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Comparing health students' attitudes towards dementia, epilepsy and psychiatric disorders: Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices study (KAP) in Low- and Middle-Income countries (LMIC)

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Context and Objectives

- The increasing number of people living with dementia, epilepsy or psychiatric disorders is a worldwide challenge, especially in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs).
- In LMICs, healthcare systems are based on local doctors, pharmacists and nurses who play a major role in diagnosis and management.
- Stigma is frequent in dementia, epilepsy and psychiatric disorders, and causes delay in diagnosis and management.
- **The KAP study explores knowledge, attitudes and practices of young healthcare professionals in LMICs in order to design recommendations for improving future training programs.**

Methods

Type	Cross sectional survey
Tools	3 questionnaires designed by French national experts French, English, Spanish, Lao and Khmer versions Auto-questionnaire linked to a database management system
Population Data	Students in last year of medicine, pharmacy and nurse studies - Socio demographic characteristics, training, awareness, and contact with a person living with the disease - Knowledge (K), attitudes (A), practices (P) questions
Scores	Scores are presented as percentages of correct KAP answers
Guidelines	STROBE initiative for observational studies in epidemiology

LMICs

From February 2020 to March 2023

Universities in 8 countries participated:

- South American (Peru, Ecuador)
- Africa (Cameroon, Benin, Gabon, Madagascar)
- South East Asian (Cambodia, Laos).

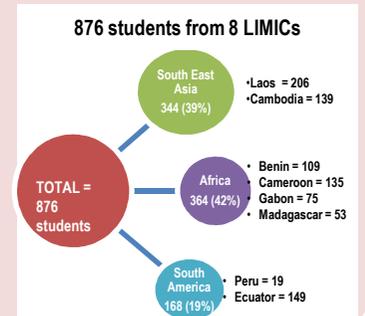
Ethical committees in France and in each partner country approved the KAP study.

Countries involved in KAP LMICs



Results: Study population

- There were more medical students (530; 62%) than nurse (182; 20%) or pharmacy students (155; 18%).
- Mean age was 24.3 ± 4.7 years, 76% were female
- Students in Africa declared less dementia training (66.6%) than in South America (77.3%) or in South East Asia (92.0%), (p<0.001).
- Students in Africa claimed less awareness about dementia (83.2%) than about epilepsy (92.6%) or about psychiatric disorders (92.3%), (p<0.001).
- Contact with a person living with dementia was similar in all regions: Africa (45.1%), South America (45.2%), South East Asia (54.2%) (p=0.06).



Results: Attitudes

Total attitude scores were 78.2% ± 18.5, but dementia attitude scores (73.7 ± 20.2%) were significantly lower than attitude scores about epilepsy (82.8 ± 16.9%) or about psychiatric disorders (77.3 ± 17.3%), (p < 0,0001).

- Students with less training scored significantly lower : 70.7% ± 21.3 versus 80.2% ± 17.2, (p < 0,0001).
- Awareness increased attitude scores significantly : 79.2% ± 17.6 versus 66.8% ± 24.3, (p < 0,001).
- Contact with a person living with dementia also increased attitude scores significantly : 79.7 ± 17.3 versus 76.2% ± 19.9, (p < 0,0014).

Discussion and Perspectives

- This KAP study reveals that approximately 1/4 of the young healthcare professionals in LMICs could have negative attitudes about dementia, more frequently than about epilepsy or about psychiatric disorders. Other studies have evaluated knowledge and attitudes about dementia in LMICs (Aslan et al., 2023, in Turkey; Filho et al., 2023, in Brazil) but no study has compared stigma between the three medical conditions.
- The study suggests that attitudes could be improved by combining formal training, awareness programs and contact with people living with dementia. These findings will be included in the recommendations to come as we pursue the study by a Delphi survey including experts from the participating LMICs.