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Aims. In a majority of low and middle-income countries, the mental health system is weakened due to poor resources as well as poorer recruitment and retention rates in psychiatry among junior doctors. The present study utilizes a mixed-methods approach to explore the factors associated with low recruitment and retention of junior doctors in Psychiatry.

Methods. This study utilized an online survey administered among medical students and postgraduate trainees in psychiatry in Pakistan. The survey was open for 5 weeks for data collection from Nov 21st to Dec 31st, 2022. The survey was distributed conveniently using social media platforms and supplemented by snowball sampling procedures. This survey explored common myths about mental illness and psychiatrists using close-ended questions. Open-ended questions were asked to probe the participants on solutions to improve recruitment into psychiatry be improved.

Results. A total of 103 responses were received on the online survey, with the majority (83, 80%) of respondents being females. A majority (66, 64%) of respondents were medical students and 37 (36%) were junior doctors. Most responses were received from the two largest government sector medical universities in Karachi Pakistan, Jinnah Sindh Medical University (67%) & Dow University of Health Sciences (23%).

A total of 62 (60%) respondents reported a lack of exposure to Psychiatry in medical students, to make it a career choice. A larger proportion 57 (55%) felt working in Psychiatry can affect their own mental health. A total of 43 (40%) were not sure if Psychiatry is fulfilling enough as a career and 58 (56%) felt that job satisfaction in psychiatry is difficult to achieve. Around 60% were concerned that mental health conditions are chronic and enduring psychiatrists may not have many options for treatment. In open-ended responses, several common themes emerged. Most respondents commented about their lack of exposure to psychiatry as medical students, which accounts for their reluctance to choose Psychiatry.

Conclusion. Psychiatry forms a very limited part of the medical school curriculum and students' placements. Myths and stigma around mental illness can lead to low recruitment in Psychiatry and stigma can be challenged with more exposure to psychiatry during medical university years. Early medical study years have an influence on career choice and Psychiatry should be introduced relatively early as clinical placement. Psychiatry conferences, seminars and workshops on the local and national level can help in inspiring Medical students and junior doctors.

Abstracts were reviewed by the RCPsych Academic Faculty rather than by the standard *BJPsych Open* peer review process and should not be quoted as peer-reviewed by *BJPsych Open* in any subsequent publication.

National Prescribing Patterns of Psychotropic Medications in Older Adults in Oman

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Aims. High rate of psychotropic medications use in elderly people has been reported in the literature. Potentiality inappropriate prescriptions (PIPs) is very common as well. This issue has not been investigated in Oman previously. The aim of our study was to assess the patterns of psychotropic medications prescribed for older adults in the psychiatry clinics in Oman, screen for PIPs and plan for future actions to minimize inappropriate prescriptions.

Methods. This is a cross sectional descriptive study using the information in patient's medical records. It was conducted in 12 health care institutions which equally represent all Governorates of Oman. All patients who aged ≥ 60 years old who attended psychiatry clinics from January 2019 to June 2021 and were prescribed psychotropic medications were included. All psychotropic drugs were evaluated including: antidepressants, antipsychotics, Mood stabilizers and hypnotics. STOPP criteria were applied to detect PIPs.

Results. 1409 patients (70%) out of 1995 elderly patients who attended the psychiatry clinics in the study period as a new case were prescribed psychotropic medications. Rate of polypharmacy in our study is 38.9%. The most common medications prescribed were risperidone (18.1%) from the antipsychotic category, citalopram (23%) from the antidepressant group and promethazine (30.1%) from the hypnotics group. Regarding the use of sedative medications, 18.5% of the patients were prescribed a benzodiazepine and 35.6% of them were prescribed an antihistamine. When assessed the pattern of medications prescribed in healthy people compared to people with different categories of major medical morbidities, no differences were observed. We found 130 (9.3%) potentially inappropriate prescriptions in our study based on STOPP criteria which included use of long-acting benzodiazepine (Diazepam), prescription of anticholinergic medication to treat extrapyramidal side effects (procyclidine) and use of tricyclic antidepressants in specific categories of medical diseases.

Conclusion. The patterns of psychotropic prescriptions for older adults in the outpatient setting in Oman raise concerns about 2 main issues: psychotropic polypharmacy and high rate of benzodiazepines and antihistamines use. This warrants further investigation of these issues in separate studies to identify risk factors. We also recommend implementing certain actions to minimize inappropriate prescriptions including reviewing the availability of appropriate psychotropic medications for this age group in Oman, creating a national guideline for prescribing and providing continuous medical education to the physicians in the primary and secondary health care institutions regarding this aspect.

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Identifying the Knowledge and Attitudes Towards Suicidal Warning Signs Among University Students in the UAE

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