

Efficacy of Mental Health First Aid for Enhancement of Mental Health Literacy: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Protocol

Soma Naskar Chakraborty^{1*}; David Ratna Paul Talagatoti²; Aparna Ray³

¹Ph.D. Scholar, School of Nursing Sciences and Research, Sharda University, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India.

²Associate Professor, Ph.D. Supervisor, School of Nursing Sciences and Research, Sharda University, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India.

³Professor and Acting Principal, Matangini Govt. College of Nursing, Purba Medinipur District Hospital, Tamluk, West Bengal, India

Correspondence Author:- Soma Naskar Chakraborty^{1*}

Abstract:-

➤ *Background:*

Low level of “Mental Health Literacy” is the leading source of the global crisis in mental health. It yields a state full of misconceptions stigmatization and a lack of health-seeking behaviour which is worsening the global mental health burden. Desperate efforts have been very urgent today, to arrange various awareness programs. “Mental Health First Aid” is one of them that originated from Australia and spread over many countries. The protocol is aimed at examining the efficacy of “Mental Health First Aid” programme for enhancing “Mental Health Literacy” among people.

➤ *Materials and Methods:*

Systematic reviews will examine randomized and non-randomized control trials. PRISMA will be followed in this review (Prospero Registration No. CRD4202344034) and PubMed, CINHAL, and Science Direct will be searched. This systematic review will search 2000–2023 studies. The JBI clinical appraisal checklist for randomized and non-randomized control trials will evaluate study quality. Included studies will meet inclusive criteria like English-language publication.

➤ *Results:*

A comprehensive analysis of the selected literature will be executed, and the findings will be presented in a narrative summary that includes statistical data.

➤ *Conclusion:*

This review aims to determine the efficacy of “Mental Health First Aid” training in enhancing “Mental Health Literacy” among individuals.

➤ *Trial Registration:*

Prospero Registration No- CRD42023440341.

Keywords:- *Mental Health First Aid training, Mental Health Literacy, Adults, Knowledge, Attitude.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The “World Health Organization” (WHO) has defined ‘Mental Health’ as an inherent constituent of HEALTH [1]. India is overburdened with mental health issues. The prevalence rate of mental illness has increased by 20% in India during the post-covid period [2]. The only burning issue behind these are lack of nominal level “Mental Health Literacy” (MHL) in India [3]. It has been proved that “Mental Health Literacy” an effective determinant of mental health—has acted as a good recognizing ability of mental health-related problems, identification of risk behaviour, seeking medical help, seeking information, identifying causes, referring to resources, etc. Positive factors of mental health literacy are that it empowers all-around capacities in an adult to attain help for self as well as others to combat mental health-related difficulties [4]

Lack of MHL leads to a state full of misconceptions, myths, and stigmatization and a lack of health-seeking behaviour which is worsening the global mental health burden [3].

An urgent need has emerged to extend efforts to arrange awareness programs by various possible means like radio, television and some other communication means to increase knowledge and positive attitude towards mental health [5].

On the other hand, “Mental Health First Aid” (MHFA) is a teaching program, based on general principles of first aid but differs from conventional first aid programme. MHFA originated in Australia (2000) and spread over many countries like the USA, Canada, England, and many other European countries. MHFA Training succeeded in increasing MHL among people. A person trained with

MHFA acts as a proactive resource for the community who can act as a first aider for a person in distress [6].

The principal purpose of the review will be to determine how far the introduction of the MHFA Training program will be impactful in enhancing MHL among adults.

Awareness and MHL may be considered as the sides of a same coin. The mental health awareness program is found very fruitful in bringing positive changes regarding negative issues [7]. MHFA is an emerging concept that requires verification. The researchers are keen to carry out a systematic review to examine the efficacy of the MHFA training program.

The first objective of the review is to identify the efficacy of MHFA training for improving MHL among people and the second objective is to conduct a meta-analysis on the synthesized data of knowledge, confidence in providing help for others, attitude or belief about mental illness.

II. METHODS

This review will follow the “Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis” (PRISMA) Guidelines. The protocol for this study has been officially registered at the “International Prospective Register for Systematic Reviews” under the “Prospero Registration No-CRD42023440341”.

➤ Eligibility Criteria

Literature published in English and since the year of 2000 to 2024 will be considered exclusively for the “Systematic Review”.

P- Adults 18 years onwards

I- “Mental Health First Aid” Intervention

C-No intervention / Routine Care

O- “Mental Health Literacy” in terms of knowledge, attitude to mental illnesses, ability to recognize symptoms of mental illness, ability and confidence to help and provide support to others, help-seeking behaviour, reducing stigma and misconceptions.

➤ Following Criteria will be taken into Consideration during Literature Selection.

Articles can be accessed from Electronical databases and publications in peer-reviewed journals.

- **Study design:** “Randomized Control Trial” (RCT), “Non-RCT”, and Observational studies.
- **Intervention:** This review will include literature with MHFA Training or Mental Health related Training in various forms, modes, schedules, sessions, duration, and format. The study will assess what change the intervention brings in the level of knowledge, attitude to mental illnesses, ability to recognize symptoms, ability, and confidence to help and provide support to others, help-seeking behaviour, and reducing stigma and misconceptions.

- **Population:** Adult person (18 years onwards irrespective of class, caste, religion, occupation, nation)
- **Settings:** Carried out in rural communities’ urban community workplaces college schools or any country.
- **Outcomes:** Studies will be involved if they show a change in “Mental Health Literacy” level in terms of knowledge, attitude to mental illnesses, ability to recognize symptoms, ability, and confidence to help and provide support to others, help-seeking behaviour, and reducing stigma and misconceptions.
- Books, unpublished manuscripts, and databases containing only abstracts will be excluded.

➤ Information Sources

A preliminary search in the databases of “Science Direct” and “PubMed” will use on the basis of PICO keywords, and “abstracts” and article-titles will be looked for extra keywords.

“PubMed-Medline”, “CINHAL plus” databases, “Science Direct”, and the “Cochrane Library” will be searched thoroughly using an effective search method. Citation pearl searching for relevant studies will also occur.

➤ Science Direct Database

“Mental Health First Aid” AND “Mental Health First Aid Training” AND “Mental Health First Aid Intervention” AND “Mental Health Literacy” AND “Knowledge” AND “Attitude” AND “Adult”

- (Filters: Research articles, 2000-2023, clinical trial, non-clinical trial).

➤ Study Records

Searching for articles to upload into the “Zotero software” (a “Reference Manager”) and identifying any duplicate item. The articles in detail are preserved in the “Reference Manager” all over the process of review.

➤ Selection Process

Regarding the applicability of the review of the matter, a couple of authors will independently examine the abstracts initially and titles of the articles during the process of Screening. Screening will be conducted after a comprehensive evaluation of the full text, in accordance with the eligibility criteria. Two authors will independently review, and any disagreements will be resolved through discussion with the 3rd joint author.

➤ Data Collection Process

Every selected literature will be evaluated for its standard using a checklist for clinical assessment developed by JBI (Joanna Briggs Institute Manual) [8]. Couple of autonomous reviewers will perform the grade assessment, while a third critic will actively address discrepancies. Both the authors will independently review the material, and any disagreements will be resolved through discussion with the 3rd joint author. The data extraction form of “Cochrane” database will be utilized to gather information from the selected studies [9].

➤ *Data Items*

This evaluation encompasses studies that examine variables such as MHFA Training, Mental Health Training, MHL, Attitude, Knowledge, Ability to recognize symptoms, Ability confidence to provide support and help, Help-seeking behaviour, Stigma, and Misconception.

➤ *Outcomes and Prioritization:*

This article is aimed to examine the efficacy of MHFA Training or Mental Health Training in improving MHL or Knowledge and attitude towards mental illness, ability to identify symptoms, confidence in aiding, support, and seeking help, as well as reducing stigma and misconceptions.

➤ *“Risk of Bias” in Individual Studies*

The “Cochrane Risk Bias Assessment Tool” for RCTs will be utilized to evaluate every literature selected for this review.

➤ *Data Synthesis*

Data will be gathered in accordance with the study's objectives. A comprehensive analysis will be conducted and presented as a summarized narration in tabular format. The brief will encompass descriptive accounts and quantitative findings derived from studies. A meta-analysis will be conducted to analyse the knowledge variable using the “Standardized Mean Difference” (SMD) measure. The heterogeneity of the data will be assessed using the “I2 statistics”.

- **Meta-bias(es):** An evaluation of “Publication Bias” will be conducted for the study that has been included.
- **Confidence in cumulative evidence:** The “GRADEpro” Approach will be employed to assess the reliability of the exhibits.
- **Confidence in cumulative evidence:** The “GRADEpro” Approach will be employed to assess the reliability of the evidence [10].

III. DISCUSSION

The WHO has described “mental health” as a basic human right and essential for all spheres of human development [11]. Meaning of mental health truly implies – mental wellbeing promotion, disorders prevention, effective treatment as well as rehabilitation [12].

The WHO recommends increasing MHL among common people as a strategic plan for mental health promotion worldwide [11]. Low level of mental health literacy is a social and national issue. Because it acts as a hindrance to the implementation of behavioural health as well as provokes stigma and misconceptions related to mental health. Literatures are clearly showing that favourable attitudes towards mental health services and mental health literacy are significantly correlated [3].

Present scenario to combat the problem of mental health burden with limited resources the best method to strengthen awareness, promote mental health literacy, and induce positive attitude at the individual level.

Mental health first aid (MHFA) is a very simple and effective educational method that can diminish the above-discussed gaps and enrich mental health literacy and awareness at the individual level. Mental health first aid teaches a person about the causes, risk factors, alarming signs, steps to be taken in a psychological crisis, and how or from where to attain professional help [6]. Review of this article will extend an attempt to assess the extent of the effect of the training program to improve MHL among people.

IV. CONCLUSION

The review will be done with the intention to explore the significance and impact of the MHFA Training Programme on MHL. The later purpose will be to focus on the existing gaps of those studies which may be the concern of scope of future work.

- **Funding:** No funding sources
- **Conflict of interest:** None
- **Ethical approval:** Not required

REFERENCES

- [1]. Mental Health. What Is Mental Health? Gov. <https://www.mentalhealth.gov> (accessed 2023-02-02).
- [2]. Sagar, R.; Dandona, R.; Gururaj, G.; Dhaliwal, R. S.; Singh, A.; Ferrari, A.; Dua, T.; Ganguli, A.; Varghese, M.; Chakma, J. K.; Kumar, G. A.; Shaji, K. S.; Ambekar, A.; Rangaswamy, T.; Vijayakumar, L.; Agarwal, V.; Krishnankutty, R. P.; Bhatia, R.; Charlson, F.; Chowdhary, N.; Erskine, H. E.; Glenn, S. D.; Krish, V.; Mantilla Herrera, A. M.; Mutreja, P.; Odell, C. M.; Pal, P. K.; Prakash, S.; Santomauro, D.; Shukla, D. K.; Singh, R.; Singh, R. K. L.; Thakur, J. S.; Thekkepurakkal, A. S.; Varghese, C. M.; Reddy, K. S.; Swaminathan, S.; Whiteford, H.; Bekedam, H. J.; Murray, C. J. L.; Vos, T.; Dandona, L. The Burden of Mental Disorders across the States of India: The Global Burden of Disease Study 1990–2017. *The Lancet Psychiatry* **2020**, *7* (2), 148–161. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366\(19\)30475-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(19)30475-4).
- [3]. Tambling, R. R.; D’Aniello, C.; Russell, B. S. Mental Health Literacy: A Critical Target for Narrowing Racial Disparities in Behavioral Health. *Int J Ment Health Addiction*, **2023**, *21* (3), 1867–1881. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-021-00694-w>.
- [4]. Zare, S.; Kaveh, M. H.; Ghanizadeh, A.; Nazari, M.; Asadollahi, A.; Zare, R. Adolescent Mental Health Literacy Questionnaire: Investigating Psychometric Properties in Iranian Female Students. *BioMed Research International*, **2022**, *2022*, 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2022/7210221>.

- [5]. Ogorchukwu, J. M.; Sekaran, V. C.; Nair, S.; Ashok, L. Mental Health Literacy Among Late Adolescents in South India: What They Know and What Attitudes Drive Them. *Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine*, **2016**, 38 (3), 234–241. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0253-7176.183092>.
- [6]. Kimberly LaFountain. Six Reasons to Learn Mental Health First Aid, 2017. Available from: <https://www.lifespan.org/lifespan-living/six-reasons-learn-mental-health-first-aid>.
- [7]. Srivastava, K.; Chatterjee, K.; Bhat, P. Mental Health Awareness: The Indian Scenario. *Ind Psychiatry J*, **2016**, 25 (2), 131. https://doi.org/10.4103/ipj.ipj_45_17.
- [8]. Tufanaru, C.; Munn, Z.; Aromataris, E.; Campbell, J.; Hopp, L. Chapter 3: Systematic Reviews of Effectiveness. In *JBIR Reviewer's Manual*; JBI, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.46658/JBIRM-17-03>.
- [9]. Intervention Review – RCTs and Non-RCTs. Data Collection Form. Available from: https://training.cochrane.org/sites/training.cochrane.org/files/public/uploads/resources/downloadable_resources/English/Collecting%20data%20-%20form%20for%20RCTs%20and%20non-RCTs.doc
- [10]. GRADEpro. Available from: <https://gradepro.org/>.
- [11]. Promoting Mental Health. World Health Organization. 2022. Available from: <https://www.who.int/westernpacific/activities/promoting-mental-health>. Accessed 2 February 2023.
- [12]. R Sreevani. *A Guide to Mental Health and Psychiatric Nursing*, 4th ed.; Jaypee Bros. Pvt Ltd.: New Delhi, 2016.