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Factors affecting help-seeking attitudes regarding mental health services among attendance of primary health care centers in Jordan

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Abstract: Despite the availability of effective treatment and services for mental health problems, a few members of the affected population utilize mental health services (MHS) in which many remain untreated. This study examined the factors influencing attitudes toward seeking formal MHS among attendance of primary health care centers. It was hypothesized that individuals' cultural beliefs about mental problems and perceived level of stigma toward formal MHS would be the dominant factors affecting individuals' attitudes toward formal MHS. A structured questionnaire was distributed to clients attending 25 primary care centers in Jordan, during the period July-September 2015 to measure the attitudes toward seeking formal mental help, cultural beliefs about mental health problems, and perceived level of Societal Stigma. Descriptive statistics and Hierarchical Regression analysis were used to analyze the data. Participants were 482 clients, 52.9% (n=254) females, with an average age was 34.75 years (SD=11.755 years). Sixty-six percent of the participants tend to use informal MHS as the treatment strategy for psychiatric disorders. The results of the analysis of the hierarchical regression model indicated that cultural beliefs about mental illness and perceived societal stigma were the factors most likely to affect individuals' attitudes toward seeking formal MHS. This study highlights the importance of designing pragmatic mental health strategies to improve the use of MHS.