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FAMILIES' EXPERIENCES OF CHRONIC MENTAL ILLNESS INDIVIDUALS RELATED SPECIFIC CULTURAL PRACTICES: PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

Abstract:

Introduction: Specific cultural practices as a vital phenomenon, which is comprised of those collectively and repeatedly in society, reveal the effect of social attitudes and behaviors on health and illness.

Aim: The objective of this study is to determine views related with specific cultural practices of chronic mental illness individuals' families and experiences about these practices.

Methods: the study was conducted in a psychiatry hospital in the province of Konya, in Turkey and planned as a qualitative study and in phenomenological pattern. 12 patient relatives were interviewed within the scope of the study.

Results: Data, obtained with sub- structural interview, was examined under the heading as definitions related with illness, help- seeking, cultural practices and metaphors. Paranoid schizophrenia, major depression, bipolar disorder and substance abuse are the diagnosis of patients. The majority of interviewed family members is women and graduated primary school. Plurality of patients' relatives considers that the reason of psychiatric illness is fate, written by God, rather than an individual or a case. Religious help- seeking is often the first practice associated with mental illness.

Conclusions: It is considered continuously in society that psychiatric disorders are taboo. The first applied place for psychiatric disorders is fake clergy due to the viewpoint that these patients seem as creatures that can think and have ability as people and also are obliged to obey religious rules according to religious belief in Islam. Praying, other rituals like praying in Islam (okutmak- üfletmek), drinking water and taking a bath with water that made holy by praying are the most preferred cultural practices. However, the majority of patients' relatives applied to the hospitals for medical treatment because they have not any benefits from these Hodjas. Interestingly, Hodja forwards the patients and relatives to the hospitals because of lack of doing anything.

Keywords:

Family, Cronic Mental Illness, Phenomenological study

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