

A Comment on “Perceptions of Accredited Social Health Activists on Depression: A Qualitative Study from Karnataka, India”

Sir,

This correspondence is made in response to the original article on “Perceptions of Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) on depression: A qualitative study from Karnataka, India.”^[1] The article is simple, decidedly well written, and imbued the necessity of training the ASHAs for identifying signs and symptoms of clinical depression, with the focus on the biological model.

However, when the reviewer looks squarely at the supporting evidence cited in the article, which is given in the discussion, the following points are pertinent: The article adduced findings from the literature to compare the absence of a biological explanation by ASHAs behind the causes of depression. The supporting evidence provided is^[2] disparate to compare the knowledge of ASHAs to that of people with common mental disorders attending an infirmary. Instead, the

authors could have used supporting evidence from the general population.

Importantly, ASHA workers are women, and moreover, they work among women and are practically more oriented on women’s issues than men’s. Hence, these study results were more favoring for the perceived problems of women leading to depression. Meanwhile, educating ASHAs on depression holds great implication because a South Indian study reported that the crude prevalence of depression is higher among women (16.3%) than men (13.9%) with $P < 0.001$.^[3]

In theme 1, the signs and symptoms of depression, the quotations elicited with the subthemes showed that seven ASHA participants identified depression as “tension.” This explanation of “tension” eventuated in ASHAs because it is the prevalent secondary

manifestation of “agitated or anxious depression,” which is commonly found in middle-aged women.^[4]

Another forewarning for future researchers is that the study used the directed content analysis method, which is more structured than conventional content analysis. Hence, the authors would have used the blind coding system in the methodology and that should have directly contributed to more robust and refined consensus in the initial coding of this study with the Directed content analysis. Thus, the authors might have used blinding but eschewed to report it in the article.

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Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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