FAMILY CAREGIVERS AND THE MENTALLY ILL IN BOTSWANA: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHICS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR QUALITY CARE

E. S. Seloiwe

ABSTRACT
This paper discusses the socio-demographic information of family caregivers and the mentally ill population in Botswana. The discussions are drawn from a grounded theory study conducted on the families that live with and provide care to their mentally ill relatives at home. In-depth and focus group interviews were utilized to obtain data. Sample (N=30) was drawn from both urban and rural areas (Gaborone and Molepolole). The demographic characteristics and information of this sample revealed significant implications for the provision of quality care for the mentally ill in the community. Socio-demographic information is used to determine psychiatric epidemiology, accessibility of health services, delivery of health care services, and trends in health in a given society. These data serve as indicators to inferences that are made about the health status of individuals and communities. The findings report common as well as peculiar characteristics used to determine the care of the mentally ill patients in the community. The demographic characteristics that are of great significance in this sample include age, sex, level of education, socioeconomic status, psychiatric morbidity, history of mental illness in the family, rehospitalisation rates, utilization of western and traditional health services, and relationship with the ill person.