Bridging Mental Health and National Security: The Transformative Impact of Psychiatric Nursing on Public Safety

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Abstract
Mental health is an essential but often overlooked component of national security and public safety. Untreated mental illnesses contribute to public disturbances, crime, and vulnerability to radicalization, posing significant security risks. Psychiatric nursing plays a critical role in mitigating these risks by providing early intervention, crisis management, and long-term rehabilitation for individuals experiencing mental health crises. This review explores how psychiatric nursing can transform public safety and enhance national security by improving access to mental health care, supporting law enforcement, and influencing public policy. One of the primary contributions of psychiatric nursing to public safety is early intervention and prevention. Psychiatric nurses are trained to identify at-risk individuals through screenings and behavioral assessments, allowing for timely mental health support before conditions escalate into crises. By working in emergency departments, community mental health clinics, and correctional facilities, psychiatric nurses help divert individuals from the criminal justice system into appropriate treatment programs, reducing recidivism and promoting rehabilitation. In crisis intervention and emergency response, psychiatric nurses collaborate with law enforcement to de-escalate situations involving individuals in acute psychiatric distress. They play a vital role in mobile crisis teams, offering immediate psychiatric support and reducing the need for forceful police intervention. This approach not only prevents unnecessary incarceration but also ensures that individuals receive proper medical care rather than punitive measures. Additionally, psychiatric nurses advocate for policy reforms that integrate mental health care into national security frameworks. This includes pushing for mental health courts, specialized psychiatric units in law enforcement agencies, and improved access to psychiatric care for security personnel dealing with trauma. By addressing the mental health needs of both civilians and security professionals, psychiatric nurses contribute to a safer and more resilient society. Ultimately, psychiatric nursing serves as a bridge between health care and national security, ensuring that mental health crises are managed proactively rather than reactively. Strengthening psychiatric nursing roles in public safety strategies is crucial for fostering a more stable and secure society.

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1. Introduction

The convergence of mental health and national security has emerged as a critical area of concern in contemporary public safety discourse (Slawotsky, 2021). As societies face an increasing prevalence of mental health disorders, the ramifications extend beyond individual well-being to affect societal stability and security (Lawrance *et al*, 2022). Untreated mental health conditions can contribute to social disintegration, community unrest, and, in some instances, serve as a precursor to extremist behavior and radicalization (Kupper *et al*, 2023). In this context, the integration of mental health services into public safety frameworks is not only a clinical challenge but also a strategic imperative for national security. Untreated mental health conditions pose

significant risks to public safety by exacerbating issues such as substance abuse, homelessness, and criminal behavior (Sorathia, 2022; Mitchell, 2022). These issues can create environments conducive to violence, reduce community cohesion, and strain law enforcement resources. Inadequate mental health care often leads to delayed diagnosis and intervention, increasing the likelihood of individuals engaging in behaviors that threaten public order (Gruber *et al*, 2021). Moreover, the lack of effective mental health interventions can hinder the rehabilitation of offenders, perpetuating cycles of recidivism that undermine efforts to maintain secure communities (Lin *et al*, 2023). The current landscape highlights a critical gap: while mental health issues are recognized as a public safety risk, they are frequently overlooked in national security strategies (Rigby *et al*, 2022). The primary objective of this reviiew is to explore the pivotal role that psychiatric nursing plays in enhancing public safety and national security. Psychiatric nurses serve as frontline professionals in the detection, assessment, and management of mental health disorders (McInnes *et al*, 2022). Their role extends beyond direct patient care to include crisis intervention, community outreach, and advocacy for policy reforms. By integrating mental health care into broader public safety strategies, psychiatric nurses can help to identify early warning signs of mental health deterioration, provide immediate crisis management, and support long-term recovery through tailored treatment plans. Furthermore, their unique position within healthcare and community networks allows them to bridge the gap between clinical care and security operations, ensuring that vulnerable populations receive the support necessary to prevent potential escalation into broader security concerns (Jabarulla and Lee, 2021; Mishra and Singh, 2023).

This posits that psychiatric nursing is instrumental in mitigating security risks associated with untreated mental health conditions (Heber *et al*, 2023). By improving access to mental health care, enhancing crisis intervention strategies, and advocating for robust policy reforms, psychiatric nurses can significantly reduce the likelihood of mental health issues escalating into public safety threats (Drake and Bond, 2021; Johnson *et al*, 2022). The integration of psychiatric nursing into national security frameworks offers a dual benefit: it not only improves individual patient outcomes but also fortifies community resilience and overall societal stability. This exploration of the intersection of mental health and national security underscores the imperative for enhanced psychiatric nursing roles in safeguarding public safety (Mir, 2023). This will examine current challenges, highlight innovative practices in psychiatric care, and advocate for strategic policy initiatives that support the integration of mental health services into national security paradigms. By doing so, it aims to illuminate the transformative impact that psychiatric nursing can have on both individual and community well-being, ultimately contributing to a more secure and resilient society.

2. The link between mental health and national security

Mental health plays a crucial role in shaping the stability and security of a nation (Reznikova, 2022). The growing prevalence of untreated mental illness has far-reaching consequences that extend beyond individual well-being, affecting public safety, law enforcement, and national security. As mental health crises become more common, their impact on communities, the justice system, and national defense structures cannot be ignored (Newman, 2022). Addressing mental health as a public safety concern is essential to ensuring a stable and secure society.

Mental illness affects millions of individuals worldwide, yet many cases go undiagnosed or untreated due to stigma, lack of resources, or insufficient healthcare access (Javed *et al*, 2021). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), depression and anxiety disorders are among the leading causes of disability globally, and their prevalence is increasing. Untreated mental illnesses can manifest in disruptive behaviors, homelessness, substance abuse, and social instability, contributing to broader public safety concerns. Without adequate support systems, individuals suffering from severe mental health conditions may struggle to maintain employment, housing, or relationships, leading to increased dependence on social services and law enforcement (Bjørlykhaug *et al*, 2022; Meghrajani *et al*, 2023). There is a well-documented link between mental health crises and public safety incidents, including self-harm, domestic disturbances, and violent outbursts. Individuals experiencing acute mental health episodes may engage in unpredictable behavior, sometimes resulting in confrontations with law enforcement. Studies indicate that mental health-related emergencies account for a significant portion of police interventions, with officers frequently being the first responders to psychiatric crises (Xanthopoulou *et al*, 2022; Heffernan *et al*, 2022). Inadequate mental health treatment can also contribute to mass violence, as some individuals with untreated psychiatric disorders may become a threat to themselves or others. Strengthening mental health care systems is essential in reducing the burden on emergency services and mitigating risks to public safety (Tausch *et al*, 2022).

Law enforcement agencies often find themselves on the front lines of mental health emergencies, despite lacking the specialized training needed to handle such cases effectively (Wood *et al*, 2021). Police officers may struggle to differentiate between criminal behavior and symptoms of mental illness, leading to mismanagement of situations and, in some cases, unnecessary use of force (Tartaro *et al*, 2021; Lorey and Fegert, 2022). The lack of mental health training for officers can escalate encounters, increasing the risk of injury or fatality for both the individual in crisis and the responding officers. Crisis intervention training (CIT) programs have been developed to address these challenges, equipping law enforcement personnel with the skills needed to de-escalate situations and connect individuals with appropriate care. The criminal justice system has become a de facto mental health care provider for many individuals with psychiatric disorders. Studies show that people with mental illness are disproportionately represented in the prison population, with estimates suggesting that nearly 40% of incarcerated individuals in the United States have a diagnosed mental health condition (Curran *et al*, 2023; Edwards *et al*, 2024). This overrepresentation is often due to the lack of community-based mental health services, leading to cycles of arrest, incarceration, and inadequate treatment. Prisons and jails are ill-equipped to provide necessary psychiatric care, exacerbating existing conditions and increasing recidivism rates (Wiseman, 2023). Addressing mental health issues within the justice system requires a shift toward diversion programs, mental health courts, and rehabilitative approaches rather than punitive measures, figure 1 offers a model that attempts to combine functional

and dysfunctional viewpoints on mental health and psychological care. It is intended to serve as a heuristic model that helps practitioners and academics create, apply, and assess a more well-rounded treatment strategy that is focused on both wellbeing and complaints. Although a detailed discussion of each model component is outside the purview of this work, we provide a synopsis of the model's key elements, including outcomes, adaptability, context, underlying processes, and interventions (Bohlmeijer and Westerhof, 2021).

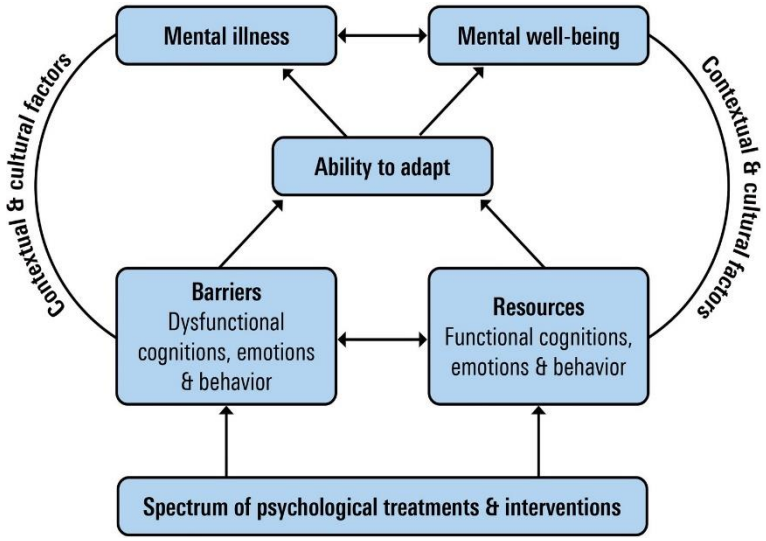

Fig 1: Model of sustainable mental health (Bohlmeijer and Westerhof, 2021)

Mental health neglect can create vulnerabilities that may be exploited by extremist groups or criminal organizations. Individuals experiencing severe mental distress, particularly those with feelings of isolation or persecution, may be more susceptible to radicalization (Gill *et al*, 2021). Research has shown that some cases of domestic terrorism and mass violence involve perpetrators with untreated or poorly managed psychiatric conditions. While mental illness alone is not a direct cause of extremist behavior, underlying psychological distress can make individuals more prone to manipulation and engagement in harmful activities (Kruglanski *et al*, 2021; Arieli *et al*, 2022). Strengthening mental health services, particularly in high-risk communities, is a crucial step in preventing radicalization and enhancing national security. The mental health of military personnel and first responders is critical to national security. These individuals are routinely exposed to high-stress environments, trauma, and life-threatening situations, which can lead to conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and substance abuse. Studies indicate that suicide rates among military veterans and first responders are significantly higher than those of the general population, highlighting the urgent need for improved mental health support (Smith *et al*, 2021; Bond and Anestis, 2023). Neglecting the psychological well-being of those tasked with defending and protecting the nation weakens operational effectiveness and national resilience. Comprehensive mental health programs, including early intervention, peer support networks, and accessible treatment options, are essential in maintaining the readiness and stability of security forces (Stanojlović and Davidson, 2021; Larson *et al*, 2023). The link between mental health and national security is undeniable. The rising prevalence of untreated mental illness poses challenges to public safety, overburdens law enforcement and the justice system, and has far-reaching implications for national defense. Addressing mental health as a fundamental component of security requires a multi-faceted approach, including increased access to care, better training for law enforcement, and enhanced support systems for military personnel and first responders (Karlović *et al*, 2021; Lavoie *et al*, 2022). By prioritizing mental health at both community and national levels, societies can foster greater stability, resilience, and security for all.

2.1 The role of psychiatric nursing in enhancing public safety

Mental health is a crucial determinant of public safety, influencing crime rates, homelessness, and societal stability (Mao and Agyapong, 2021). Psychiatric nursing plays a fundamental role in mitigating security risks by addressing mental health disorders before they escalate into crises as shown in figure 2 (Tavares *et al*, 2021). Psychiatric nurses contribute to public safety through early intervention, crisis management, and rehabilitation programs that support individuals in reintegrating into society (Güleşen and Dikeç, 2024). Their expertise in mental health care enables them to bridge the gap between clinical treatment and public security efforts, ensuring that vulnerable individuals receive the necessary care to prevent harm to themselves and others (Simpson *et al*, 2021; McGorry *et al*, 2022).

One of the primary roles of psychiatric nursing in enhancing public safety is identifying and managing mental health disorders before they develop into severe crises. Early intervention is crucial in preventing individuals from experiencing mental health deterioration that could lead to self-harm, violence, or criminal activity (Ejlskov *et al*, 2023). Psychiatric nurses are trained to screen and assess individuals for mental health conditions, especially those who exhibit risk factors such as a history of trauma, substance abuse, or severe stress. They utilize standardized psychiatric screening tools to detect early signs of conditions such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and depression. These screenings are particularly important in high-risk environments, such as correctional facilities, schools, and community health clinics. Once at-risk individuals are identified, psychiatric nurses implement early treatment

plans, including counseling, medication management, and psychoeducation. Early psychiatric intervention reduces the likelihood of individuals developing severe psychiatric conditions that could contribute to erratic behavior or public safety concerns. Crisis prevention efforts also involve providing support to families and caregivers, equipping them with coping strategies and resources to manage mental health conditions within the home environment (Buka *et al*, 2022; Branjerdporn *et al*, 2023). By proactively addressing mental health concerns, psychiatric nurses play a key role in reducing incidents that could lead to law enforcement intervention or hospitalization.

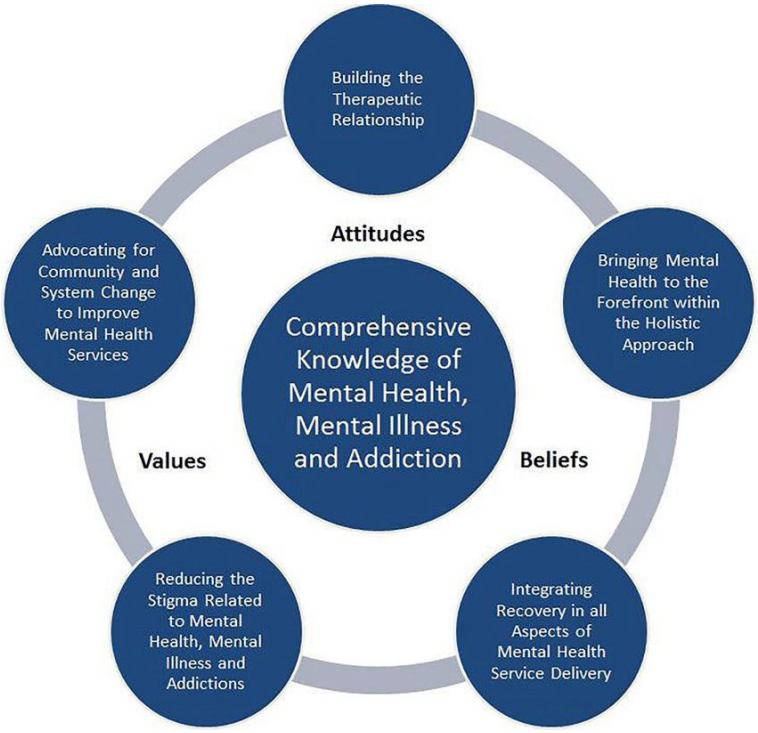

Fig 2: Unique contribution of psychiatric nursing **(**Tavares *et al*, 2021**)**

Despite preventive efforts, psychiatric crises can arise suddenly, requiring immediate intervention to prevent harm. Psychiatric nurses are essential members of crisis response teams, often working in emergency departments, mobile crisis units, and law enforcement collaborations (Balfour *et al*, 2022). Their expertise in mental health crisis management helps de-escalate situations that could otherwise result in violence or legal consequences. Psychiatric nurses stationed in emergency departments assess patients experiencing acute psychiatric distress, such as suicidal ideation, psychotic episodes, or severe agitation (Salani *et al*, 2021). Their role includes stabilizing patients through immediate therapeutic interventions, ensuring their safety, and coordinating with psychiatric facilities for further care. In mobile crisis response teams, psychiatric nurses provide on-site evaluations and support, reducing unnecessary hospitalizations and law enforcement involvement. A critical aspect of psychiatric nursing in crisis intervention is the use of de-escalation techniques. Psychiatric nurses are trained in verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that help calm agitated individuals, preventing aggressive behavior (James *et al*, 2023). Their ability to build trust and establish therapeutic relationships enables them to defuse potentially violent situations more effectively than traditional law enforcement approaches. Furthermore, psychiatric nurses collaborate closely with police departments to ensure that mental health cases are handled with care and that individuals in crisis receive appropriate medical attention rather than incarceration (Ahern, 2021; Preston *et al*, 2022).

Beyond crisis intervention, psychiatric nurses play a pivotal role in supporting the rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals recovering from mental health crises (Morganstein and Flynn, 2021). This is especially relevant for individuals transitioning out of psychiatric hospitals, correctional facilities, or long-term treatment programs. Successful reintegration into society requires ongoing mental health support, which psychiatric nurses provide through community-based programs. Community mental health programs led by psychiatric nurses focus on providing continuous care, including medication management, counseling, and social support (Deng *et al*, 2022). These programs help individuals maintain stability, reducing the likelihood of relapse or re-hospitalization. Psychiatric nurses also work with housing and employment services to assist individuals in rebuilding their lives post-crisis. Access to stable housing and job opportunities significantly reduces recidivism rates and enhances overall community safety (Marx *et al*, 2023). In addition to direct patient care, psychiatric nurses advocate for policy changes that support mental health rehabilitation initiatives. They collaborate with government agencies and nonprofit organizations to develop policies that promote mental health awareness, funding for community programs, and alternatives to incarceration for individuals with psychiatric disorders. By prioritizing rehabilitation over punitive measures, psychiatric nursing helps create a more inclusive and safe society.

Psychiatric nursing is a vital component of public safety, providing early intervention, crisis management, and rehabilitation services that prevent mental health conditions from escalating into security risks (Bury *et al*, 2022; Ellis and Korman, 2022). Through proactive screening and treatment, psychiatric nurses identify and manage mental health

disorders before they lead to public safety concerns. In crisis situations, their expertise in de-escalation and emergency response ensures that individuals receive the appropriate care rather than face punitive actions. Additionally, psychiatric nurses facilitate the reintegration of individuals recovering from mental health crises, promoting stability and reducing recidivism. Moving forward, increased investment in psychiatric nursing services and community mental health programs will be essential in strengthening public safety and national security (Carleton, 2021; Freeman, 2022).

2.2 Psychiatric nursing and policy advocacy for national security

Psychiatric nursing plays a critical role in shaping policies that address mental health as a fundamental aspect of national security. As mental illness increasingly impacts public safety, law enforcement, and military personnel, it is essential to integrate psychiatric care into national security strategies. By fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, reforming criminal justice policies, and improving mental health access in underserved populations, psychiatric nurses and policymakers can work together to enhance societal stability and security (Kois *et al*, 2021; Simes and Tichenor, 2022).

Mental health and national security are deeply interconnected, necessitating collaboration between psychiatric professionals and security agencies (Fusar-Poli *et al*, 2021). Many security threats, including radicalization, violence, and instability, have roots in untreated mental illness. Effective national security strategies must incorporate mental health services to identify and mitigate risks before they escalate. Interdisciplinary collaboration involves joint efforts between healthcare providers, law enforcement, military leaders, and policymakers to develop comprehensive strategies that address mental health concerns (Khan and Moazzam, 2022). Psychiatric nurses play a key role in these efforts by assessing mental health risks, providing crisis intervention, and supporting rehabilitation efforts as figure 3 explain the metal health advocacy (Campion *et al*, 2022). Collaborative initiatives, such as embedding psychiatric professionals within security institutions, can improve early detection and treatment of mental health issues among vulnerable populations (Wissow *et al*, 2021; Aked *et al*, 2021).

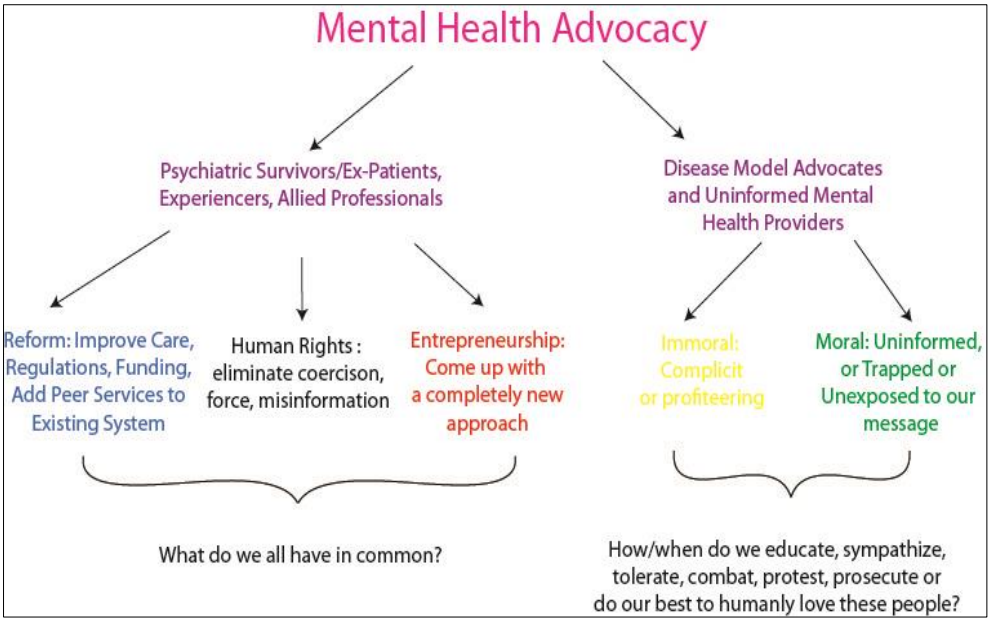

Fig 3: Types of Mental health advocacy (Campion *et al*, 2022)

Security personnel, including military service members, police officers, and emergency responders, frequently experience high levels of stress, trauma, and psychological strain (Easterbrook *et al*, 2022). Without adequate mental health support, these individuals are at increased risk for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, substance abuse, and suicide. Policymakers must implement robust mental health policies to protect those responsible for national security. Key policy initiatives should include; Routine mental health screenings for security personnel to detect early signs of psychological distress. Confidential counseling services to encourage security personnel to seek help without fear of stigma or career consequences (Wills *et al*, 2022). Resilience training programs to equip personnel with coping mechanisms for handling stress and trauma. Comprehensive reintegration programs for veterans and retired officers to prevent long-term mental health deterioration. By institutionalizing mental health policies within security forces, governments can enhance the psychological resilience of personnel, ensuring greater national stability and security.

The criminal justice system has become a de facto mental health institution, with a disproportionate number of individuals with psychiatric disorders being incarcerated rather than treated (Swanson *et al*, 2023; Valles, 2023). Traditional punitive approaches to crime often fail to address the root causes of mental illness, leading to cycles of reoffending and incarceration. Psychiatric nurses and mental health advocates play a crucial role in advocating for diversion programs, which focus on treatment rather than punishment. These programs direct individuals with mental illness toward psychiatric care instead of prison, helping to reduce recidivism rates and alleviate the burden on the justice system. Successful diversion models include community-based treatment programs, crisis intervention teams, and mobile mental health units that work in collaboration with

law enforcement. Mental health courts serve as an alternative to traditional judicial proceedings by offering specialized legal processes for individuals with psychiatric disorders (Sibley, 2021). These courts prioritize rehabilitation over incarceration, mandating mental health treatment as a condition for case resolution. Psychiatric nurses and mental health professionals serve as essential members of these courts, providing assessments, treatment recommendations, and ongoing care management. Additionally, correctional facilities should establish specialized psychiatric treatment units to provide care for incarcerated individuals with mental illness. These units should offer; Regular psychiatric evaluations to monitor inmate mental health conditions. Therapeutic programs focused on rehabilitation and skill-building. Post-release support services to prevent recidivism and facilitate community reintegration (Sapp, 2023). By implementing these reforms, governments can reduce the overrepresentation of individuals with mental illness in prisons and ensure they receive appropriate care.

Underserved populations, including low-income communities, rural areas, and marginalized groups, often experience limited access to mental health services (Alonzo and Popescu, 2021). This lack of care contributes to increased rates of untreated mental illness, homelessness, substance abuse, and crime factors that can pose significant security risks. Policy efforts should focus on reducing mental health disparities through; Increased funding for community mental health centers in high-risk areas. Expansion of telepsychiatry services to reach remote populations. Incentivizing mental health professionals to work in underserved regions through loan forgiveness programs and financial incentives. By addressing these disparities, governments can proactively reduce security threats while improving the overall well-being of communities (Mumford *et al*, 2023).

Psychiatric nurses are essential in bridging the gap between mental health care and public safety, particularly in areas with limited resources (Søvold *et al*, 2021). Expanding their roles in underserved communities can significantly improve early intervention and crisis management efforts. Key strategies for expansion include; Mobile mental health clinics, staffed by psychiatric nurses, to provide on-site care in remote and high-risk regions. Crisis intervention training for psychiatric nurses, enabling them to work alongside law enforcement in responding to mental health emergencies. Community education initiatives, led by psychiatric nurses, to promote mental health awareness and reduce stigma (Morgan *et al*, 2021). By investing in psychiatric nursing and mental health workforce development, policymakers can ensure that even the most vulnerable populations have access to essential psychiatric care. The intersection of psychiatric nursing and policy advocacy is vital in strengthening national security. Integrating mental health into security strategies, reforming criminal justice policies, and improving access to psychiatric care can mitigate risks associated with untreated mental illness. By fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, investing in mental health support for security personnel, and expanding psychiatric services to underserved populations, societies can enhance public safety and national stability (Lomax *et al*, 2022; Alegría *et al*, 2022). Policymakers, psychiatric nurses, and security agencies must work together to implement these critical reforms, ensuring a more secure and resilient future.

2.3 Challenges and future directions

Psychiatric nursing plays a crucial role in addressing mental health concerns that intersect with public safety and national security (Choflet *et al*, 2022). However, various barriers hinder its effectiveness, including stigma, resource constraints, and a shortage of psychiatric professionals. At the same time, innovations such as telepsychiatry and AI-driven risk assessment tools present new opportunities for improving psychiatric nursing's role in public safety. Strengthening this field requires targeted policy recommendations, including increased training and interdisciplinary collaboration between mental health professionals and security forces (Putri *et al*, 2021; Wiedermann *et al*, 2023).

One of the primary challenges facing psychiatric nursing in public safety is the pervasive stigma associated with mental health disorders. Mental illness is often misunderstood, and individuals experiencing psychiatric conditions may face discrimination in both healthcare and criminal justice settings (Thornicroft *et al*, 2022; Forstner, 2023). This stigma can lead to delayed treatment, underreporting of mental health symptoms, and reluctance among law enforcement and policymakers to prioritize mental health interventions. Additionally, there is a misconception that mental health issues and national security concerns are separate entities. In reality, untreated psychiatric conditions can contribute to social instability, violence, and even radicalization in extreme cases. Psychiatric nurses play a crucial role in bridging this gap by advocating for mental health as a core component of public safety strategies (Varcarolis and Fosbre, 2020). However, overcoming societal biases remains a significant challenge in ensuring that psychiatric nursing is recognized as an integral aspect of security and law enforcement initiatives.

Fig 4: Barriers to effective psychiatric nursing in public safety

Another major barrier is the global shortage of psychiatric nurses, which limits the capacity to provide adequate mental health services. Many healthcare systems, particularly in low-resource settings, struggle to recruit and retain psychiatric professionals due to high job stress, low wages, and insufficient institutional support (Ebuenyi *et al*, 2020).

This shortage results in inadequate mental health coverage, leaving many high-risk individuals without access to preventive or emergency psychiatric care. Furthermore, funding constraints impact the availability of psychiatric nursing programs, crisis intervention units, and community mental health initiatives. Governments often allocate more resources to law enforcement and incarceration rather than mental health services, despite the clear link between untreated mental illness and public safety risks (Ramezani *et al*, 2022; Kamin *et al*, 2022). Addressing these financial and workforce limitations is critical for strengthening psychiatric nursing's role in public safety.

Technological advancements offer promising solutions to some of the barriers in psychiatric nursing. Telepsychiatry, which involves remote mental health consultations via video conferencing, has emerged as a valuable tool for expanding psychiatric services, particularly in underserved areas (Hand, 2022; Evangelatos *et al*, 2022). Psychiatric nurses can use telepsychiatry to conduct mental health assessments, provide crisis intervention, and offer ongoing therapy to at-risk individuals. This approach improves accessibility and reduces the burden on emergency departments and correctional facilities. Beyond telepsychiatry, digital mental health solutions including mobile applications, chatbots, and virtual therapy platforms allow individuals to access psychiatric support anonymously, which can help mitigate stigma-related barriers (Koly *et al*, 2022; Nashwan *et al*, 2023). These technologies also enable psychiatric nurses to monitor patients remotely, track symptom progression, and intervene before a crisis escalates.

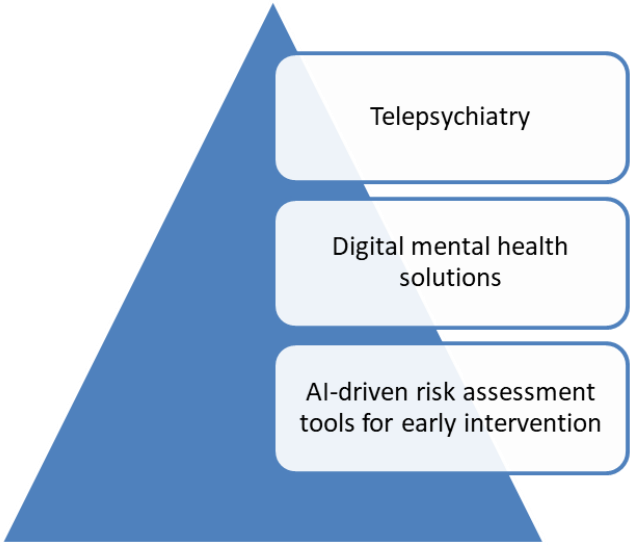

Fig 5: Innovations in psychiatric nursing for public safety

Artificial intelligence (AI) has the potential to enhance psychiatric nursing by providing data-driven insights into mental health risks (Dawoodbhoy *et al*, 2021). AI-driven risk assessment tools analyze patterns in patient behavior, medical history, and social determinants of health to identify individuals at high risk of psychiatric crises or violence. These predictive analytics can help psychiatric nurses prioritize interventions, allocate resources more efficiently, and provide personalized treatment plans. Moreover, AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants can offer initial mental health screenings, guide patients to appropriate services, and provide real-time support during crises (Dempere, 2023). While AI should not replace human psychiatric care, it can serve as a valuable tool for improving early detection and intervention efforts in public safety contexts.

To enhance psychiatric nursing's impact on public safety, there is a growing need for specialized training in forensic and crisis nursing. Forensic psychiatric nurses are trained to work with individuals involved in the criminal justice system, including those with a history of mental illness and violent behavior (Maguire *et al*, 2022; Kinghorn *et al*, 2023). These nurses play a critical role in evaluating competency to stand trial, providing court testimony, and developing rehabilitation plans for incarcerated individuals with psychiatric disorders. Crisis nursing training should also be expanded to equip psychiatric nurses with skills in emergency response, trauma-informed care, and de-escalation techniques. This training can help nurses collaborate more effectively with law enforcement officers in handling psychiatric emergencies, reducing the likelihood of violent confrontations and unnecessary incarcerations. Improving collaboration between psychiatric nurses and security forces is essential for addressing the mental health dimensions of public safety. Law enforcement officers frequently encounter individuals with untreated mental health conditions, yet many lacks the training to respond appropriately (Rohrer, 2021). Psychiatric nurses can bridge this gap by providing mental health education and crisis intervention training to police officers, correctional staff, and first responders. Additionally, integrating psychiatric nurses into law enforcement agencies and emergency response teams can improve outcomes in psychiatric crises. Expanding such initiatives can enhance public safety while ensuring that individuals with psychiatric conditions receive compassionate and effective care (Pfaff *et al*, 2021).

Psychiatric nursing is an essential but often underutilized component of public safety efforts. Despite its importance, the field faces significant challenges, including stigma, workforce shortages, and limited funding (Pedruzzi *et al*, 2021). However, advancements in telepsychiatry, digital mental health solutions, and AI-driven risk assessment tools offer new opportunities to enhance psychiatric nursing's role in public safety. Moving forward, strengthening forensic and crisis nursing training and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration between mental health professionals and security forces will be key to improving psychiatric care and promoting public safety. By addressing these challenges and embracing innovative approaches, psychiatric nursing can play a more significant role in preventing mental health crises, reducing crime rates, and ensuring a safer and healthier society (Bifarin *et al*, 2022; Happell *et al*, 2022).

3. Conclusion

Psychiatric nursing plays a crucial role in national security by addressing the intersection of mental health and public safety. This review highlighted key areas where psychiatric care and policy advocacy can contribute to a more secure society. First, integrating mental health into national security strategies is essential for preventing crises among security personnel and the broader population. Second, reforming criminal justice policies, including the establishment of diversion programs and mental health courts, can reduce the overrepresentation of individuals with mental illness in prisons. Lastly, expanding psychiatric services to underserved populations helps address disparities that

contribute to security risks, such as homelessness, substance abuse, and crime.

Psychiatric nurses are uniquely positioned to support national security efforts by identifying and managing mental health conditions that may lead to public safety concerns. Their expertise in crisis intervention, rehabilitation, and policy advocacy makes them valuable contributors to both healthcare and security sectors. By working alongside law enforcement, military personnel, and policymakers, psychiatric nurses can help create a more comprehensive and preventative approach to security challenges.

A strong call to action is necessary to ensure the integration of mental health into public safety policies. Governments and security agencies must prioritize mental health funding, expand training programs for psychiatric professionals in crisis intervention, and establish policies that promote early intervention and treatment. Additionally, interdisciplinary collaboration between healthcare providers, law enforcement, and policymakers should be institutionalized to create a holistic security framework. By recognizing mental health as a fundamental component of national security, societies can build more resilient communities, enhance public safety, and support the well-being of both security personnel and civilians.

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