

**Review Article**

Access to Mental Health Care Services for the Orphan and Vulnerable Children in Addis Ababa Ethiopia

Liranso Gebreyohannes Selamu, Mohan Singhe

Department of Social Work, Mangalore University, Mangalore, India

Email address:

gliranso.2001@gmail.com (L. G. Selamu)

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Abstract: A lot of children in the world suffer from untreated mental health problems. The global burdens of mental illness are high but promoting compressive care services are neglected in most countries. The objective of this review journal was to discover access and barriers to mental health care services for the orphan and vulnerable children in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The systematic review was used to collect and analyze a relevant information from Global Health, PubMed, Google Scholar, Clinical Social Work Abstracts, Summon, WHO, PsychInfo Ethiopian Universities, and NIH data sources. Many research journals published after 2001 were identified and analyzed based on meeting inclusion and exclusion criteria as well as quality standards. The barriers associated to finance, logistic, stigma and traditional beliefs, and perceptions towards mental health problems and treatment. Children mental health care services are poorly understood, not adequately addressed, not assessment based, and incomprehensive rather it is based on traditional practices.

Keywords: Access, Mental Health Care, Orphan, Vulnerable, Children

1. Introduction

Nowadays, a children mental health problem has become a hot research issue. Mental health service is a fresh and growing research area. Though, scholars have only recently begun to describe the occurrence of mental illness, much less the significant differences that exist in regard to mental health care. Mental health should be a responsibility for all of the societal members, rather than only for those who experience a mental illness. Mental health problems are affecting a whole society, not just a small members those mentally ill. Children mental health care service is about enhancing competencies of children and enabling them to achieve their self-determined goals. It involves professional activities for the well-being of children in whom every child realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully [14]. It is a care that able to make a contribution to children personal life and community at large.

Moreover, the service comprises a help to adapt to change and cope with adversity, fulfilling a relationship with other people, and resulting in productive activities. Furthermore,

childcare is receiving a global attention as a way to support who are orphaned or vulnerable. Mental health service has a power in creating good interactions in children with the world around them and is determined by their sense of control in dealing with their circumstances. A child who has a healthy mind is able to comprehend his or her own abilities, deal with the stress of daily life, work effectively, and add values to the society [13].

Children mental disorders comprise childhood developmental disorders including social, behavioral, emotional, and cognitive disorders that seriously impact the behavior of children and their capacity to learn and interact with others. Moreover, being orphanhood has a great impact on children life that could be worse because it is a social, political, economic, medical disease, and a highly stigmatized incident [4], [10]. In contrast to other children, orphans are less optimistic, more anxious and depressed and displaying angry feelings and disruptive behaviors. On the other vein, the lack of modern child mental health care services has

significant implications considering that child psychopathology may be a risk factor for future problems such as academic difficulties, health problems, substance abuse, and psychopathology [3], [11].

Finally, the numbers of orphans in most sub-Saharan Africa countries are rising exponentially because HIV infection is yet developing as a pandemic. Among the sub-Saharan African countries, Ethiopia is one, which is the highly affected by the disease and orphanhood. Mental health situations of the orphan and vulnerable children (OVC) are more multifaceted and complex in Ethiopia. Besides, numerous studies indicated that in many regions of the country, mental health care for OVC is the most neglected dimension of care provided. Furthermore, child caring organizations at different levels tried to moderate the multidimensional troubles of the orphan and vulnerable children, still, the plan coverage of the existing efforts in Ethiopia is insufficient.

Therefore, there is a need for assessment of the current system of the children mental health care services allocation, challenges, and chances within Ethiopia. In view of the above-mentioned reality of the problems, this particular journal was aimed to realize the access to mental health care service and barriers for the orphan and vulnerable children in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

2. Method

The research method was based on the systematic review of the recent research literature used to collect and analyze a relevant information from Global Health, PubMed, Google Scholar, Clinical Social Work Abstracts, Summon, WHO, Ethiopian Universities, and PsychInfo data sources. Numerous journals published after 2001 were identified and analyzed based on meeting inclusion and exclusion criteria as well as quality standards and analyzed in a systematic manner. Besides, the focus of journals selection was based on the review objective which focused on the access to mental health care services for the orphan and vulnerable children in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

3. Results and Discussion

Nowadays the issues of child mental illness and care services have become a critical research issue and it is necessary to conduct research and discussions. Because, children are our future leaders, and what happens to them affect the whole community at large. According to World Health Organization there is no health without mental health [13]. So, mental health is a vital component of the society, and the problems of mental illness are still followed in this twenty-first century as a hot research issue. Additionally, the issue of children mental illness is highly related to a social, political, medical, and economic problem of the country. Therefore, the objective of the review journal was to realize the access to mental health care services for the orphan and vulnerable children in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The mental health situations of OVC are more complicated

and disadvantage health program in Ethiopia. Numerous studies indicated that in many regions of the country, mental health care for OVC is the most neglected dimension of research and care provided. Furthermore, the child caring organizations at different levels trying to intervene to mitigate the multidimensional problems of orphan and vulnerable children, yet the programmatic access of the existing mental health care services in Ethiopia is inadequate.

Furthermore, as indicated in some studies, Ethiopia does not have any rigorous national child mental health policy, and programs. Moreover, there is a lack of accessible scientific research journals and debate on children mental health care issues that initiated and written by Ethiopian professionals are still insufficient. Mainly there is a scarcity of reliable empirical research data on the mental health issues of the orphans and vulnerable children in the country. This indicated that there is a need for assessment of the current system of mental health care distribution to find out who delivering mental health care services for the children, and what resources the child caring organizations currently using utmost importance in assessing the quality and capacity of the services providers as well. Consistent with others studies result; for instance, Appunni revealed that mental health is one of the most underprivileged health programs in the country, both in terms of educated professionals and basic facilities [2]. And, Appunni illustrated that the average occurrence of mental illness in Ethiopia is 18% for adults and 15% for children.

As a result, the children are exposed to harsh mental illness and psycho-social problems. Surprisingly, the mental health support systems for the OVC in the country are not the assessment based, limited, and not based on the needs of the children; rather it is based on cultural beliefs and traditional practices. To prove this fact, most Ethiopian community members' believed that the causes of mental illness are focused on the supernatural phenomenon and its treatment practices associated with religions and traditional medicines. Besides, the traditional healers and religious leaders have been identified as effective mental health care providers many regions of the country. Traditionally, most Ethiopian believed that mental illness can be originated by the awful spirits, horrible wishes, evil-minded people, ill will, the evil eye and the antagonistic feelings.

The prevalence of mental disorders is higher among the orphan and vulnerable children (OVC) than other children. The OVC experience numerous hazards, vulnerabilities, depression, suicidal thoughts, and anxiety that lead to self-pity, poor self-esteem and often with accompanying shattered hope concerning the future. This may lead the children to have behavioral and conduct problems as well as suicidal thoughts. Even though externalizing behaviors have also affected the children particular that lost their family due to HIV/AIDS pandemic are in superior danger of becoming depressed and anxious than of acting out their distress in the country. Greater attention needs to be given at the level of policy formulation, legislation, decision making, resource allocation and the overall healthcare system of the country to reduce mental

health burdens and the service barriers, and to promote the professional mental health care services.

4. Conclusion

The objective of the journal was to realize the access to mental health care services and barriers for the orphan and vulnerable children (OVC) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The mental health situations of OVC are more complicated and disadvantage health program in Ethiopia. Ethiopia does not have any precise national children mental health policy, and programs. There is a lack of accessible scientific research journals and discussion on the children mental health care services that initiated and written by Ethiopian professionals are still insufficient. An orphan and vulnerable children experience numerous hazards, vulnerabilities, depression, suicidal thoughts, and anxiety and sever psychopathological problems. On the other vein, most Ethiopian community members' believed that the causes of mental illness are focused on the supernatural phenomenon and its treatment practices associated with religions and traditional medicines, scarcity of facilities and skilled human resources, logistic, and stigmatization were identified as barriers for the service. These barriers were affecting the promotion of the modern mental health care systems of the country.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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