

Empirical Evidence to Beliefs and Perceptions About Mental Health Disorder and Substance Abuse: The Role of a Social Worker

Authors : Helena Baffoe

Abstract : Context: In the United States, there have been significant advancements in programs aimed at improving the lives of individuals with mental health disorders and substance abuse problems. However, public attitudes and beliefs regarding these issues have not improved correspondingly. This study aims to explore the perceptions and beliefs surrounding mental health disorders and substance abuse in the context of data analytics in the field of social work. Research Aim: The aim of this research is to provide empirical evidence on the beliefs and perceptions regarding mental health disorders and substance abuse. Specifically, the study seeks to answer the question of whether being diagnosed with a mental disorder implies a diagnosis of substance abuse. Additionally, the research aims to analyze the specific roles that social workers can play in addressing individuals with mental disorders. Methodology: This research adopts a data-driven methodology, acquiring comprehensive data from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). A noteworthy causal connection between mental disorders and substance abuse exists, a relationship that current literature tends to overlook critically. To address this gap, we applied logistic regression with an Instrumental Variable approach, effectively mitigating potential endogeneity issues in the analysis in order to ensure robust and unbiased results. This methodology allows for a rigorous examination of the relationship between mental disorders and substance abuse. Empirical Findings: The analysis of the data reveals that depressive, anxiety, and trauma/stressor mental disorders are the most common in the United States. However, the study does not find statistically significant evidence to support the notion that being diagnosed with these mental disorders necessarily implies a diagnosis of substance abuse. This suggests that there is a misconception among the public regarding the relationship between mental health disorders and substance abuse. Theoretical Importance: The research contributes to the existing body of literature by providing empirical evidence to challenge prevailing beliefs and perceptions regarding mental health disorders and substance abuse. By using a novel methodological approach and analyzing new US data, the study sheds light on the cultural and social factors that influence these attitudes.

Keywords : mental health disorder, substance abuse, empirical evidence, logistic regression with IV

Conference Title : ICSWR 2024 : International Conference on Social Work Research

Conference Location : Toronto, Canada

Conference Dates : June 13-14, 2024