

0050.Abeywardena, G.S

Descriptive study and comparison of the psychiatric morbidity of the prisoners on capital punishment and other sentenced prisoners charged for non-murder at Bogambara Prison. Kandy , Sri Lanka

MD (Psychiatry) - 2009

D 2177

All though it is known that sentenced prisoners have a higher prevalence of psychiatric disorders than the normal population, we do not have adequate data to assess the psychiatric morbidity of the local prison population. Data currently available are mostly from western countries, and they may not be applicable to Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka does not have an organized forensic mental health service, and although death sentence has been existent it has not been implemented since 1977. Prisoners on capital punishment have to suffer in isolation, without knowing their plight due to the indecisiveness of the judicial authorities, which may have a significant psychological impact on them. This descriptive study was done at Bogambara prison, Kandy to compare the psychiatric morbidity of the prisoners on capital punishment with that of the sentenced prisoners with lesser offences not amounting to murder. Nearly half of the overall sample has had separations in childhood from parents, and less than half of the study sample has been educated up to grade 10. Being married did not prove to be a protective factor against criminal offending, and previous convictions showed to be a risk factor for minor offending rather than for murder in this survey. Heroin dependence was also associated with minor offending rather than with criminal offending, and 1/3 of the prisoners on the death row had been dependent on cannabis prior to imprisonment. The striking and alarming findings of this study were that 79.2 percent of the prisoners on capital punishment were found to be having some kind of a psychiatric disorder, and 58.3 percent of the same population was depressed. 30.6 percent of the prisoners on the death row were found to be alcohol dependent prior to imprisonment and 25 percent were found to be having Dual Diagnoses.