

Barriers, And Predictors Of Seeking Mental Health Care Among Omani Adults: Across Sectional Study

Moza Sulaiman Al Badi¹, Abdullaziz ALMeshall¹, Eman Elsayed Abd-Ellatif¹
¹Field Epidemiology Training Program, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Mental health problems **prevalence is low (11.5%)**, with low seeking help attitude. The highest scored barriers are **stigma** and **attitudinal** barriers. **Government worker** is a predictor for seeking mental health care.

BACKGROUND

Mental Health problems are causing disability among adults globally. Studying help-seeking attitudes and barriers is important to improve mental health.

This study aims to determine the prevalence of mental health problems and seeking help attitudes. It also aims to determine help-seeking barriers and their associated factors that affect access to mental health services. Finally, it studies the predictors of seeking mental health care.

METHODS

A cross-sectional study was conducted between 1st August and 30th September 2023 in the three towns of Al Dahera governorate, Oman. This study used a convenient, proportionate sampling approach. It involved willing Omani adults aged 18 - 64 from the 18 primary health centers of Al Dahera governorate.

Data was collected using the Barriers to Access to Care Evaluation (BACE-III) Arabic Version questionnaire that was self-filled by the participants. IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 23) was used for data analysis.

RESULTS

The total participants were 357 from the Al Dahera governorate. The study found that the prevalence of mental health problems was 11.5% and only 5.3% sought professional help. It has been found that major stigma and attitudinal barriers were 42.9% and 41.5%, respectively.

Figure 1: Prevalence of mental health problems and seeking help attempts in Al Dahera Governorate, Oman

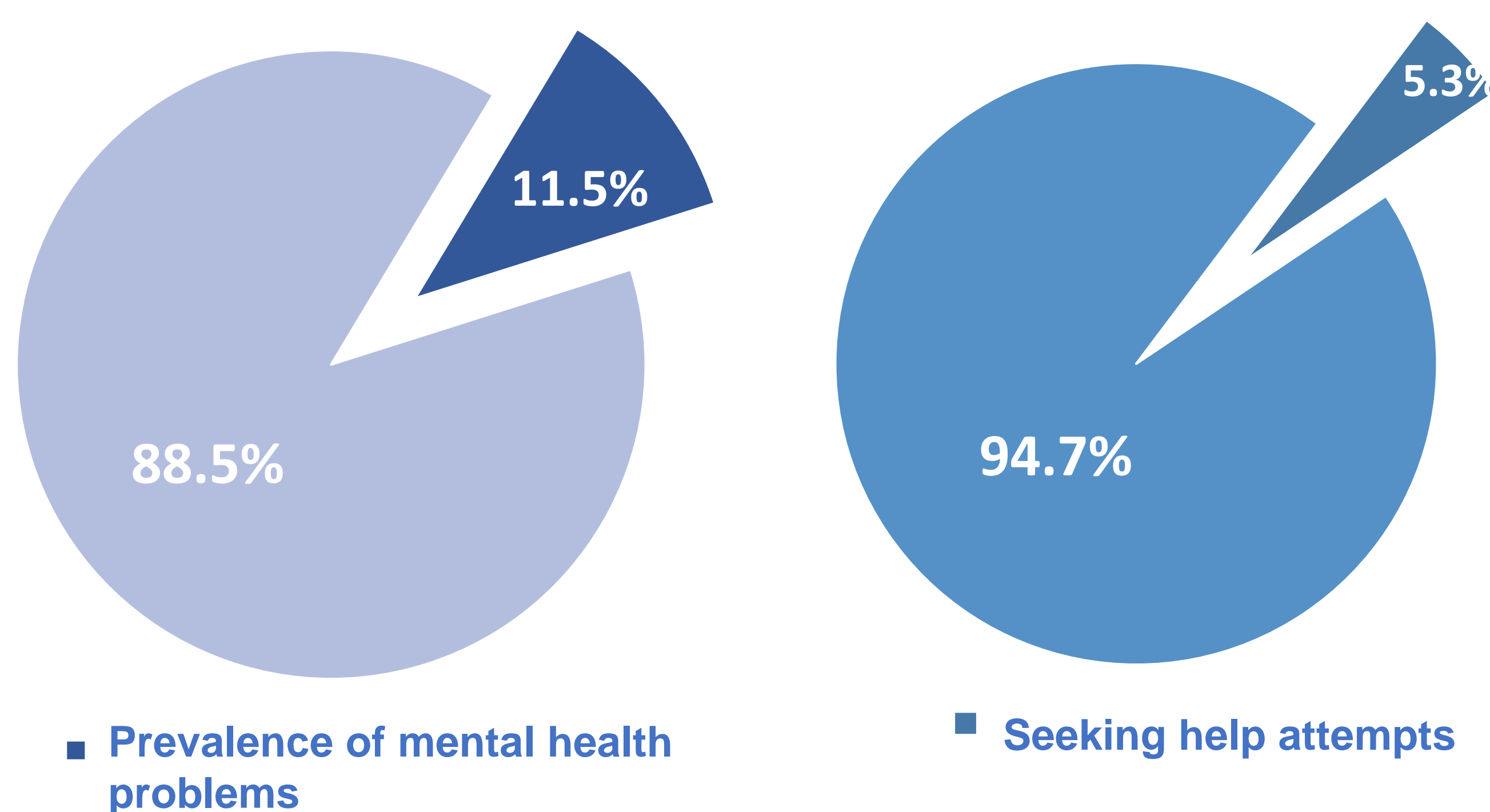


Table 1: Distribution of seeking help barriers types

Barrier's type	Score range	Mean	Standard deviation	N (%)		
				No Barrier	Minor Barrier	Major Barrier
Instrumental Barriers	0-15	4.59	4.2	106(29.7%)	127(35.6%)	124(34.7%)
Attitudinal Barriers	0-30	8.8	7.75	92(25.8%)	117(32.8%)	148(41.5%)
Stigma Barriers	0-29	9.43	8.5	97(27.2)	107(30%)	153(42.9%)

While the significantly associated factors with stigma barriers were residency (P value= 0.039) and education level (P value= 0.023), the associated factor with attitudinal barriers was educational level (P value= 0.049).

Participants with current mental health problems responded with 64% major stigma barriers and 69% major attitudinal barriers (P value= 0.001 & 0.023, respectively). The independent predictor for seeking mental health care was government worker (p value = 0.014)

CONCLUSIONS

In the Al Dahera governorate, the prevalence of mental health problems is low. This is accompanied by lower seeking help attempts. Stigma and attitudinal barriers affect seeking help significantly in the governorate. Increasing awareness to overcome these barriers will improve access to mental health services.

ADDITIONAL KEY INFORMATION

Corresponding author: Dr. Moza Al Badi
Email: albadimoza27@gmail.com

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