

Assessing the awareness and perceptions towards mental health among patients' relatives

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INTRODUCTION

- In India, National Mental health Survey 2016-17 revealed that every sixth Indian needs mental health help with the prevalence of mental disorders being 10.6 percent
- Besides its vast prevalence, people are unaware about the facts related to mental illnesses. Moreover, mental illness is still stigmatized
- Due to the stigma associated with mental illness, a lack of awareness, and limited access to professional help, a very small proportion of sufferers seeks help

INTRODUCTION continued..

- Person suffering with mental health issues are often perceived as weak, untidy, violent, and dangerous. Often, most of the people believe that either the mentally ill patient had to be treated by traditional healers or there is no cure for them
- When it comes to mental illnesses, unless the symptoms are too dramatic or extremely distressing, they are often neglected by the relatives due to shame
- This results in late diagnosis, delayed treatment institution, overall poor prognosis, or adverse outcomes such as self-harm, risky behaviour, and untimely deaths by suicide which could have been prevented

INTRODUCTION continued...

- The role of family members in psychiatry is of great importance
- The family member of the patient have to control and manage all the adverse effects and consequences of mental illness and thus, psychiatric doctors often consider family members of a patient as people of support because they are the ones who can act as a source of information regarding the patient and can act as co-therapists at their homes

RATIONALE

- Though, the role of family caregivers in successful treatment of patient is sufficiently proven to be of great significance, to our knowledge, study on their awareness and perceived stigma towards people with mental illness is non-existent in Gujarat
- Furthermore, it is important to study the knowledge, perceptions, and health-seeking behavior in the community regarding mental illness, which will help in providing proper services and effective mental healthcare promotion for the community

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the level of awareness in patients' relatives towards mental health?
2. What are the perceptions of patient's relatives towards mental health?
3. Is there any association between the sociodemographic characteristics and perceptions of the patients' relatives?

OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the level of awareness towards mental health among patients' relatives
2. To assess the perceptions towards mental health among patients' relative
3. To see if the sociodemographic characteristics correlates with the perceptions of caregivers of mentally ill patients towards mental health

METHODOLOGY

STUDY DESIGN: Cross sectional descriptive study

STUDY AREA: Hospital For Mental Health, Ahmedabad

STUDY PERIOD: 10th February to 10th May, 2019

STUDY TOOL: Self- structured questionnaire

DATA COLLECTION METHOD : Face-to-face exit interviews

METHODOLOGY..

SAMPLE: Relatives of mentally ill patients (One adult family member living and accompanying the patient)

Inclusion criteria-

- ✓ Relatives with age above 18 years
- ✓ Relatives are the primary caregivers and provides most assistance to the patient

Exclusion criteria-

- ✗ Family members who refused to participate

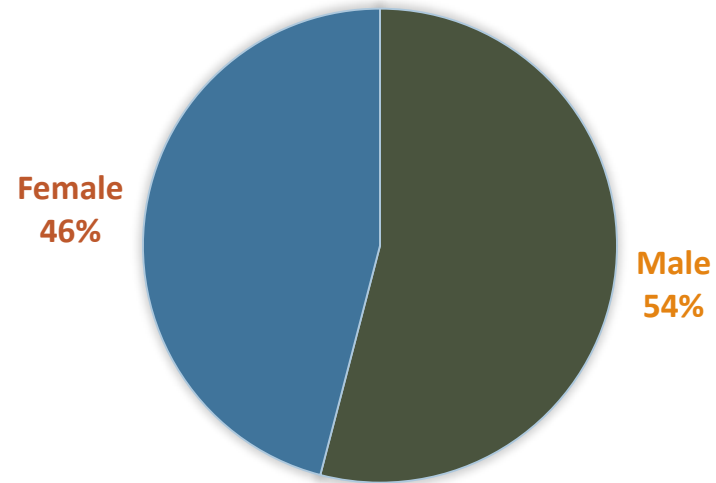


SAMPLE SIZE – 148 relatives

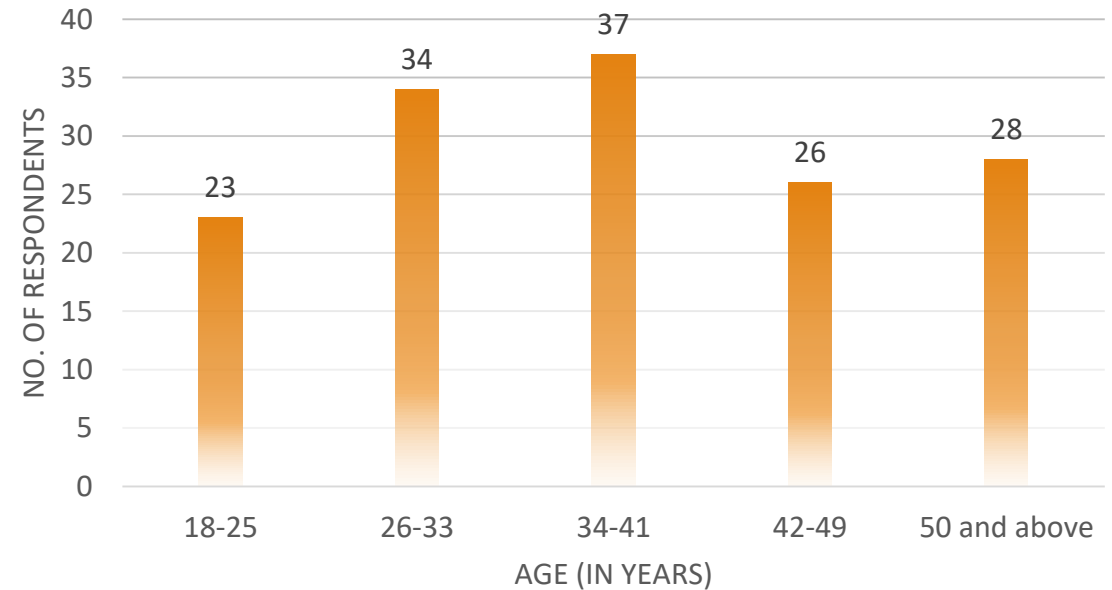
SAMPLING METHOD – Convenient sampling

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS

SEX OF THE RESPONDENTS

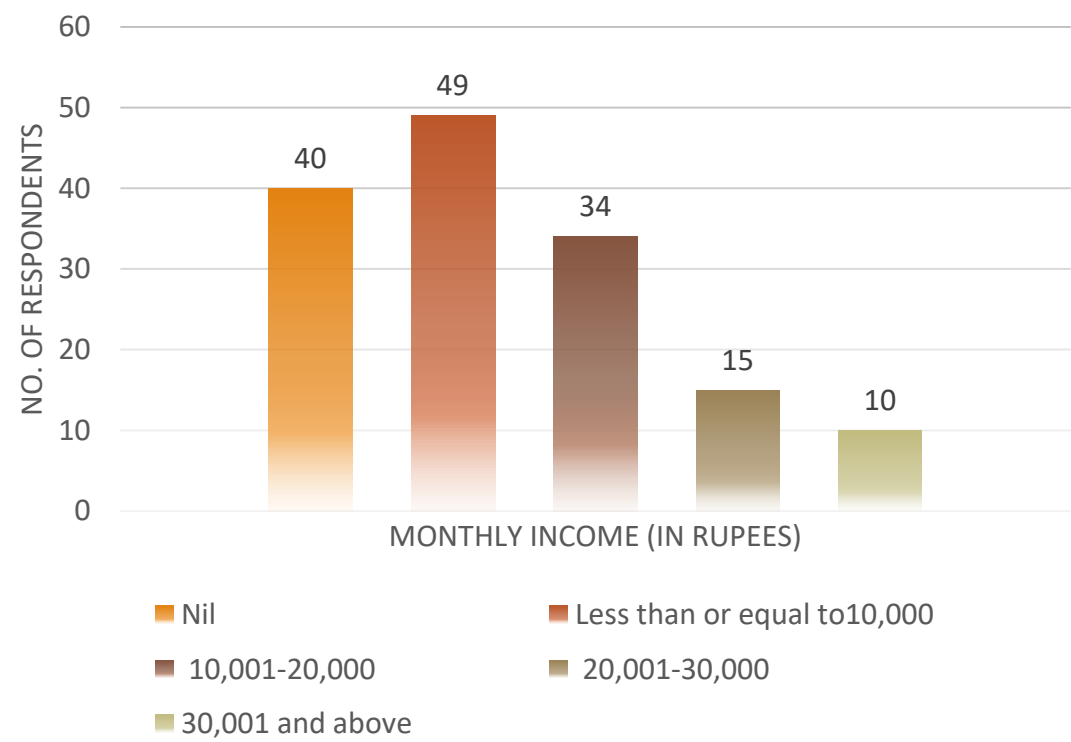


AGE OF THE RESPONDENTS

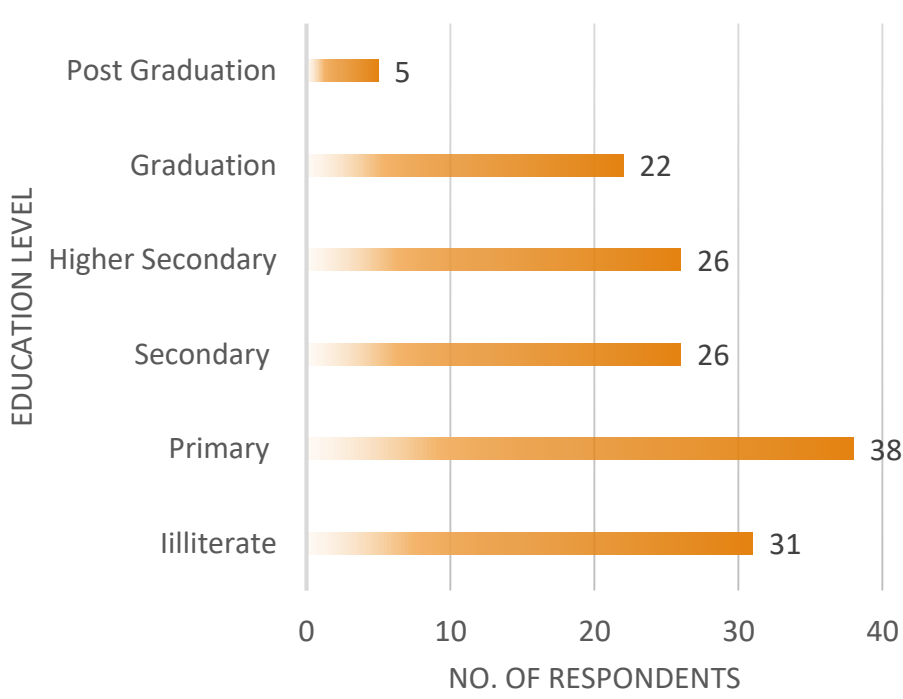


SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS..

MONTHLY INCOME OF THE RESPONDENTS

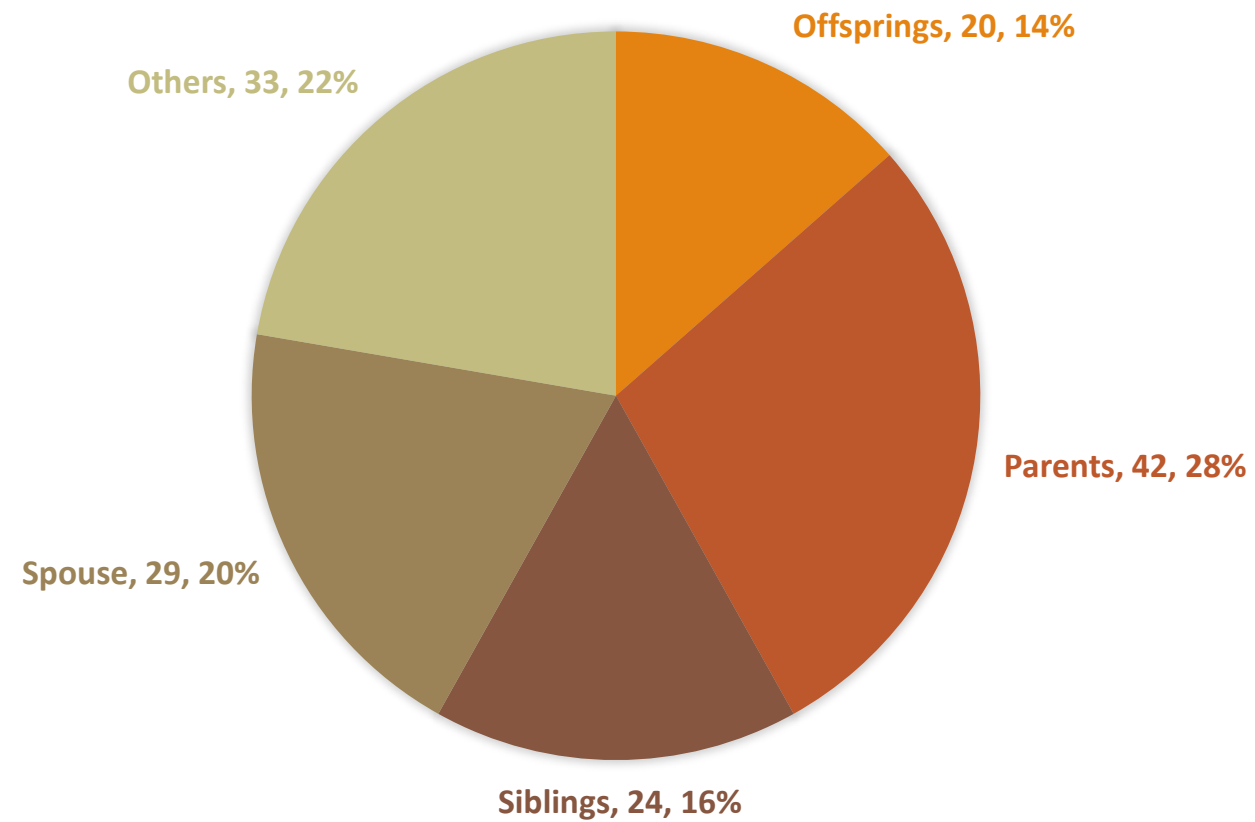


EDUCATION LEVEL OF THE RESPONDENTS

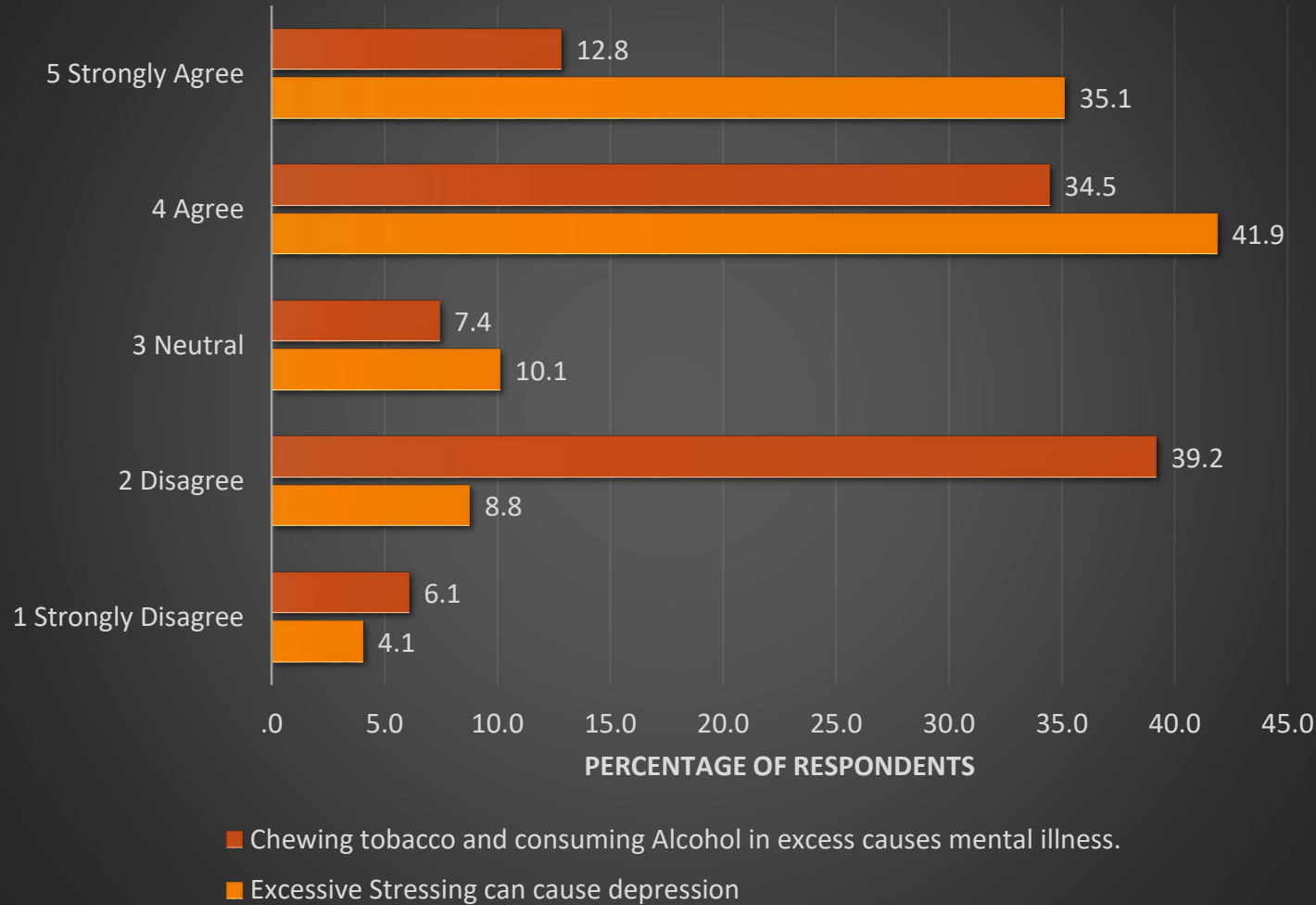


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RESPONDENTS' RELATION WITH PATIENT



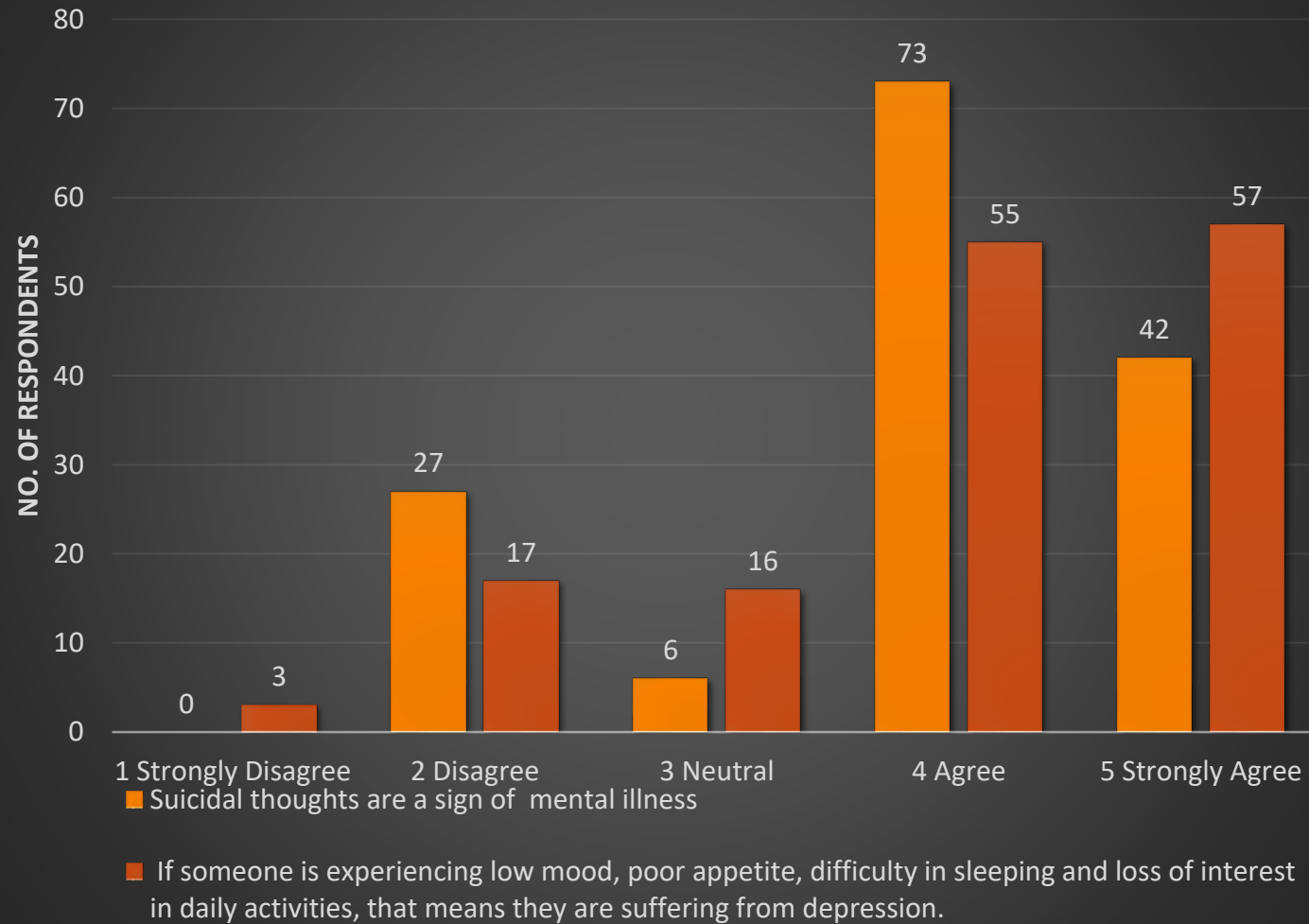
Causes of mental illness



KEY FINDINGS

- About 45 percent of respondents didn't know that chewing tobacco or consuming alcohol in excess can cause mental illness (substance use disorder)
- 77 percent of the respondents knew that excessive stressing can lead to mental illness, indicating a fair knowledge about causes of mental illness

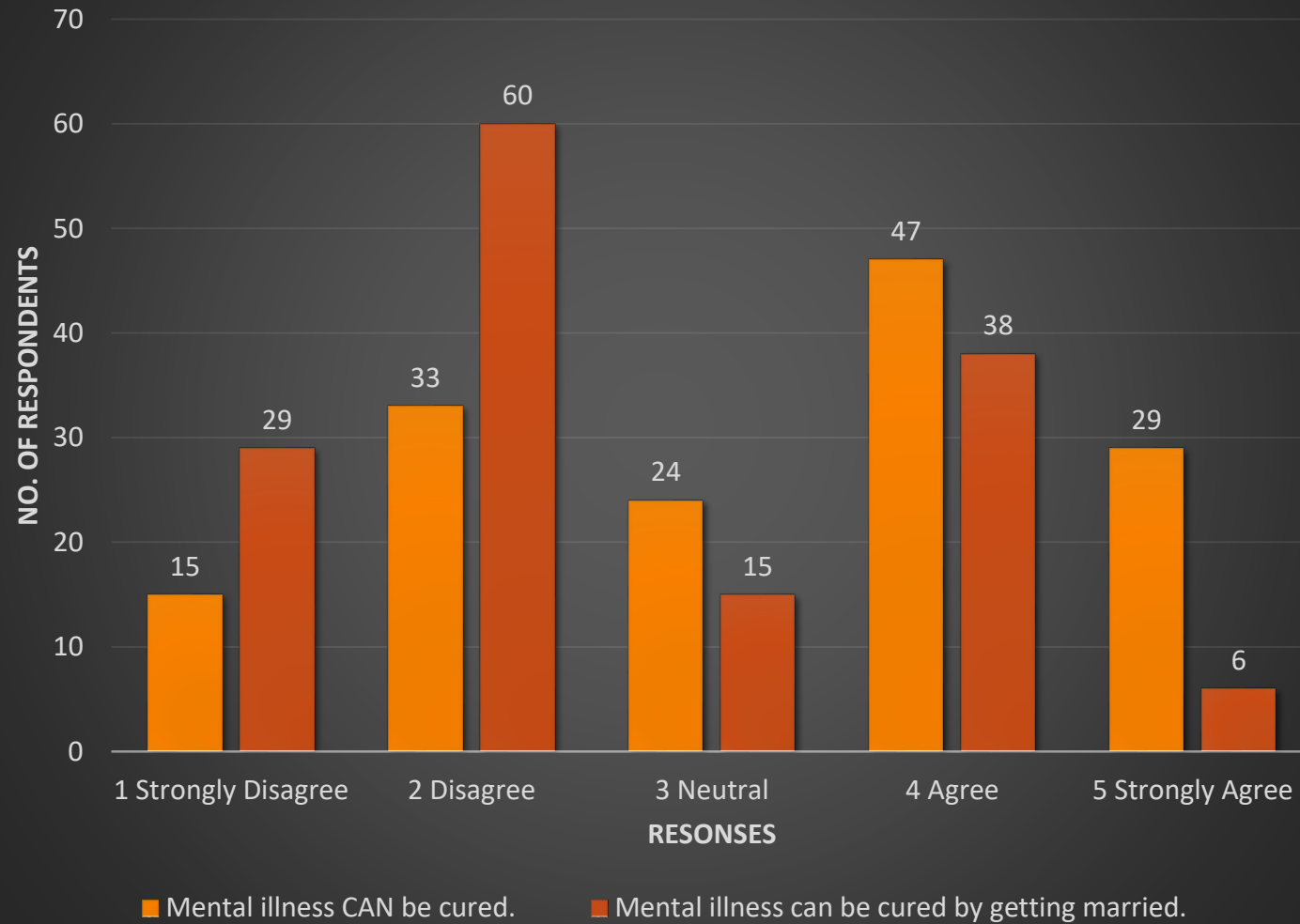
Symptoms of mental illness



Interpretation:

- Awareness about the symptoms of mental illness was seen to be adequate as majority of subjects knew that suicidal thoughts, experiencing low mood, difficulty in sleeping and poor appetite are a sign of mental health issues

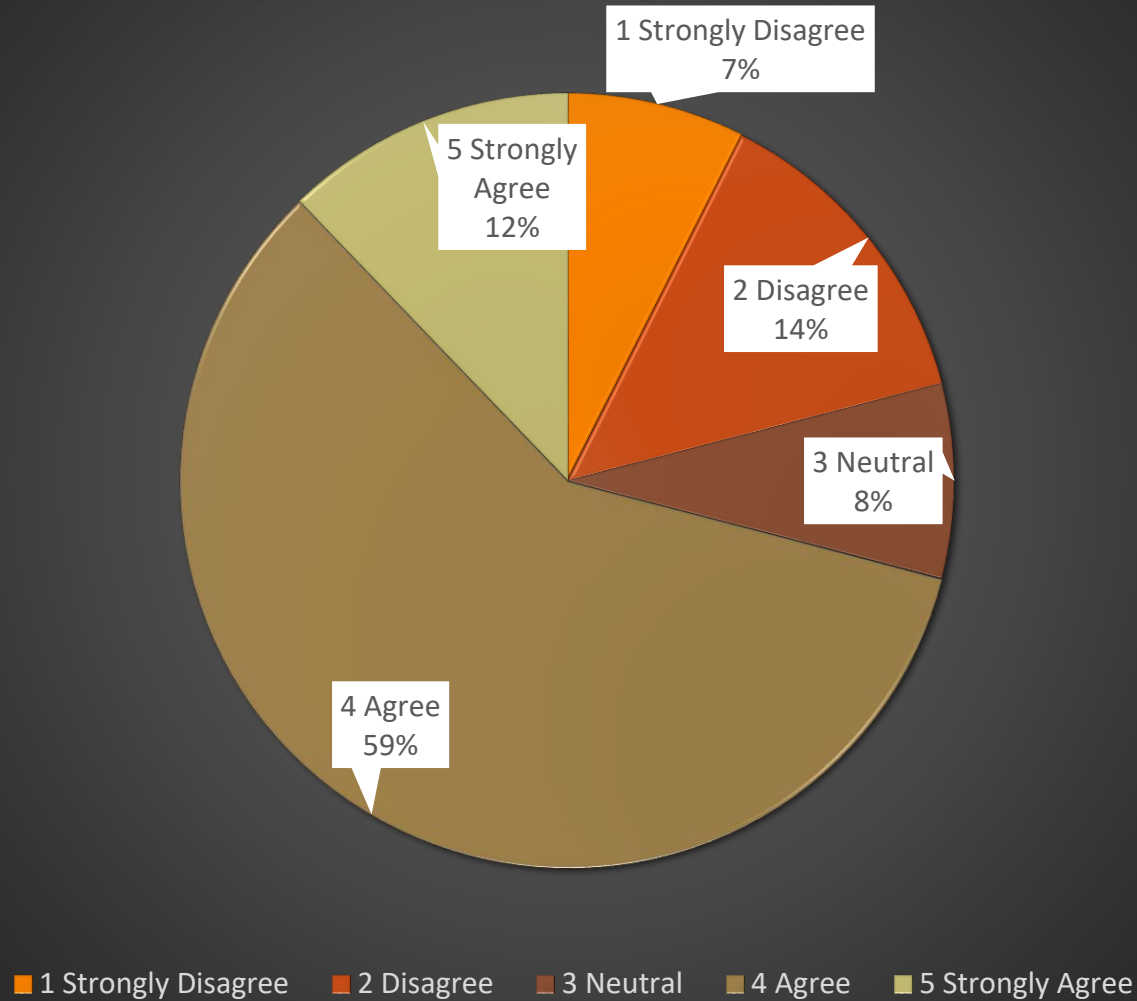
Treatment of mental illness



Interpretation:

- From this graph, we can see that around 30 percent of people believed that mental illness cannot be cured while 16 percent were uncertain about it
- It is still a myth among 40 percent of people that getting married can be a treatment for mental illness

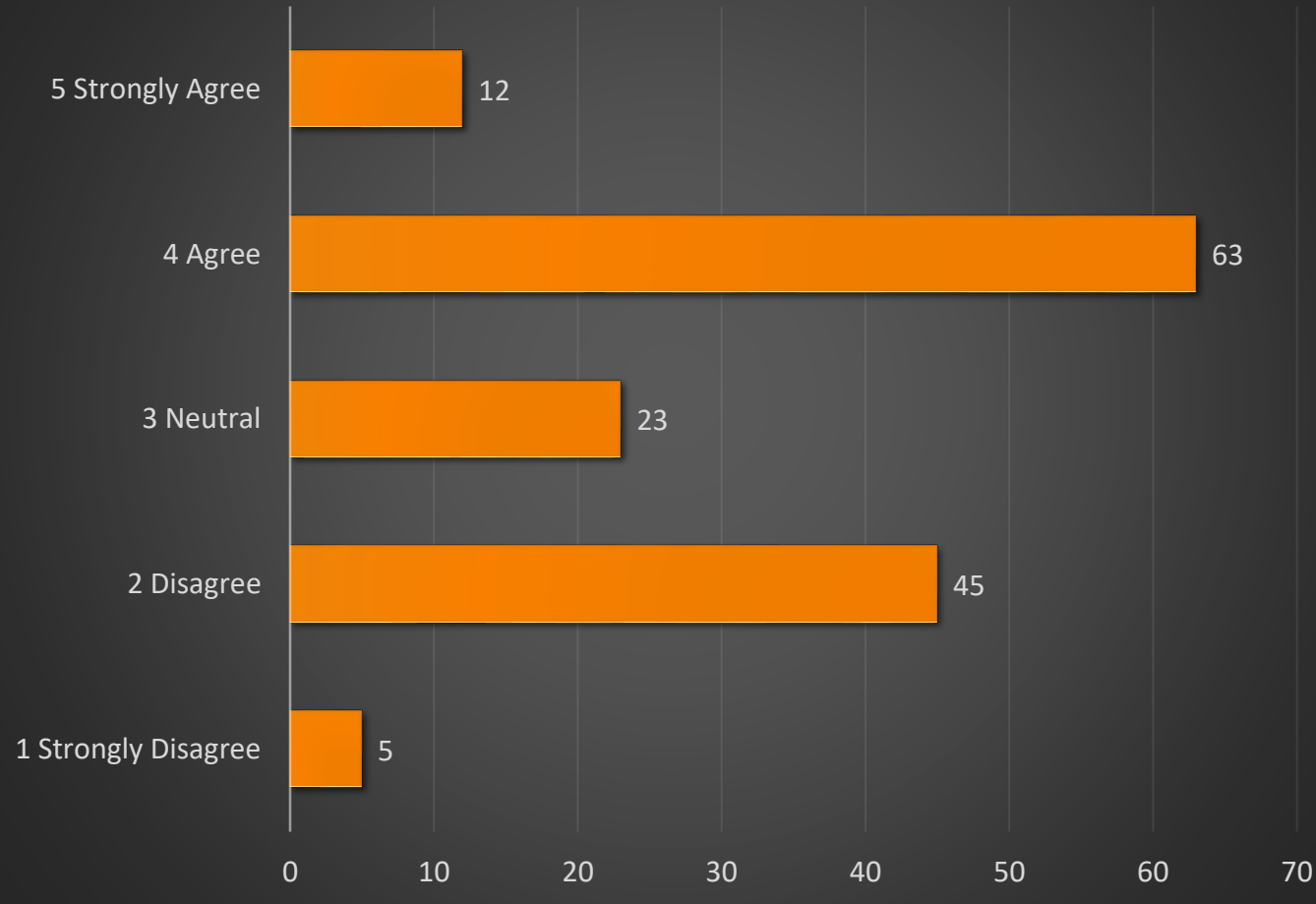
Depression is a sign of failure



Interpretation:

- It was seen, that majority of the respondents (70%) have this myth that depression is a sign of failure
- Around 20 percent of respondents disagreed while 3 percent of them were neutral to the statement

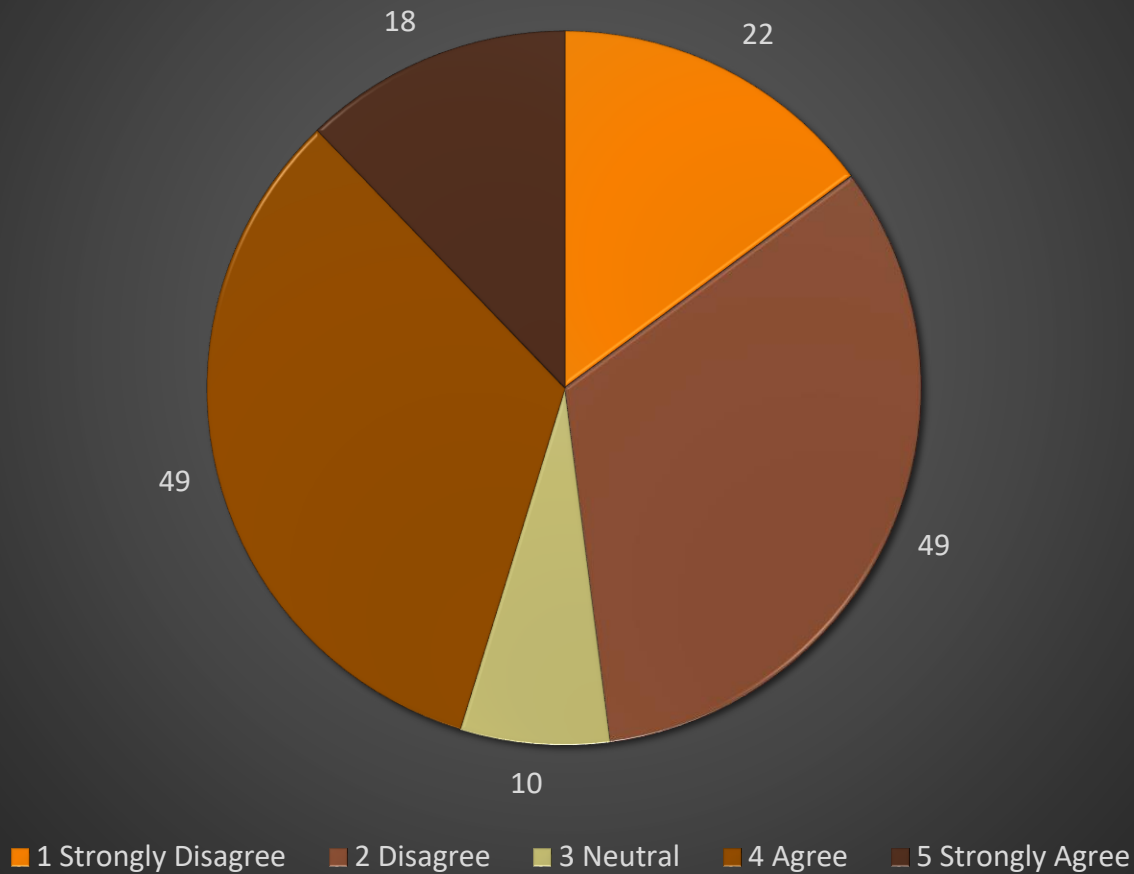
Psychiatric medicines cause addiction



Interpretation:

- Nearly half of the caretakers believed that psychiatric medicines cause addiction which in turn leads to improper doses of medicines
- Only 33 percent of them knew that psychiatric medicines do not cause addiction if taken properly

**You would be ashamed to mention
someone in your family has mental illness**



Interpretation:

From this chart we can see that people who would be ashamed to mention someone in their family have mental illness are nearly equal to those who wouldn't

Statement	Nature of Question P: Positive N: Negative	Ideal Score	Average Score	% of people (n=148) who responded with				
				SD	D	N	A	SA
Mental health is as important as physical health.	P	5	4.31	1% (2)	6% (9)	5% (7)	34% (50)	54% (80)
Evil spirits cause mental illness.	N	1	2.92	14% (20)	34% (50)	13% (19)	27% (40)	13% (19)
Mental illness is always hereditary.	N	1	2.56	23% (34)	39% (58)	7% (11)	24% (36)	6% (9)
Children can suffer from mental illness.	P	5	3.54	10% (15)	17% (25)	11% (16)	39% (57)	24% (35)

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Nature of Question</i>	<i>Ideal Score</i>	<i>Average Score</i>	<i>% of people (n=148) who responded with</i>				
				<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>
Person with Mental illness is mentally retarded.	N	1	3.32	9% (14)	24% (36)	12% (18)	38% (56)	16% (24)
People with mental illness are dangerous and violent.	N	1	3.58	1% (2)	28% (42)	8% (12)	45% (66)	18% (26)
Mentally ill patient should be given responsibility	P	5	2.77	20% (29)	36% (53)	8% (12)	31% (66)	5% (26)
Mentally ill person should be allowed to make decisions.	P	5	2.84	15% (22)	45% (67)	5% (7)	23% (34)	12% (18)

- Out of 20 statements, ten were positive while the other ten were negative
- Positive and negative statements were analyzed separately.
- For both types, the Likert scale scoring was done as Strongly Agree=5, Agree=4, Neutral=0, Disagree=2, Strongly Disagree=1
- Sum total score of positive questions and negative questions were calculated separately
- On the basis of scoring, respondents were segregated on the basis of favourable and unfavourable score

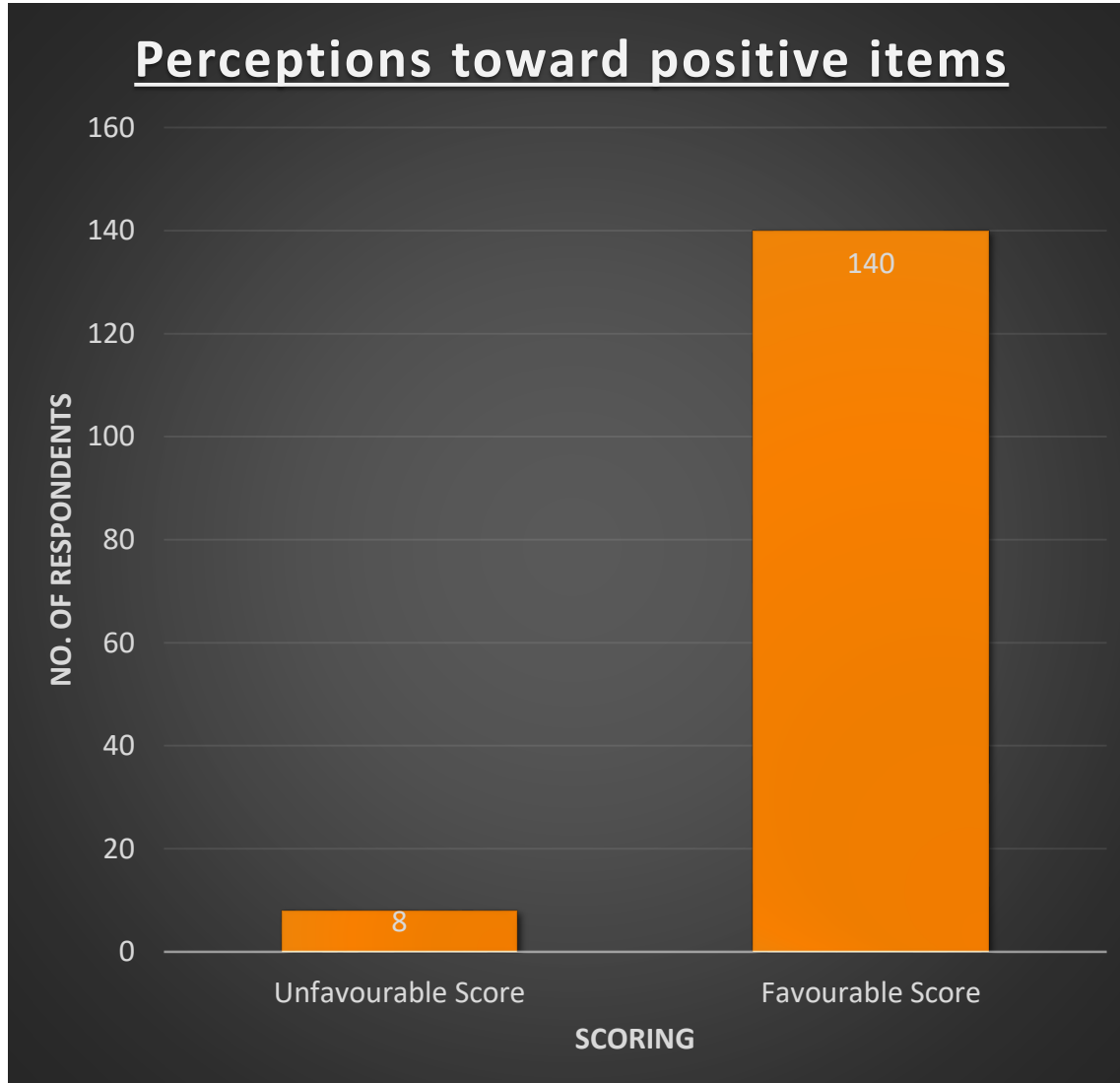
- **For positive statements:**

Score (Min 10; Max 50)	Perception
10- 29	Unfavourable
30-50	Favourable

- **For negative statements:**

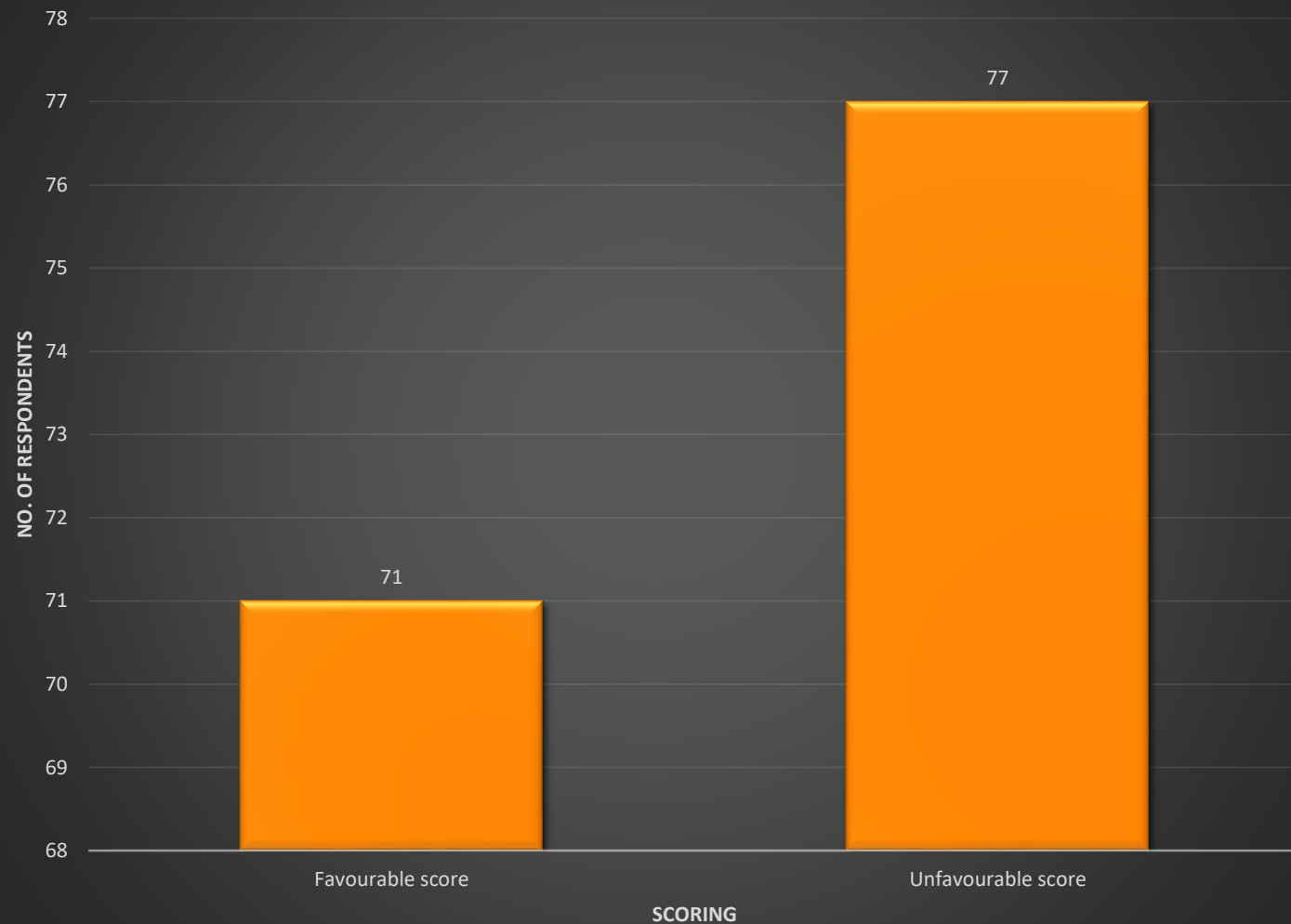
Score (Min 10; Max 50)	Perception
10-30	Favourable
31-50	Unfavourable

KEY FINDINGS



- The chart shows that 95 percent of the respondents were well aware and had positive perception towards mental illness
- Only a mere number of respondents 8 out of 148 had an unfavourable perception towards the positive items related to mental illness
- The mean score obtained for all ten positive statements was 35.08 (Minimum score possible 10; Maximum score possible 50)

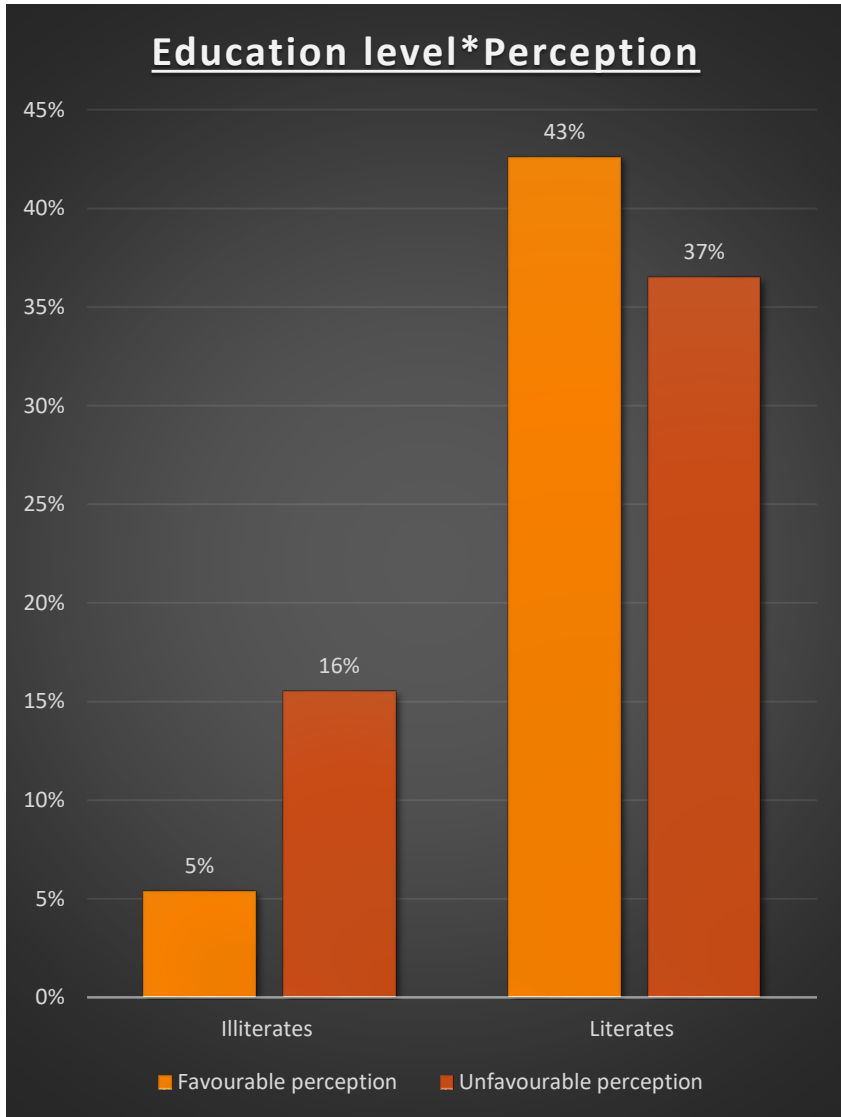
Perceptions toward negative items



Perception of people towards negative statements

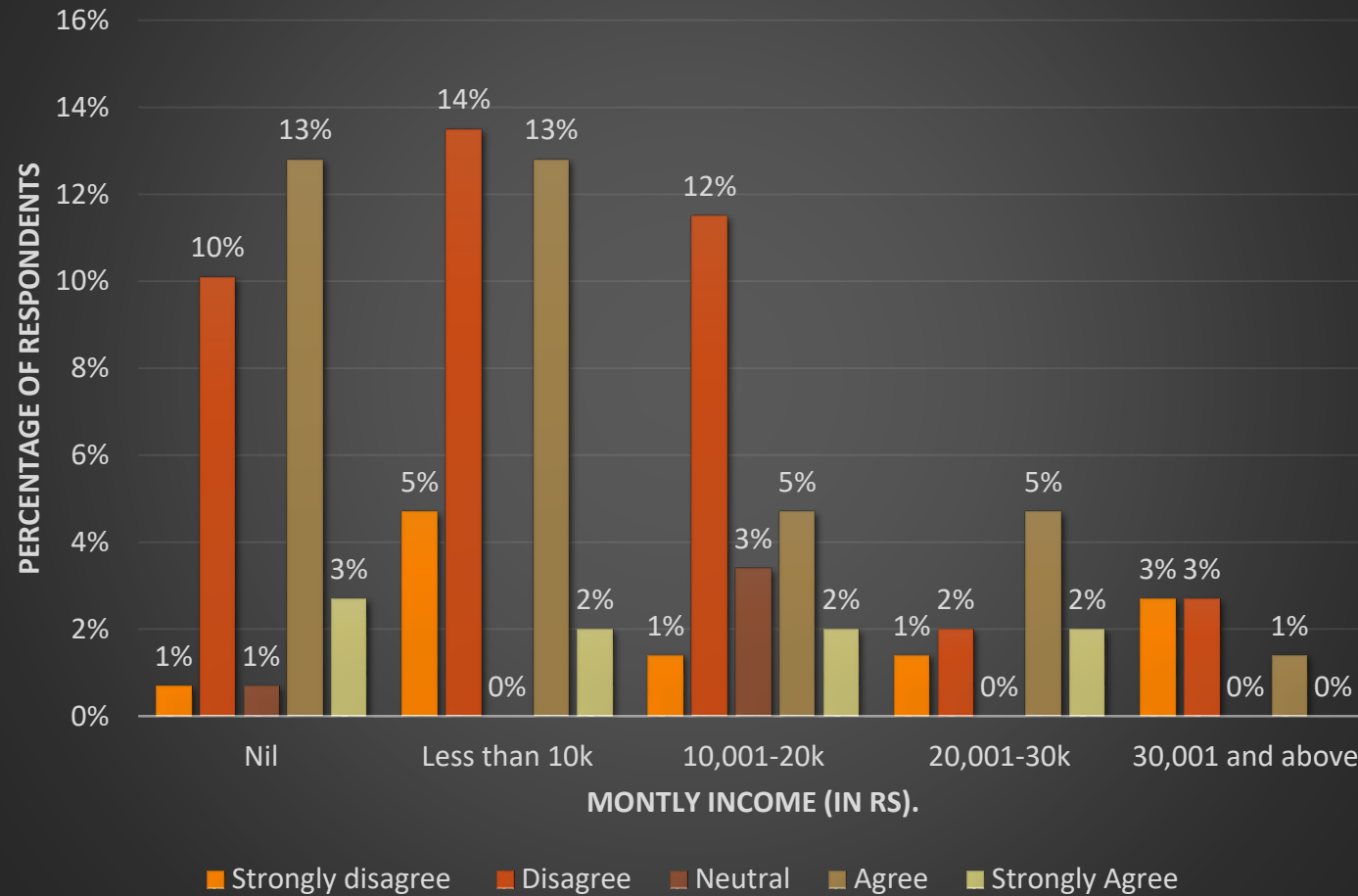
- For negative statements, it was seen that 77 respondents (52 percent) had less awareness and unfavourable perception towards mental illness while 48 percent had favourable scores
- The mean score for all negative items responses comes put to be 31. Though, the ideal score for negative statements is 20

Education level & Perception



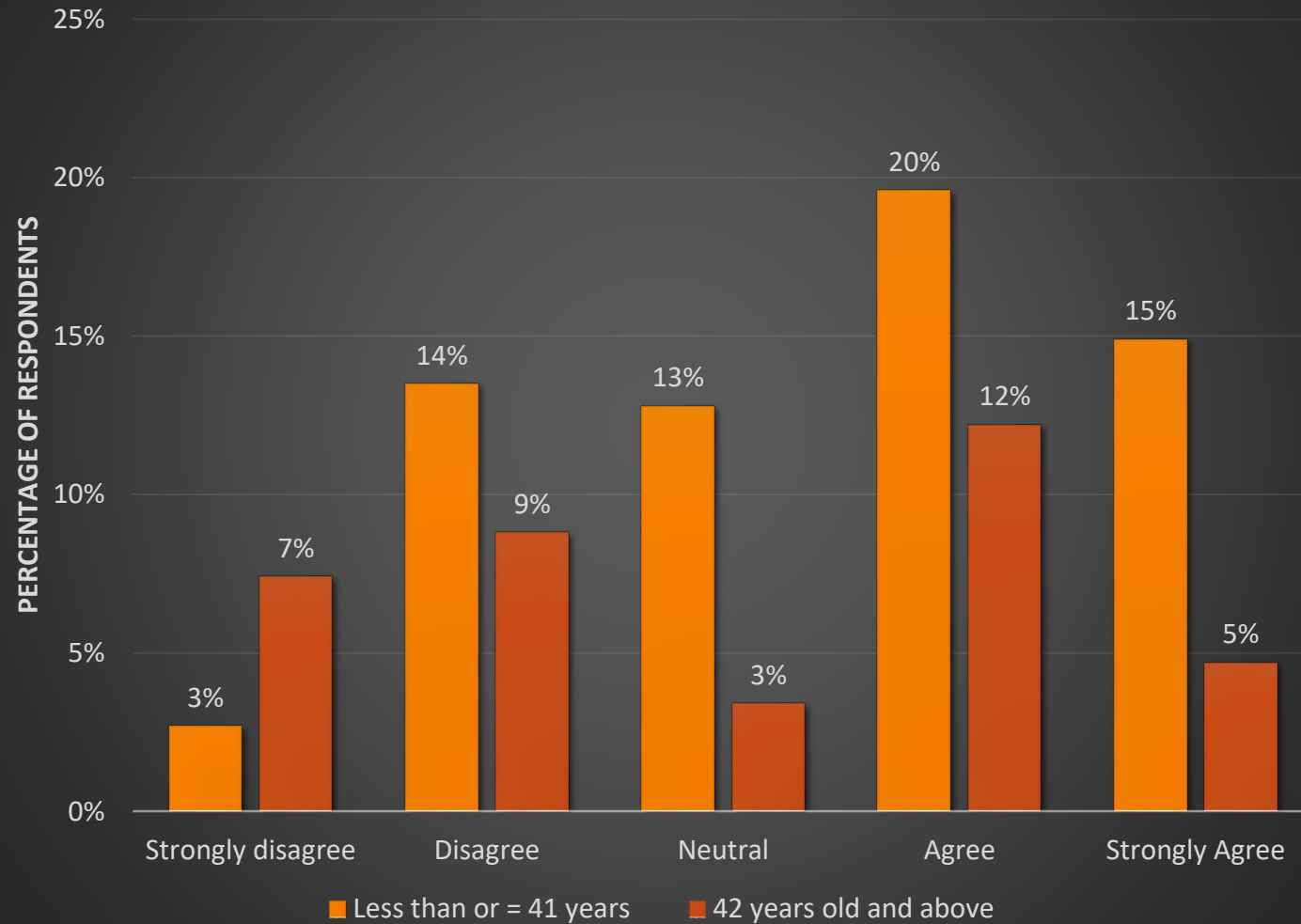
- It was seen that perceptions of respondent towards negative set of questions varied with their education level
- Majority of the illiterates had an unfavorable perception whereas the literates had a positive perceptions towards mental health

Monthly income* Mentally ill patients are burden on the society



- It was observed that perception of respondents towards the statement whether people with mental illness are a burden varied with their monthly income
- Respondents with low monthly income agreed with the statement while for people earning well comparatively didn't not feel that people with mental illness are a burden on the society

Age* Mental illness CAN be cured



Interpretation:

- It is seen that young people are fairly aware that mental illness can be cured while people above the age of 41 years feel that mental illness is incurable

Conclusion

- Stigma towards mental illness is still persistent. People suffering from mental illnesses lead a poor quality of life and face discrimination in key social activities and opportunities as mental illness
- The need of an hour is to not only sensitize and educate individuals about the signs and symptoms of mental illness but normalizing the idea of seeking support for themselves and their loved ones by reducing the stigma which is carried along the term
- Discussions and dialogues related to mental health should not only be limited to experts of this subject but needs to be more open with the general public which in turn will help create a more inclusive environment for people with mental illness reducing the stigmas and myths

RECOMMENDATIONS

- As we can see that from the findings that education plays a vital role, effective IEC strategies and social media engagement to make people aware of the rights of the mentally ill and destigmatize them about various myths and belief related with mental illness
- Creation of various opportunities, employment and education for people with mental illness so that they are not perceived as a burden on society
- Active engagement of the media to develop programmes for the advancement of mental health. While negative portrayal needs to be stopped, positive portrayal on success stories, rights and opportunities, recovery aspects need more coverage

References

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<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28529357>
- Knowledge and attitudes of secondary and higher secondary school teachers toward mental illness in Ahmedabad
<http://www.indjsp.org/text.asp?2016/32/1/56/176770>
- Understanding the impact of stigma on people with mental illness.

Corrigan PW, Watson AC

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16946807>

THANK YOU!

Because when 'I' becomes 'We', Mental illness becomes Mental wellness