# "Investigating the Mental Health Challenges Faced by Chronically Ill Patients in Hospitals atKanpur, U.P: A Descriptive Study"

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**ABSTRACT**

Chronic illnesses significantly impact an individual's mental health, often leading to stress, anxiety, and depression. Understanding the extent of these challenges is crucial for developing targeted interventions that improve patient well-being.

This descriptive study investigates the mental health challenges faced by chronically ill patients in a selected hospital in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh. Data was collected from 100 patients using a structured questionnaire and a Mental Health Assessment Scale, and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings revealed that 55% of patients exhibited moderate psychological distress, 30% reported severe mental health issues, while 15% showed minimal distress. A significant association was found between mental health challenges and contributing factors such as prolonged illness duration ($\chi^2 = 12.45$, $p < 0.05$), lack of family support ($\chi^2 = 10.23$, $p < 0.05$), and financial burden ($\chi^2 = 14.01$, $p < 0.05$). However, no significant association was found with demographic variables such as gender ($\chi^2 = 3.42$, $p > 0.05$) and education level ($\chi^2 = 4.67$, $p > 0.05$). The study emphasizes the need for hospital-based mental health interventions, including psychological counselling and financial assistance programs, to mitigate these challenges.

**Keywords**: Chronic Illness, Mental Health, Psychological Distress, Depression, Hospital-Based Study

## INTRODUCTION

Chronic illnesses require long-term management and significantly affect patients' mental health. Conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and kidney disorders often lead to prolonged stress, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion. The

inability to perform daily activities, reliance on medications, and frequent hospital visits contribute to psychological distress. Social isolation, fear of disease progression, and financial strain further worsen mental health outcomes. Despite these challenges, mental health concerns among chronically ill patients remain underdiagnosed and inadequately addressed in routine clinical care.

Research suggests that untreated psychological distress can reduce treatment adherence and negatively impact disease management. Healthcare professionals need to integrate mental health screening into chronic disease care to ensure comprehensive patient support. This study aims to assess the mental health challenges faced by chronically ill patients and analyse the factors contributing to psychological distress. The findings will help healthcare providers design better support systems for these patients.

**NEED FOR THE STUDY**

The increasing prevalence of chronic diseases has led to a rise in associated mental health challenges. Chronic illness affects not only physical health but also emotional well-being, often resulting in depression, anxiety, and stress. However, these psychological aspects are frequently overlooked in healthcare settings. Many hospitals lack structured mental health support systems for chronically ill patients, making it difficult for them to cope with the emotional impact of their conditions.

This study is essential to bridge the knowledge gap and highlight the necessity of integrating mental health care into chronic disease management. By identifying key mental health challenges and their associated factors, this research will help in developing targeted interventions, such as psychological counselling, family support programs, and financial assistance, to improve the quality of life for chronically ill patients.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM "Investigating the Mental Health Challenges Faced by Chronically Ill Patients in Hospitals atKanpur, U.P: A Descriptive Study"**

## OBJECTIVES

✞ To determine the socio-demographic distribution of chronically ill patients experiencing mental health challenges.

✞ To assess the common psychological distress factors among chronically ill patients.

✞ To analyse the association between mental health challenges and factors such as illness duration, family support, and financial burden.

✞ To measure the level of psychological distress using a Mental Health Assessment Scale.

## HYPOTHESIS

**H1:** There will be a significant association between mental health challenges and contributing factors among chronically ill patients.

## METHODS AND MATERIALS

**Research Approach:**

In the present study, Descriptive research approach was used

**Research Design:**The research design used for this study isDescriptive research design.

**VARIABLES**

✞ **Dependent Variable:**In this study, the Mental health challenges among chronically ill patients is the dependant variable.

✞ **Independent Variables:**In the present study, the independent variables are Illness duration, family support, financial burden, and socio-demographic factors.

**POPULATION**

Population for the study comprises ofChronically ill patients in selected hospitalsat Kanpur.

**Target Population:**

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In this study, the target population was patients diagnosed with chronic illnesses receiving hospital care.

**SAMPLE**

Sample for the present study comprises of Chronically ill patients meeting inclusion criteria.

**SAMPLE SIZE:**

Sample size selected for the present study is 100 chronically ill patients.

**SAMPLING TECHNIQUE:**

In this study Convenient sampling was used as sampling technique

**SAMPLING CRITERIA**

**Inclusion Criteria:**

✟ Patients diagnosed with a chronic illness for at least six months.

✟ Patients receiving treatment at the selected hospital in Kanpur.

✟ Patients willing to participate in the study and provide informed consent.

✟ Patients aged 18 years and above.

 **Exclusion Criteria:**

✟ Patients diagnosed with severe psychiatric disorders unrelated to chronic illness.

✟ Patients with cognitive impairments that prevent them from completing the questionnaire.

✟ Patients unwilling to participate in the study.


**METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION**

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire assessing socio-demographic details, illness duration, financial burden, family support, and mental health challenges. Additionally, a modified Mental Health Assessment Scale was used to measure levels of psychological distress. Face-to-face interviews were conducted to ensure accuracy and completeness of responses.

## DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH TOOL

A self-structured questionnaire was developed to assess socio-demographic variables and mental health challenges. The modified Mental Health Assessment Scale was adapted from validated psychological measures to quantify distress levels among chronically ill patients.

## DESCRIPTION OF TOOL

The research tool consisted of two sections:

1. **Socio-Demographic Questionnaire** – Included variables such as age, gender, education level, financial status, and duration of illness.

2. **Modified Mental Health Assessment Scale** – Measured levels of stress, anxiety, and depression among participants using a Likert-scale format.
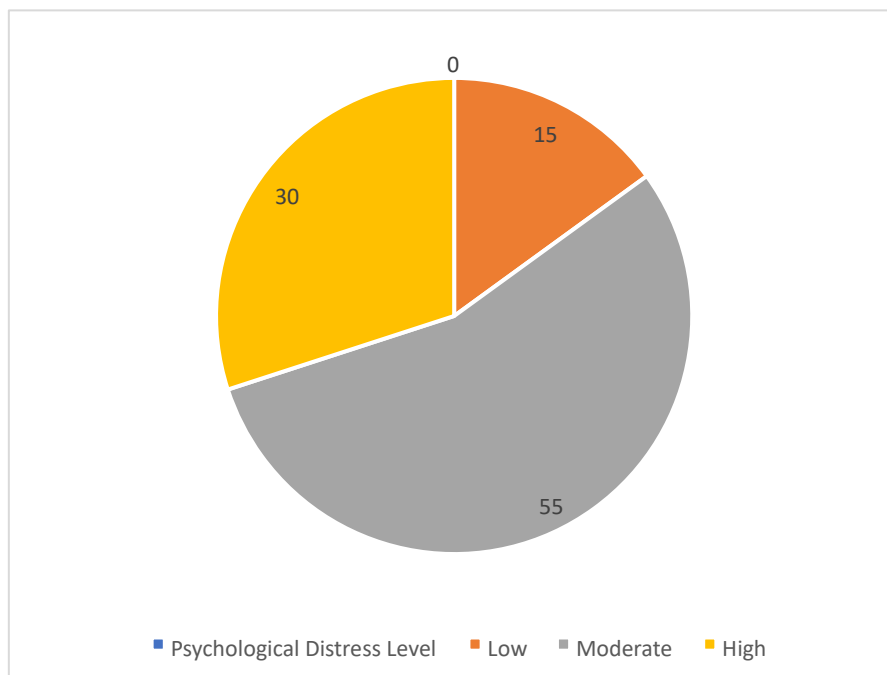
## RESULTS AND FINDINGS

**Section A:**

**Findings on Socio-demographic Distribution.**

- 50% of participants were aged 40-60 years.
- 60% were male, 40% were female.
- 70% belonged to middle-income families.

**Section B:**

**Findings on the level of Mental Health Challenges.**

| Psychological Distress Level | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Low | 15 | 15% |
| Moderate | 55 | 55% |
| High | 30 | 30% |



**Section C:**

**Association between Mental Health Challenges and Contributing Factors**

| Variable | Chi-Square Value ($\chi^2$) | p-value | Significance |
|---|---|---|---|
| Illness Duration | 12.45 | < 0.05 | Significant |
| Family Support | 10.23 | < 0.05 | Significant |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Financial Burden | 14.01 | $< 0.05$ | Significant |
| Gender | 3.42 | $> 0.05$ | Not Significant |
| Education Level | 4.67 | $> 0.05$ | Not Significant |

The findings indicate that illness duration, family support, and financial burden significantly influence the mental health challenges of chronically ill patients, as their p-values are below 0.05. This suggests that patients with prolonged illness, inadequate family support, or financial difficulties are more likely to experience psychological distress. On the other hand, gender and education level did not show a significant association ($p > 0.05$), implying that these demographic factors do not substantially impact mental health outcomes in this population. These results emphasize the need for targeted interventions focusing on financial aid, family support programs, and long-term psychological care to mitigate mental health burdens among chronically ill patients.

## NURSING IMPLICATIONS Nursing Practice

Nurses should integrate routine mental health screenings into chronic disease management and provide personalized counselling to patients experiencing psychological distress. Educating patients and their families on coping strategies, stress management, and emotional well-being is essential. Nurses should also collaborate with psychologists and social workers to ensure holistic care.

## Nursing Education

Nursing education should emphasize the significance of mental health in chronic disease management. Training programs should include modules on recognizing early signs of psychological distress and effective counselling techniques. Continuing education programs and workshops should be conducted to keep nurses updated on mental health trends.

### Nursing Administration

Hospital administrators should develop policies prioritizing mental health care for chronically ill patients. Mental health screening should be mandatory in healthcare facilities treating chronic illnesses. Hospitals should establish dedicated counselling units and allocate sufficient resources for mental health programs.

### Nursing Research

Further research is needed to explore the long-term impact of mental health interventions on chronically ill patients. Studies should evaluate the effectiveness of various psychological support programs, such as cognitive-behavioural therapy and stress management workshops, to enhance patient care.

## LIMITATIONS

✠ The study was conducted in a single hospital in Kanpur, which may limit the generalizability of the findings.

✠ The sample size of 100 patients may not fully represent the diverse experiences of all chronically ill individuals.

✠ Self-reported data may introduce response bias as patients might underreport or exaggerate their symptoms.

✠ The study did not include a longitudinal follow-up, making it difficult to assess the long-term mental health trends of patients.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

✠ Implement routine mental health screenings in hospitals treating chronic illnesses.

✠ Provide specialized training for healthcare professionals on recognizing and addressing mental health challenges.

✞ Develop hospital-based psychological counselling programs to support chronically ill patients.

✞ Establish family and community support programs to enhance emotional well-being.

✞ Introduce financial assistance programs to help patients manage treatment-related stress.

✞ Conduct long-term studies to evaluate the effectiveness of different mental health interventions.

✞ Promote public awareness campaigns on mental health and chronic illness management.

**CONCLUSION**

The findings of this study highlight the significant mental health challenges faced by chronically ill patients, with 55% experiencing moderate distress and 30% suffering from severe psychological issues. Factors such as prolonged illness duration, lack of family support, and financial burden were found to be significantly associated with mental health distress, while demographic factors like gender and education level were not statistically significant contributors.

These results emphasize the urgent need for integrating mental health services into routine chronic disease management. Hospitals and healthcare providers should implement structured psychological interventions, such as counselling services, peer support groups, and stress management programs, to help patients cope with emotional distress. Additionally, financial support programs should be introduced to alleviate the economic burden faced by chronically ill patients, which contributes significantly to their mental health struggles.

By addressing these concerns holistically, healthcare systems can significantly enhance the quality of life for individuals suffering from chronic diseases, leading to better treatment adherence, improved health outcomes, and overall well-being.

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