

Barriers to mental health treatment for children and adolescent: a systematic review

ABSTRACT

Background: Despite the higher prevalence of mental health problem among children and adolescent, the rate of mental health services utilization among this group is still low. Among small number of children and adolescents attended mental health treatment, many of them tend to prematurely terminate the treatment offered.

Objective: This systematic review aims to provide an overview reported barriers to mental health treatment for children and adolescents from the perspectives of parents or caregivers. **Methods:** Quantitative studies published between 2005 to March 2015 were identified through electronic searching via four selected databases, PsycINFO, Psychology and Behavioural Sciences Collection, CINAHL and ProQuest. Studies which involved parents or caregiver of targeted children aged between 2 to 18 years were included. Relevant data were extracted and barriers to mental health treatment were reviewed.

Results: Five studies were identified met the inclusion criteria included for this review. The most prominent barriers reported by parents or caregivers of children and adolescent aged between 2 to 18 were attitudinal barriers that include beliefs that nothing could help, seeking help is a sign of weakness or failure, reluctance to admit to having mental health problems, denial of problems, too embarrassed to seek help and barriers related to stigma.

Conclusions: Attitudinal barrier especially believed that nothing could help is one of the main barriers to mental health treatment for children and adolescent. School-based program could improve children's and adolescent's mental health status by reducing the barriers.

Keyword: Barriers; Mental health; Treatment; Children; Adolescent