion, domicile, type of the family, educational status, employment status and sociodemographic class were studied.

Statistical analysis

Analysis of data was done using statistical software MS Excel / SPSS version 17.0 for windows. Data presented as percentage (%) as discussed appropriate for quantitative and qualitative variables.

Observation & Results

Table 1 shows that 68.7% schizophrenic patients were below 40 years of age and 31.3% were above 40 years of age. There is more male preponderance as 64.7% patients were males and 35.3% patients were females. 63.3% patients were from rural areas and 36.7% patients were from urban areas. There were 88% patients who were Hindus, 9.3% were Muslims and 2.7% patients belong to other religion. Maximum percentage of patients i.e. 52% were unmarried followed 44.7% married, 2% widowed and 1.3% divorced. There were 51.3% patients who live in joint families and 48.7% who live in nuclear families. As per educational status 49.3% had studied above 10th standard, 22.7% had studied between 6th to 10th standard, 16.7% had studied upto 5th standard and 11.3% were illiterate. Majority i.e. 52.7% patients were unemployed compared to 47.3% who were employed. Maximum percentage of patients i.e. 59.3% belongs to lower socioeconomic class, whereas 32% belongs to middle economic class and 8.7% belongs to upper socioeconomic class.

Table 1 shows sociodemographic characteristics schizophrenic patients

	Number of patients	Percentage (%)
Age (in years)		
≤40	103	68.7
>40	47	31.3
Sex		
Males	97	64.7
Females	53	35.3
Residence		
Rural	95	63.3
Urban	55	36.7
Religion		
Hindu	132	88
Muslims	14	9.3
Others	4	2.7
Marital status		
Married	67	44.7
Unmarried	78	52
Divorced	2	1.3
Widowed	3	2
Type of family		
Joint	77	51.3
Nuclear	73	48.7
Education		
Illiterate	17	11.3
Upto 5 th standard	25	16.7
6 th -10 th standard	34	22.7
Above 10 th standard	74	49.3
Occupation		
Employed	71	47.3
Unemployed	79	52.7
Socioeconomic class		
Upper	13	8.7
Middle	48	32
Lower	89	59.3

Discussion

In the present study majority i.e. 68.7% patients were below 40 years of age whereas 31.3% were above 40 years of age. Schizophrenia is a disorder which occurs in life with peak age of onset among men ranges between 10 to 25 and in women 25 to 35 years⁴ and the same trends are reflected in this study. Our finding is in accordance to Rode SB et al who observed that 69.9% of schizophrenic patients were below 40 years.⁷

Similarly Siddhartha G et al and Nukala S et al in their respective studies had also found that 69.5% and 68.2% of the schizophrenic patients were below 40 years.^{8,9} Other studies had also observed that majority of the schizophrenic patients were below 40 years.¹⁰⁻¹⁴ 64.7% of the schizophrenic patients were males compared to 35.3% who were females. There is equal prevalence of schizophrenia in males and females⁴ but in Indian culture the illness in males is taken more seriously due to the fact that the males are the sole bread earner of the family.¹⁵ Moreover due to gender bias more male patients are brought for treatment compared to females.¹⁶ The finding of ours is in agreement with Nukala S et al and Banerjee I et al who found that 61.9% and 59.61% of the schizophrenic patients were males.^{9,10} Similar observation was also made by other studies.^{7,8,11,13,14} However Oommen S et al had observed that majority of the schizophrenic patients were females.¹² Maximum percentage of schizophrenic patients i.e. 63.3% were from rural areas and only 36.7% were from urban areas. This could be explained by the fact that caretakers of psychiatric patients who are living in urban areas prefer to visit private psychiatric clinics rather than government psychiatric establishments¹⁶ which may be due to stigma related issues.¹⁷ Eticha T et al had observed that 56% of the schizophrenic patients were from rural areas.¹⁴ Similarly Vijayalakshmi K had also observed that majority of the patients with psychiatric disorders including schizophrenia were from rural background.¹⁸ However Rode SB et al and Grover S et al in their respective studies had observed that there is preponderance of schizophrenic patients in urban areas as compared to rural areas.^{7,11} In the present study 88% patients were Hindus whereas 9.3% were Muslims and only 2.7% belongs to other

religion. India is a country which is dominated by Hindu population¹⁹ and hence it is expected that most of the patients to be from Hindu religion.¹⁰ Our finding is in agreement with Grover S et al who observed 77% of the schizophrenic patients were Hindu.¹¹ Banerjee I et al had also observed that 78.1% of the schizophrenic patients were Hindu.¹⁰

Most of the patients i.e. 52% were unmarried followed by 44.7% married, 2% widowed and 1.3% divorced. The individuals who were diagnosed with schizophrenia were more likely to be single compared to others possibly because this disorder has an earlier onset which occurs during the years of formation of marriage.⁷ The finding of ours is in accordance with Rode SB et al and Eticha T et al who in their respective studies had observed that 52.04% and 57.3% of the schizophrenic patients were unmarried.^{7,14} Similar observation was also made by Adhikari P et al¹⁵ whereas Grover S et al had found that majority of the schizophrenic patients were married.¹¹

51.3% patients were from joint family whereas 48.7% were from nuclear families. Most of our studied patients were from rural areas and hence it is expected that majority of them to be from joint families as joint family is the most common type of family system in rural areas.^{16,20} Vijayalakshmi K had observed that majority of the psychiatric patients including that of schizophrenia were from joint families¹⁸ whereas Grover S et al had noted that most of the schizophrenic patients were from nuclear families.¹¹

In the present study 49.3% patient had studied above 10th standard followed 22.7% between 6th to 10th standard, 16.7% upto 5th standard and only 11.3% were illiterate. In India literacy rates are rising¹⁶ and same are shown in our study also. Our finding is in agreement with Grover S et al who observed that 55.6%

schizophrenic patients had studied above 10th standard.¹¹ Similarly Eticha T et al had also found that most of the schizophrenic patients were educated.¹⁴ However Swapna S et al had observed that majority of the patients of schizophrenia were illiterate.¹³

About 52.7% of the schizophrenic patients were unemployed compared to 47.3% who were employed. Schizophrenia due to its nature of insidious onset may affect an individual's capacity to compete in job market resulting in more unemployment among these patients.⁷ Various other studies had also observed that majority of the schizophrenic patients were unemployed^{7,10,14} however Swapna S et al had made observation opposite to us.¹³

59.3% of the studied patients belong to lower socioeconomic class, 32% were from middle and 8.7% were from upper socioeconomic class. Patients of higher socioeconomic class prefer to take treatment from private psychiatrist or a general practitioner rather than attending a government psychiatric hospital.¹⁵ This may be reason that most of the participants in our study belongs to lower socioeconomic class. Our finding is in accordance to Adhikari P et al who observed that most of the psychiatric patients including schizophrenic patients belong to low socioeconomic class.¹⁵

Conclusion

From present study, it has been concluded that majority of the schizophrenic patients were below 40 years of age, males from rural areas living in joint families, were unmarried, educated but unemployed and belongs to low socioeconomic class. Hence it is suggested that clinicians while attending psychiatric clinics special should pay special attention to the patients with these characteristics so that early diagnosis and manage of schizophrenia can be done.

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