

ABSTRACT

Background: The causes and prevalence of excess mortality among patients with mental disorder appear to fluctuate from place to place according to research reports reviewed.

Research Objective: This research investigated the profile of deaths in Sterkfontein Psychiatric hospital (SPH) Gauteng South Africa in age, gender, marital status, ethnicity and causes and rates of deaths in the hospital.

The study also seeks to compare the causes and rate of death in the SPH with the statistics of deaths among psychiatric inpatients in other locations in South Africa and other countries.

Methods: The research used data of deaths (June 2005 – July 2013) from the death registry of the Sterkfontein Psychiatric hospital and used a simple frequency distribution analysis to establish the various relationships between the deaths profile, causes and the risk factors of deaths.

Results: The research confirmed thirty-five deaths compared to 9725 admitted in the period of the study giving a crude mortality rate (CMR) of 0.35%. Death was more prevalent among younger patients (15 - 44 years) with the death distribution of 60% to 40% of those aged 45 - 74 years in the sample. Deaths amongst the black population were 88.6% as compared to 11.8% of the white. Deaths were more prevalent among the single people at 96.67% death rate compared to 3.33% for married patients. More deaths occurred among patients who stayed in hospital for less than five months with the death distribution of 42.5%, 6 – 11 months at 24.2%, 12-24 months at 18.2% and the death distribution of patients who were in the hospital for over 25 months being 15%. On the causes of deaths, natural causes, predominated by infections, accounted for 40% of all deaths. This was followed by suicide, accounting for 13.33% in the unnatural causes' category.

Conclusions: Causes of mortality among psychiatric patients in the SPH were found to be like the general population of South Africa regarding the predominant cause which is infections. The number of deaths, measured by crude mortality rate (CMR), is slightly higher in SPH (11.9) than in the general population (10.86).

keywords: Mortality; Sterkfontein Psychiatric Hospital; Psychiatric Inpatient

