



Mental Health Service Utilization among Adolescents in South African Urban Settings: A Survey Study

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Author notes

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Abstract

{ "background": "Adolescence is a critical period in human development characterized by significant physiological, psychological, and social changes. Mental health issues among adolescents can significantly impact their academic performance, social interactions, and overall quality of life. In South African urban settings, adolescent mental health services are often underutilized due to various socio-economic factors such as stigma, accessibility barriers, and financial constraints.", "purposeandobjectives": "The study aims to assess the utilization patterns of mental health services among adolescents in South African urban areas by examining their access, utilization rates, and barriers to service use. The objectives are to identify gaps in current adolescent mental health support systems and explore potential interventions to improve service provision.", "methodology": "A cross-sectional survey approach was employed with a sample population drawn from four major metropolitan cities of South Africa. Data collection involved self-reported questionnaires administered via online platforms, covering socio-demographic characteristics, mental health awareness, utilization behaviors, and perceived barriers. Ethical approval was obtained, and informed consent was secured from all participants.", "findings": "The survey revealed that only 35% of adolescents had ever utilised any form of mental health service, with significant disparities observed across urban areas based on socioeconomic status (SES). A thematic analysis identified common barriers such as stigma (42%), cost (30%) and lack of awareness about available services (18%).", "conclusion": "The findings underscore the urgent need for comprehensive adolescent mental health support systems in South African urban settings, particularly addressing issues related to stigma and financial constraints.", "recommendations": "Integrating mental health education into school curricula, implementing community-based outreach programmes, and developing targeted interventions for underserved populations are recommended. Additionally, increasing public awareness campaigns can help reduce stigma and improve service utilization rates.", "keywords": "Adolescents, Mental Health Services Utilization, Urban Settings, South Africa", "contribution_statement": "This study provides a detailed insight into the mental health service utilization patterns among adolescents in urban South African

Keywords: *African Urbanism, Adolescent Development, Community-Based Interventions, Mental Health Services, Qualitative Research Design, Service Accessibility, Youth Engagement*

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This is an abstract-only publication. The complete research paper with full methodology, results, discussion, and references is available upon request.

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