Duration of untreated period of psychiatric conditions in Thailand: Results from the Thai National Mental Health Survey

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Background

- Psychiatric conditions are major causes of the global burden of diseases.
- This is more profound for low-and-middle-income countries ⁽¹⁾.
- It is known that one of the main determinants of the outcome is the time between the onset of the symptoms and the time that people seeks help.
- Although, many studies were conducted for duration of untreated psychosis, there are few that looked at the duration of untreated period for other psychiatric conditions.
- **Using data from the 2013 Thai National Mental Health Survey ⁽²⁾, we examine the help-seeking patterns of the Thai population with common mental disorders and substance-related disorders.**

Methods

- The 2013 Thai National Mental Health Survey is a cross-sectional survey using random representative participants aged 18 and above living in the community.
- Conducted by trained interviewers using the Thai version of the World Health Organization's Composite International Diagnostic interview (WHO- CIDI) 3.0.
- The CIDI contains 42 sections that assessed for ICD-10 and DSM-IV-TR diagnoses and conditions including common mental disorders and substance-related disorders.
- It also elicits from the participants the time of onset of any symptoms of any of the disorders and the time they first seek help from any health professional.
- The mean time difference was calculated from this data.

Results

- 6360 representative participants selected.
- 4766 consented to the interview (Response rate: 74.9%).
- 4727 completed the interview (99.2%).
- Men: Women = 48.3: 51.7

Results (cont.)

Figure 1: Duration of untreated period

- The average duration of untreated period for any condition was **10** years.
- The disorders with the **longest** duration of untreated periods were:
  - o Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD): 18.6 years
  - o Agoraphobia: 17.8 years
- The disorders with the **shortest** duration of untreated periods were:
  - o Generalised anxiety disorder: 2.0 years
  - o Major depressive disorder: 2.7 years
- The average duration of untreated period for substance-related disorders was **11** years.
  - o Longest duration: Alcohol abuse: 8.2 years
  - o Shortest duration: Alcohol dependence: 5.2 years

Conclusion

- There is still a long duration of untreated period for mental disorders in Thailand.
- Conditions with higher recognition and systematic approach in care like Major depressive disorder has a much lesser duration of untreated period compared to lesser-known diseases like PTSD or agoraphobia.
- These results could be utilised for further studies and in establishing public health policy to improve awareness for mental disorders among the people of Thailand.

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