



VIOLENCE: A PROBLEM OF MENTAL HEALTH IN PERU

LA VIOLENCIA: ¿UN PROBLEMA DE SALUD MENTAL EN EL PERÚ?

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Mr. Editor

WHO defines mental health as a condition in which a person is aware of his or her abilities to face the problems of everyday life, performs productively in his or her workplace, and contributes to his or her community⁽¹⁾. During 2017, according to the Ministry of Health in Peru, 52,611 people were treated on an outpatient basis for mental health among victims of family violence and patients with different mental disorders. The number of victims of family violence was 18,387⁽²⁾.

One of the indicators of mental health problem in Peru is the violence against women and girls, which is reflected in the Encuesta Demográfica y de Salud Familiar (ENDES) in 2018, developed by the Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática (INEI), which revealed that 63.2% of women at some point in their lives suffered some type of violence from their husband or partner⁽³⁾.

Due to the increasing rate of this problem, on May 23, 2019, Congress promulgated the new mental health law No. 30947. It establishes not only the importance of diagnosis and treatment of different mental disorders but also guarantees the accessibility, quality, universal health coverage, and confidentiality of mental health care, with emphasis on promotion, prevention, and detection interventions in both public and private institutions⁽⁴⁾.

According to the study prepared by the Instituto Nacional de Salud Mental Honorio Delgado, in 2008, from the point of view of mental health, mistreatment of women is associated with factors such as the presence of psychiatric disorders, economic problems, family issues, and conflicting parenting styles, poor quality of sleep and suicidal indicators⁽⁵⁾.

Due to the high number of victims of violence in our country, it is important to create campaigns of mental health and conduct psychological assessments. As a result, it will accelerate the rapid detection of diseases and mental disorders that lead the person to commit acts of violence and starting treatment early. While it is true that there are factors that predispose a person to suffer a particular mental health disorder, early intervention would help to control the expression of the same. It should also seek to minimize the factors associated with violence and provide the necessary psychological help to the victims. It is also necessary to stress the importance of compliance with this new mental health law in the expectation of good results that will be reflected in the decrease in the rate of violence in our country.

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