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## **Original Article**

### **Psychiatric morbidity among the female inmates of district jail Adyala, Rawalpindi**

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **Objectives**

To determine psychiatric morbidity among the female prisoners of district jail Adyala Rawalpindi.

### **Subjects and Methods**

A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted at Central Jail Adyala, Rawalpindi from September 2006 to February 2007. Initially, 176 inmates were accessed; an informed consent was taken followed by collection of demographic details; 48 (27.27%) inmates were excluded. The final sample size was 128 inmates who were screened by using self-reporting questionnaire-24 administered by trained raters. All inmates scoring above the cutoff point of 11 (98) and 1/10 of the low scorers (03) were interviewed using the Present state examination. The data was analyzed using the SPSS version 10.

### **Results**

Psychiatric illnesses were found in 62.5% of the female inmates; affective disorders were found in 23.43%, of those 19.5% were depressive illnesses followed by stress related disorders (13.28%), neurotic (anxiety related disorders) (10.15%), somatoform disorders (9.37%), psychotic disorders (3.12%) and organic mental disorders (3.12%).

## **Conclusion**

Our study showed a substantially high psychiatric morbidity among female inmates. The sample size was too small to generalize the conclusion and further research involving larger sample size and longitudinal follow up is required to elucidate the possible perspective. (Rawal Med J 2011;36:129-132).

## **Key words**

Psychiatric morbidity, female prisoners, forensic Psychiatry.

## **INTRODUCTION**

There is a need for the development of mental health services for jail inmates as there is a growing population of mentally ill prisoners being insufficiently detected and treated.<sup>1</sup> Worldwide community based epidemiological studies have estimated that the 12 months prevalence rates are 8.4-29.1%.<sup>2</sup> In Australia, the 12-month prevalence of any psychiatric illness was 80% in prisoners and 31% in the community.<sup>3</sup> Norway prisoners had 35% psychiatric disorders.<sup>4</sup> Institute of Psychiatry, Rawalpindi General Hospital provides forensic services to prison inmates at district jail Adyala, Rawalpindi. The purpose of this study was to determine the rates of psychiatric morbidity among the female prisoners.

## **SUBJECTS AND METHODS**

A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out at central jail Adyala, Rawalpindi from September 2006 to February 2007. Sample technique applied was non- probability

convenience sampling and all female inmates between 18-65 years of age, who were currently awaiting trial or serving sentence were included. All those who were suffering from chronic physical illness (long term physical illnesses of greater than six months), those who refused to participate in the study and those who could not understand the instrument questions due to secondary deficit or language problems were excluded from the study.

Data was collected in two stages; in stage 1, total number of inmates at the start of study was 176. Demographic details were collected. The prison doctor than examined the inmates to screen the inmates suffering from chronic physical illness. Out of 176 inmates, 48 (27.27%) were excluded. Detail of these are: 12 (6.81%) did not give consent, 13 (7.38%) had chronic physical illnesses, 2 (1.13%) had language difficulties, 7 (3.97%) were released before the completion of stage 1, 13 (7.38%) did not fulfill inclusion criterion of age and 1 (0.56%) died. Remaining 128 (72.72%) were administered the screening instrument (self-reporting questionnaire (SRQ-24) by trained female inmates selected and trained from among the inmates who had refused to participate in the study. The inmates were allotted personal numbers to maintain the confidentiality and to cite in the proceeding reference and data analysis. In stage 2, a total of 101 inmates (98 inmates were those who scored above cut off score of 11, and 3 were those of 1/10 of 30 inmates who scored below cut off score of 11), were interviewed using the Present state examination based on ICD-10 criteria by the principal investigator who was blind to the results of screening questionnaire. Data were analyzed using SPSS v 10.

## **RESULTS**

The demographic factors identified in current study revealed that majority were young, formally educated, urban residents, married, committed minor crimes, unemployed before imprisonment, no past forensic history, no history of past psychiatric illness, convicted and were having no physical illnesses (Table 1).

**Table 1. Demographic characteristics of inmates.**

Demographic factors		Number
Age	18-33	70
	34-49	47
	> 50	11
Education status	Formal education (primary, middle, secondary, intermediate, graduation or post graduation)	73
	Illetrate	55
Residence	Rural	51
	Urban	77
Imprisonment status	Convicted	58
	Undertrial	56
	Internees (released but waiting in jail)	14
Marital Status	Married	58
	Unmarried	13
	Others(separated,divorced,widow)	57
Nature of Crime	Murder	26
	Other (drug trafficking, terrorism, border crossing, zina, kidnapping)	102
History of past imprisonment	Yes	2
	No	126
Employment status before imprisonment	Employed	57
	Un employed	71
Physical illnesses excluding chronic illnesses	Yes	39
	No	89
Per month income in rupees before imprisonment	No income	71
	Less than 10,000	51
	More than 10,000	6
History of past psychiatric illness	Yes	2
	No	126

There was a substantially high psychiatric morbidity (62.50%) among female inmates (Table 2).

**Table 2. Psychiatric illnesses in inmates.**

Diagnosis (No)	Number (%)
Affective disorders (30)	Depressive illness 25(19.5)
	Hypomanic episode 1(.8)
	Cyclothymia 2(1.6)
	Dysthymia 2(1.6)
Neurotic (anxiety related disorders) (13)	13(10.2)
Stress related disorders (17)	17(13.3)
Somatoform disorders (12)	12 (9.3)
Psychotic disorders (4)	4(3.1)
Organic mental disorders (4)	4(3.1)
No diagnosis	48 (37.5)
Total	128 (100)

All the disorders including organic mental disorders were diagnosed using present state examination based on ICD-10 system.

Affective disorders were found in 23.43%; of those 19.5% were depressive illnesses, followed by stress related disorders (13.28%), neurotic (anxiety related disorders) (10.15%), somatoform disorders (9.37%), psychotic disorders (3.12%) and organic mental disorders (3.12%). No psychiatric illness was found in 37.5% of the inmates.

## **DISCUSSION**

Our study revealed a substantially high psychiatric morbidity (62.50%) among female inmates that is consistent with other international studies.<sup>3</sup> Worldwide, these rates vary from widely,<sup>4-11</sup> however, majority of studies support our findings. One study showed

that a qualitative change took place in the life situations of the mentally ill people who were underwent psychiatric treatment and rehabilitation.<sup>12</sup> These findings may indicate the need for separate gender-oriented therapeutic interventions<sup>13</sup> and highlight the need for future investigations of specific social, behavioral, and other factors involved in the justice system.<sup>14,15</sup>

Among inmates with mental illness, most were off their treatments at the time of arrest. Improvements are needed both in correctional health care and in community mental health services that might prevent crime and incarceration.<sup>16-19</sup> Jails are not using evidence-based screenings, staff require training, access to services and medications for jailed individuals with serious mental illnesses is often slow, and coordination between community providers and jails is limited<sup>20</sup>. This study also emphasizes the importance of Forensic Psychiatric training in our post graduate training program.

The limitations of our study were chances of information bias as the screening instrument was administered by the trained inmates, lack of personality inventories and personality profile. The study was conducted in Pakistani setting and sample size was too small to generalize the conclusions. More studies involving larger sample size and longitudinal follow up is required to elucidate the possible perspective.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study showed a substantially high psychiatric morbidity among female inmates. The disorders included depressive illnesses, stress related disorders, somatoform disorders, psychotic disorders and organic mental disorders.

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