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Where there are no psychiatric nurses - a psychiatrist's point of view

Where there are no psychiatric nurses - a psychiatrist's point of view

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Bangladesh is a least developed country in South Asia, with a population of 156.6 million people in an area of 147,570 km², making it one of the most densely populated countries in the world. Mental health services are limited with almost no allied mental health professionals and no specialist psychiatric nursing programs available in the country. The author finds himself in a unique position, having studied and worked in both Bangladesh and UK, to compare and contrast health systems to try and find a solution to this issue. In UK and other developed countries, psychiatric nurses play a major role in care of patients. In inpatient wards, psychiatrists relies heavily on nurses to form a relationship of trust with patients, being able to ensure on-going assessment, compliance, de-escalate in a safe manner and monitor treatment progress. In the community, psychiatric nurses will visit patients in the community, often see people in their own environment and be able to give information regarding their family life, levels of functioning and risk, compliance, as well as administer medication. In Bangladesh, the above functions are either not performed or are passed onto others, such as family members, friends, household staff or members of the community. While this seems ideal, there are often conflicts of interest which result in poor care for the patients and increased risks. The author intends to reflect on his experience in Bangladesh and try to explore a way forward to bridge this gap in patient care.

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