

# Application of Social Support System in the Rehabilitation of Vagrants and Beggars with Mental Illness

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**Abstract:** *Objective:* Analyze the specific role of social support in vagrants and beggars with mental illness. *Methods:* 80 patients with vagrant psychosis admitted into our hospital from April 2020 to April 2021 were randomly selected. The patients were treated for more than 6 months. The patients were randomly divided into two groups by drawing lots, with 40 cases in each group. The control group received routine nursing, and the observation group received routine nursing along with social support. The objective support, subjective support, and the utilization of support, which were combined into total social support of the two groups were compared after different nursing interventions. *Results:* After different nursing interventions, through the comparison of social support scale, the scores of objective support, subjective support, and utilization of support, and the total social support in the observation group were higher than the control group, and the differences were statistically significant ( $P < 0.05$ ). *Conclusion:* The application of social support system and while providing routine nursing among vagrants and beggars with psychosis can effectively improve their mental status, make them feel more valued and supported, and help improve their mental health and quality of life.

**Keywords:** Social support system; Vagrants and beggars with mental illness

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## 1. Introduction

Mental disorder is a common illness characterized by individual cognitive, emotional or volitional behavioral disorders, including anxiety disorder, depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, etc. [1-2]. The main etiology of mental disorders is not clear, and studies have shown that it is related to genetics, brain structure and environmental factors [3-4]. Vagrants and beggars with mental illness usually cannot contact their relatives, and the attitude of the public towards them is generally discriminatory and fearful. As a result, patients cannot receive positive support, making their mental status worse [5-6]. Many studies have found that [7-8] an individual's physiological and psychological state are closely related to the attitude of the surrounding society, which plays a very important role in the development and improvement of mental patients. In the treatment of vagrants and beggars with mental illness, the social support system helps the patients in connecting with the society, and help them develop positive emotions from the surrounding people, so that the patients feel respected and supported, so as to improve the mental status of the patients [9-10]. This study selected 80 vagrants and beggars with mental illness in our hospital from April 2020 to April 2021 as the research subject, implemented the social support system combined with routine nursing, and explored the application effect of the social support system in the treatment of vagrants with mental

illness.

## **2. Data and methods**

### **2.1. General information**

80 vagrants and beggars with psychosis, 40 male patients and 40 female patients respectively, were randomly selected from our hospital from April 2020 to April 2021. The patients were divided into a control group and an observation group. The patients in the control group were 22–65 years old, with an average age of  $(39.35 \pm 2.57)$  years, and the patients in the observation group were 20–66 years old, with an average age of  $(40.11 \pm 2.53)$  years. The general data of patients had no significant difference and were comparable ( $P > 0.05$ ).

Inclusion criteria: (1) Informed consent of patients to participate in the study; (2) the patients are vagrants and beggars in our city, mentally ill patients; (2) The patients met the ICD-10 diagnostic criteria related to mental illness; (3) the patient has been hospitalized in our hospital for more than 6 months; (iv) Patients have the ability to take care of themselves, and have good execution and understanding.

Exclusion criteria: (1) patients who were reluctant to join the study; (2) patients younger than 18 years old; (3) patients having moderate or severe intellectual impairment; (4) patients having other serious physical diseases.

### **2.2. Method**

The patients in both groups received routine nursing, including health education, routine individualized nursing, collective nursing intervention, environmental cleaning, hospitalization guidance and so on. The patients in the observation group were provided with social support along with routine nursing. The contents of nursing are described as below.

#### **2.2.1. Individualized nursing intervention**

Individualized nursing intervention is a personalized nursing according to the situation of patients. The patients' doubts were answered and the patients were guided on how to effectively eliminate bad emotions through one-to-one communication. A platform was provided for patients to communicate with each other and strengthen the communication between patients. In this way, it also made the communication between patients and doctors smoother, and help doctors better understand patients' emotions and needs.

#### **2.2.2. Collective nursing intervention**

Collective training for patients were carried out every day, patients were allowed to communicate together, some life skills training were carried out, and other activities that help patients integrate into society. A lecture was given once a week to uniformly solve the troubles encountered by patients during hospitalization. Patients were followed-up regularly after discharge. In case of emotional instability and sleep disorder, the doctor need to be contacted in time for further examination.

#### **2.2.3. Health education in social support**

Patients need to receive sufficient health education order to improve the social viability, strengthen their ability to use social support and improve their perception of the outside world. Through health education, patients can better receive support from family and society, guide patients to actively seek help from others<sup>[11-12]</sup>, actively participate in various nursing activities, make better self-regulation, maintain patients' physical and mental health and promote patients' recovery.

### 2.2.4. Explore the types of social support

Social support strongly affects the physical and mental health of psychiatric patients. Good social support can improve the quality of life of patients and reduce their pessimism. Nurses should explore the issues regarding social support for psychiatric patients, understand the current situation of social support, and take effective measures to increase publicity and awareness of this matter.

### 2.2.5. Strengthen social support

During the hospitalization of vagrant psychiatric patients, nurses should communicate with the patients' families act as a bridge for the patients to receive family support. On the other hand, the public awareness of mental diseases should be raised, and more attention should be brought to vagrant mental patients. The perception and attitude towards vagrant mental patients should be changed, and initiative should be taken to provide help for mental patients and strengthen social support.

## 2.3. Observation indicators

The social support of the two groups before and after nursing was compared by using the social support scale, which consist of 14 items and three dimensions, mainly including objective support, subjective support and support utilization. The overall situation of patients' social support was evaluated through these three dimensions. Objective support is usually material support and social network support; subjective support refers to emotional support, like whether patients feel respected and understood in society; the utilization of support refers to the utilization of social support by patients [13].

## 2.4. Statistical analysis

In this study, the data of patients were recorded and processed with SPSS 20.0 statistical software. The measurement data were expressed with ( $\bar{x} \pm s$ ) and compared with *t*-test ( $P < 0.05$ ).

## 3. Results

There was no significant difference in social support indexes between the two groups before nursing ( $P > 0.05$ ). After nursing, the total social support of the observation group was higher compared to the control group, and the degree of increase was also significantly higher than that of the control group. The objective support, subjective support and utilization of support of the patients after nursing were also better than that of the control group. The data comparison between the two groups was statistically significant ( $P < 0.05$ ). See **Table 1** for details.

**Table 1.** Comparison of social support between the two groups before and after nursing

| Group             | Number of cases | Objective support |               | Subjective support |               | Utilization of support |               | Social support |               |
|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------|------------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
|                   |                 | Before nursing    | After nursing | Before nursing     | After nursing | Before nursing         | After nursing | Before nursing | After nursing |
| Control group     | 40              | 4.21 ± 0.93       | 6.21 ± 0.83   | 12.48 ± 1.51       | 13.62 ± 1.78  | 3.58 ± 0.67            | 4.12 ± 0.77   | 20.21 ± 2.23   | 23.98 ± 2.68  |
| Observation group | 40              | 3.91 ± 0.29       | 6.98 ± 1.06   | 12.82 ± 1.55       | 16.38 ± 1.31  | 3.32 ± 0.56            | 6.72 ± 1.04   | 20.06 ± 1.56   | 30.06 ± 1.69  |
| <i>t</i>          |                 | 1.9477            | 3.6173        | 0.9937             | 7.8982        | 1.8831                 | 12.7075       | 0.3486         | 12.1367       |
| <i>P</i>          |                 | 0.0551            | 0.0005        | 0.3234             | 0.0000        | 0.0634                 | 0.0000        | 0.7283         | 0.0000        |

## 4. Discussion

People draw positive emotions from their families, the society and other areas to obtain a sense of security and belonging, the same goes for mental patients. The cause of mental illness is the result of the interaction of physiological, psychological and social systems. Vagrant and begging mental patients are in a disconnected from the society and cannot effectively produce positive emotions [14-15]. The stable operation

of social support system is the embodiment of social stability. Social support system usually refers to the material or spiritual support obtained by individuals in social relations <sup>[16-17]</sup>. A person with a complete social support system can share life with others in the social network and get help in times of difficulties, which is conducive to personal growth and physical and mental health <sup>[18-19]</sup>. In this study, the social support system is implemented among vagrants and beggars having mental illness to provide a platform for them to understand each other, provide life skill training, allow them to understand what is going on outside the hospital, and enable patients to get a sense of belonging and identity in the care and understanding of others. At the same time, through communication with the patient's family members, the patient's family members can realize the importance of family support in the treatment of psychiatric patients and provide more support for patients. On the other hand, it is also necessary to raise awareness towards mental illness through television news, public welfare activities, social workers, and other publicity methods, which can change the social attitude towards the mentally ill and obtain more social support for the patients <sup>[20-21]</sup>. The results of this study show that after different nursing interventions, the three dimensions of social support in the observation group, including objective support, subjective support and the utilization of support, were better than those in the control group. The score of social support is higher, reaching  $(30.06 \pm 1.69)$ , and the increase of social support in the observation group after nursing is significantly higher than that in the control group. Therefore, the application of social support system in the treatment of vagrant psychiatric patients, like actively communicating with their family members, and changing the public's attitude towards psychiatric patients, can help patients feel valued and supported, and better improve their mental status.

### Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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