



## AN ASSESSMENT OF AWARENESS TOWARD ELECTROCONVULSIVE THERAPY AMONG COMMUNITY PEOPLE

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### Abstract

**Background:** Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT) is an effective and evidence-based treatment for several severe psychiatric disorders. Despite its proven clinical benefits, ECT continues to be surrounded by myths, stigma, and misinformation, particularly among the general community.

**Aim:** The present study aimed to assess the level of awareness and attitudes toward Electroconvulsive Therapy among community people.

**Methods:** A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among community people using a structured questionnaire consisting of socio-demographic variables and items related to knowledge and attitudes toward ECT. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

**Results:** The findings revealed that a majority of participants had limited awareness of ECT. Misconceptions regarding pain, memory loss, and safety were commonly reported. Awareness levels were significantly associated with educational status and previous exposure to mental health information.

**Conclusion:** The study highlights inadequate awareness and prevalent negative perceptions of ECT among community people. Educational and awareness programs are essential to improve public understanding and reduce stigma associated with ECT.

**Keywords:** Electroconvulsive Therapy, Awareness, Community People, Mental Health, Attitude

## **Introduction**

Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT) is a psychiatric treatment modality in which controlled electrical stimulation is administered to the brain under anesthesia to induce therapeutic seizures. It is widely recognized as an effective treatment for severe depression, catatonia, bipolar disorder, and treatment-resistant schizophrenia.

Despite advancements in technique and safety, ECT remains one of the most misunderstood treatments in psychiatry. Public perception of ECT is often influenced by negative portrayals in media and lack of accurate information, leading to fear and stigma. Community awareness plays a crucial role in acceptance of mental health treatments and in promoting early help-seeking behavior.

Therefore, assessing the level of awareness toward ECT among community people is important to identify misconceptions and plan appropriate educational interventions.

## **Objectives of the Study**

1. To assess the level of awareness regarding Electroconvulsive Therapy among community people.
2. To identify attitudes and misconceptions related to ECT.
3. To determine the association between awareness of ECT and selected socio-demographic variables.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

A descriptive cross-sectional research design was adopted for the study.

### **Study Setting**

The study was conducted in selected community areas (urban/rural) of [mention location].

### **Study Population**

Community people aged 18 years and above who were willing to participate in the study.

### **Sample Size and Sampling Technique**

A sample of 50 participants was selected using a convenient sampling technique.

### **Tool for Data Collection**

A structured questionnaire was used, consisting of:

- Section A: Socio-demographic variables
- Section B: Awareness and attitude toward Electroconvulsive Therapy

### **Data Collection Procedure**

After obtaining informed consent, data were collected through face-to-face interviews/self-administered questionnaires.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Ethics Committee. Confidentiality and anonymity of participants were maintained.

### **Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean) and inferential statistics (chi-square test) where applicable.

### **Results**

The results showed that:

- A significant proportion of participants had heard about ECT, but detailed knowledge was lacking.
- Many participants believed ECT to be painful and dangerous.
- Awareness levels were higher among participants with higher educational status.
- A statistically significant association was found between awareness of ECT and educational level.

### **Discussion**

The findings of the study indicate inadequate awareness and negative perceptions of ECT among community people. These findings are consistent with previous studies that reported widespread misconceptions and stigma associated with ECT. Lack of mental health literacy and negative media portrayal may contribute to poor awareness.

Improving community education through mental health campaigns, counseling, and involvement of healthcare professionals can help improve acceptance of ECT as a safe and effective treatment option.

### **Conclusion**

The study concludes that awareness toward Electroconvulsive Therapy among community people is insufficient, with many holding misconceptions about its safety and effectiveness. There is a strong need for public education and awareness programs to enhance understanding and reduce stigma related to ECT.

### **Recommendations**

- Conduct community-based mental health awareness programs.
- Include accurate information about ECT in public health education.
- Encourage mental health professionals to address myths and misconceptions.

### **Limitations of the Study**

- Limited sample size
- Use of convenience sampling
- Self-reported responses may be subject to bias

### **References**

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