

**ASSESSMENT OF ATTITUDES, KNOWLEDGES AND PRACTICES ON MENTAL  
DISORDERS AMONG HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS IN GAKOIGO SUB-LOCATION IN  
MARAGUA DIVISION OF MURANG'A IN MURANG'A SOUTH SUB - COUNTY.**

**BY  
JAMES DUNCAN MWANGI (P.H.O)  
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**MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY,  
P. O. BOX 30195,  
THIKA CAMPUS.**

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## **Abstract**

Mental disorder is a term that describes a broad spectrum of mental and neurological status. It causes serious disturbances of thinking, mood, feelings and social relationship or it interferes significantly with personal ability to perform duties, work, socialize, with others or enjoy life and therefore a mentally ill person is not able to cope with ordinary tasks of life (Speigal, 2005).

About 400 million people are identified to be suffering from some type of mental disorders and one out of four families encounter debilitating mental challenges, which ranged from depression, substance related, schizophrenia, epilepsy Alzheimer and mental retardation conditions. All these conditions accounts for 4-10% epidemiology of disease burden, sinking US\$150 billion of the health care budget and is expected to raise to 15% in the next 20years (Who, 2001).

The broad objective is to find out the community's perception, knowledge, altitude and practice among members of household in Gakoigo sub-location of Murang'a South sub-county. The specific objectives are (1): To determine the knowledge on mental health among household members of gakoigo sb-location. (2): To establish the altitude towards mental disorders among the household members of gakoigo sub-location and (3): to establish the practice applied to enhance mental health disorders among the residents of gakoigo sub-location.

It is a cross-section descriptive study design applying sampling procedures which gave the tentative sample size which facilitated investigation of measurable characteristic and whose findings assisted in generalizability to the study population.

Data collection research tools were structured questionnaire both open and closed which informed the basis for quantitative result findings while qualitative study finding was addressed by use of focused group discussion.

The result finding shows that among the 338 respondents 188 were women at 56% and 150 men, it also showed various ages being represented but of significant are those of age 16-20 who were 93 at 27.7%, 41-45 who were 53 at 15.7% and 21-25 who were 43 at 12.7%. Those who knew somebody with mental illness were 331 out of 338 respondents at 97.7 % against only 7% who had no knowledge of any mental illness person. About 332 respondents at 98.2% recognize, that mental illness is a problem against 6 at 1.8% who didn't know it's a problem.

The management of data constituted by the use of descriptive statistic, mean, frequency and percentages.

The study concluded that, despite people having knowledge on mental illness a significant number believed on witchcraft and curse and therefore continues to stigmatize those suffering in the community. This indicates that more information on mental illness needs to be disseminated to the community.

The study also recommends on giving advices to the community, family and participation and their involvement in the management of mental illness. It also recommends incorporation of programs related to mental illness in the curriculums so that children can acquire more knowledge on how to address challenges of mental illness.