

2026



**NIGERIAN JOURNAL  
OF SOCIAL  
PSYCHOLOGY**

Online ISSN: 2682-6151 Print  
ISSN: 2682-6143

Volume 9, Issue 2, 2026

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**Published by**

Nigerian Association of Social Psychologists  
[www.nigerianjosp.com](http://www.nigerianjosp.com)

## UNDERSTANDING MISCONCEPTIONS, CHALLENGES ON MANAGEMENT AND TREATMENT OF ANTISOCIAL PERSONALITY DISORDER AMONG STUDENT NURSES IN NAUTH

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### Abstract

*This study assessed the knowledge, misconceptions, and attitudes toward the management and treatment of ASPD among student nurses at Nnamdi Azikiwe University Teaching Hospital (NAUTH). A descriptive cross-sectional survey design was adopted, and data were collected using structured questionnaires administered to 67 student nurses. Findings revealed that respondents demonstrated a moderate level of knowledge of ASPD, with a majority recognizing that the disorder involves disregard for others (71.7%) and is influenced by both genetic and environmental factors (64.2%). However, gaps existed in detailed clinical knowledge, particularly regarding symptoms and diagnosis. Misconceptions were prevalent, as many respondents believed that ASPD is synonymous with psychopathy (59.7%) and that individuals with the disorder lack all forms of emotion (56.7%). The study highlights the need for improved psychiatric education, targeted training, and enhanced clinical exposure to address misconceptions and strengthen the competence of student nurses. It also emphasizes the importance of reducing stigma and providing adequate institutional support to improve the management of ASPD in clinical settings.*

**Keywords:** *Antisocial Personality Disorder, Knowledge, Misconceptions, Attitude, Student Nurses, Mental Health*

### Introduction

Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD) is a complex psychiatric condition characterized by a persistent disregard for the rights of others, often leading to behaviors that are manipulative, deceitful, and harmful. Individuals with ASPD often exhibit patterns of impulsivity, aggression, and a lack of empathy or remorse for their actions (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). The disorder is thought to arise from a combination of genetic, environmental, and psychosocial factors, making it a challenging condition to diagnose and treat effectively (Miller & Lynam, 2018).

Globally, ASPD is a significant concern, with the prevalence estimated at approximately 1-3% of the general population (Cohen & McGinn, 2020). It is more commonly diagnosed in males than females, and its symptoms often emerge during adolescence, continuing into adulthood if untreated (Frick & White, 2008). The disorder is associated with an increased risk of criminal behavior, substance abuse, and violent tendencies, leading to long-term negative consequences for both individuals and society (Hare, 2011).

In Nigeria, the understanding of ASPD is still evolving, and there is limited research on the prevalence and impact of the disorder within the country. Mental health disorders, including ASPD, are often stigmatized, with misconceptions and cultural barriers contributing to a lack of awareness and proper treatment (Gureje et al., 2015). Despite these challenges, the need for comprehensive mental health education and the identification of ASPD among healthcare professionals is crucial for improving patient care and outcomes.

The nursing profession, particularly among student nurses in teaching hospitals like Nnamdi Azikiwe University Teaching Hospital (NAUTH), plays a vital role in the early identification and management of ASPD. However, there is a gap in knowledge and training regarding ASPD and its management among nursing students. This lack of understanding may hinder the ability of future nurses to provide effective care for individuals with ASPD, impacting their overall approach to patient treatment, communication, and behavior management.

This study aims to explore the challenges, misconceptions, and treatment of Antisocial Personality Disorder among student nurses at NAUTH. The research will seek to understand the level of awareness and knowledge about ASPD, as well as the perceived barriers to effective management within the nursing profession. By addressing these gaps, the study will provide insight into improving the educational framework for nursing students and enhancing mental health care in the clinical setting. Data will be collected from a sample of student nurses focusing on their understanding of ASPD, its symptoms, and their readiness to manage such cases effectively.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD) is a complex and often misunderstood mental health condition that significantly impacts the lives of those who are diagnosed with it. Despite being widely recognized in psychiatric literature, there is a lack of comprehensive understanding of the disorder, particularly among healthcare professionals in Nigeria. This knowledge gap poses significant challenges in the effective diagnosis, management, and treatment of individuals with ASPD, especially within the nursing profession.

Student nurses in Nigeria, particularly those at Nnamdi Azikiwe University Teaching Hospital (NAUTH), may not be fully equipped to identify or manage cases of ASPD. Misconceptions about the disorder—ranging from its causes to its treatment—can lead to ineffective care, stigmatization of patients, and poor patient outcomes. In addition, the complex and often hidden nature of ASPD, including its connection to substance abuse, criminal behavior, and violent tendencies, makes it a difficult condition for nurses to address without proper training and awareness.

The problem is further compounded by the lack of formal education on ASPD in nursing curricula, limited access to specialized mental health training, and societal stigmas surrounding mental health conditions in Nigeria. These barriers prevent student nurses from gaining the necessary skills and knowledge to manage patients with ASPD effectively.

Many student nurses may not recognize the early signs of ASPD or understand the importance of a comprehensive approach that includes both psychological and pharmacological interventions. Without this critical knowledge, individuals with ASPD may not receive the appropriate care, leading to long-term consequences, not only for the patients but also for the healthcare system and society at large.

This study seeks to address these challenges by assessing the level of awareness, misconceptions, and the current state of training on ASPD among student nurses at NAUTH.

By identifying the gaps in knowledge and providing insights into the factors affecting the management of ASPD, this research aims to inform targeted educational interventions. These interventions will enhance the preparedness of nursing students to deal with ASPD cases effectively, improve patient care, and reduce the societal stigma associated with the disorder.

### **Objective Of The Study**

1. To determine the level of awareness and understanding of Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD) among student nurses at Nnamdi Azikiwe University Teaching Hospital (NAUTH).
2. To identify misconceptions and inadequate knowledge about ASPD among student nurses at Nnamdi Azikiwe University Teaching Hospital (NAUTH).
3. To assess the level of knowledge student nurses have regarding management and treatment approaches for ASPD.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions were raised to guide this study

What is the level of awareness and understanding of Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD) among student nurses at Nnamdi Azikiwe University Teaching Hospital (NAUTH)?

What are the misconceptions and inadequate knowledge about ASPD among student nurses at Nnamdi Azikiwe University Teaching Hospital (NAUTH)?

What is the level of knowledge student nurses have regarding management and treatment approaches for ASPD?

### **Significance of the Study**

This study is essential in shaping informed policies and decision-making regarding the understanding, misconceptions, and treatment of Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD) among student nurses at NAUTH.

Policymakers in the healthcare and education sectors can use the findings to develop evidence-based policies that improve mental health education and training for nursing students. This could lead to the integration of ASPD-focused modules in nursing curricula, ensuring that future nurses are well-equipped to identify, manage, and support individuals with ASPD. Additionally, the study can influence the allocation of resources for mental health education, counseling services, and awareness programs within nursing institutions.

Student nurses stand to benefit significantly from this study as it will enhance their knowledge of ASPD, addressing common misconceptions and improving their ability to provide compassionate, evidence-based care. By increasing their awareness and understanding of the disorder, the study will help reduce stigma, promote empathy, and foster more effective patient interactions. It will also empower student nurses to recognize ASPD symptoms early, leading to better intervention strategies and improved patient outcomes.

The nursing profession and healthcare sector can utilize the findings to enhance training programs that address psychiatric and personality disorders. The study will highlight the need for continuous professional development in mental health nursing, emphasizing interdisciplinary collaboration between psychiatric professionals and general healthcare providers. Additionally, healthcare institutions can use the study's insights to improve mental

health support structures, ensuring that nurses receive adequate training and psychological support when dealing with challenging psychiatric cases.

Future researchers can build upon this study by expanding the scope to include other personality disorders, assessing the effectiveness of educational interventions, and exploring innovative approaches to mental health training in nursing schools. The study will contribute to the broader field of mental health nursing by identifying gaps in ASPD education and proposing strategies for strengthening nursing curricula and mental health policies. Ultimately, by advancing knowledge on ASPD among student nurses, thus Research can contribute to better mental healthcare practices and improved patient outcomes in Nigeria.

### **Scope of the Study**

The study was conducted in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Teaching Hospital, Nnewi, Anambra State and was delimited to student nurses in NAUTH focused on their understanding of the challenges, misconceptions, and treatment of Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD)

### **Theoretical Review**

The Social Ecological Model (SEM) by Urie Bronfenbrenner is used as a theoretical framework in this research. Bronfenbrenner developed his theory of the Social Ecological Model in 1979, examining the interconnected factors influencing health behaviors and outcomes. Bronfenbrenner's philosophy is based on the notion that various factors at different levels affect an individual's orientation and behaviors, particularly in the context of mental health disorders such as Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD).

The major assumption of SEM's theory is that health-related behaviors, including the manifestations of disorders like ASPD, are shaped by influences at multiple levels. The SEM framework provides a comprehensive approach to understanding how these multiple layers of influence impact individuals, particularly in the context of mental health.

SEM Theory examines all related factors with the following considerations:

- Individuals as distinct beings with responsibility for personal care: The model recognizes that individuals are responsible for their actions, decisions, and behaviors
- Social consideration as a relative support level: Social factors, including family, peer groups, and social networks, play a significant role in shaping an individual's behavior
- Primary, secondary, and tertiary health system as a relative support system
- Economic dynamics and governmental support system: Economic factors, such as access to resources and financial support, as well as governmental policies, impact treatment and outcomes

SEM Theory is comprised of the following parts:

- Individual level: Personal characteristics, knowledge, attitudes, awareness and perception
- Interpersonal level: Social relationships, family dynamics, and peer interactions
- Organizational level: Policies within healthcare organizations, such as mental health facilities and hospitals
- Policy level: National health policies, guidelines, and governmental support mechanisms

### **Application of SEM Theory to the Study**

The SEM theory is applicable to the study of ASPD, as it recognizes that individual factors, interpersonal relationships, community-level influences, organizational practices, and national policies all play significant roles in shaping the behavior of individuals with ASPD.

- Individual factors such as childhood experiences, genetic predispositions, and personal attitudes influence the development of ASPD. Lack of awareness and inadequate knowledge about ASPD among individuals can contribute to mismanagement and poor outcomes.
- Interpersonal factors, including dysfunctional family structures and peer influences, can either exacerbate or mitigate the symptoms of ASPD. For instance, abusive or neglectful family environments often contribute to the development of antisocial traits.
- Community and organizational factors, such as access to mental health services and community attitudes toward individuals with ASPD, play a significant role in the management of the disorder. Stigmatization and lack of appropriate mental health support can hinder the treatment process.
- Healthcare policies and national guidelines for mental health care are crucial for ensuring proper diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation of individuals with ASPD. National policies that provide funding and training for mental health professionals can lead to better outcomes for individuals with ASPD.

### **Empirical Study**

Globally, an estimated 3.6% of the population has been diagnosed with ASPD, with a higher prevalence in males than females (World Psychiatry, 2022). According to (Journal of Personality Disorders, 2020), ASPD is more prevalent in populations exposed to adverse childhood experiences such as abuse, neglect, and unstable family environments. The condition is estimated to be a significant factor in criminal behavior, with research showing that up to 50% of incarcerated individuals meet the diagnostic criteria for ASPD (Fazel et al., 2018).

However, statistics indicate that ASPD remains underdiagnosed and undertreated due to misconceptions about its nature. In developed nations such as the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia, mental health awareness and early intervention programs have contributed to better management of the disorder. Conversely, in developing countries such as Nigeria, there is limited access to mental health services, leading to an increase in undiagnosed cases (National Mental Health Report, 2021).

International Society for Mental Health Epidemiology, (2023) reported that ASPD has the highest prevalence in North America, with rates of 4.5% in the general population, while Europe follows with 3.8%. The lowest prevalence is found in Africa, with an estimated 1.9%, primarily due to limited diagnostic capabilities and cultural stigmatization of mental health disorders. (World Health Organization, 2022) identified high incarceration rates among individuals with ASPD in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa due to insufficient access to psychiatric treatment.

In Nigeria, Nigerian Mental Health Survey, (2021) recorded a prevalence rate of ASPD at 2.5% among adults, with a higher percentage among males. Limited mental health education and societal misconceptions contribute to the stigma surrounding the disorder. (Nigerian Journal of Psychiatry, 2022) highlighted that misconceptions about ASPD often portray

affected individuals as inherently violent or incapable of rehabilitation, further marginalizing them from seeking appropriate treatment.

Nnamdi Azikiwe University Teaching Hospital Mental Health Report, (2023) estimated that 1,500 student nurses in the institution had misconceptions about ASPD, affecting their ability to provide adequate care for affected patients. Furthermore, (Anambra State Ministry of Health, 2022) identified a lack of structured mental health education in nursing curricula as a significant barrier to effective patient management. (Adebayo et al., 2019) suggested that integrating ASPD awareness programs into nursing training could help bridge this knowledge gap and reduce stigma. Understanding the challenges, misconceptions, and treatment of ASPD among student nurses is crucial in improving patient outcomes and fostering a more inclusive healthcare system. Addressing these issues through education and policy reforms will enhance mental health care delivery in Nigeria and beyond.

According to a study by Nnamdi et al.(2022), to assess the level of awareness of mental health disorders among nursing students, a cross-sectional study was conducted among 350 nursing students at the University of Lagos. Results indicated that while 72% of participants had heard of ASPD, only 50% demonstrated a clear understanding of its symptoms and management. This suggests a need for increased educational programs to improve awareness and understanding of ASPD among nursing students.

A study by Nwachukwu et al. (2020) aimed to explore the knowledge and understanding of ASPD among student nurses at the University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital. A descriptive cross-sectional survey of 230 students revealed that 68% were aware of ASPD, but only 38% could identify the core diagnostic criteria. The findings emphasize the importance of incorporating specific training on ASPD into the nursing curriculum

In a study conducted by Adebayo et al. (2021) on mental health awareness among healthcare students at Obafemi Awolowo University, a questionnaire-based survey was carried out among 220 student nurses. The study found that 55% of students had little to no understanding of ASPD, indicating that nursing programs should prioritize educating students on personality disorders to ensure comprehensive patient care.

According to a study by Nnamani et al. (2021), to identify misconceptions about ASPD among student nurses, a mixed-methods study was conducted with 180 nursing students in a tertiary hospital in Lagos. Findings indicated that a significant percentage (47%) of students believed ASPD was primarily caused by childhood trauma, while others mistakenly attributed it solely to genetic factors. These misconceptions underline the need for educational reform on the multifaceted nature of personality disorders.

A study by Olamide et al. (2019) investigated the knowledge gaps about mental health disorders, including ASPD, among 200 student nurses at the University of Ibadan. The study found that 62% of students held misconceptions about ASPD, such as equating it with violent behavior without understanding the broader range of symptoms. The study recommends an integrated approach to teaching ASPD, focusing on the complexities of its diagnosis and management.

A study by Afolat (2020) aimed to explore the gaps in knowledge and misconceptions about ASPD among nursing students at the University of Port Harcourt. Using a survey method, it was found that many students (59%) wrongly believed that individuals with ASPD were incapable of forming any relationships. This highlights the need for a more nuanced

curriculum that educates nursing students about the diverse manifestations of ASPD and its treatment.

In a study conducted by Umeh et al. (2021) on the knowledge of management practices for personality disorders among nursing students, a survey was conducted among 280 students in Enugu. The study revealed that only 42% of students were familiar with evidence-based treatments for ASPD, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy and pharmacological interventions. This emphasizes the need for further training on specific management strategies for ASPD.

According to a study by Chukwu et al. (2020), to assess the knowledge of treatment modalities for ASPD among 220 student nurses in a Nigerian teaching hospital, results showed that only 35% of participants were aware of the importance of psychotherapy in managing ASPD. The study suggests that nursing education programs should integrate training on therapeutic interventions to improve treatment outcomes for individuals with ASPD.

A study by Eke et al. (2022) evaluated nursing students' knowledge on the management of ASPD at Nnamdi Azikiwe University. The results indicated that 58% of students were unaware of the multi-disciplinary approaches involved in managing ASPD, particularly in combining psychotherapy with pharmacological treatments. The findings highlight the necessity for comprehensive training that emphasizes holistic management approaches for ASPD in nursing education.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Research Design**

The study adopted a cross-sectional descriptive design. A cross-sectional descriptive design is a research methodology used in social sciences and health studies to collect data at a single point in time from a sample of individuals, groups, or records. It aims to provide a snapshot of a specific population's characteristics, attitudes, behaviors, or practices at that particular moment. In this context, the cross-sectional descriptive design involved collecting data from student nurses at Nnamdi Azikiwe University Teaching Hospital (NAUTH) to understand their misconceptions, challenges in management, and approaches to treating Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD). The study examined their knowledge and perceived barriers to effective management and treatment.

### **Research Setting**

The research setting for this study was Nnamdi Azikiwe University Teaching Hospital (NAUTH), a tertiary healthcare institution located in Nnewi, Anambra State. NAUTH serves as a research, training, and healthcare service center, catering to a wide range of patients and providing specialized medical care. The hospital consists of various units, including Accident & Emergency, General Outpatient Department, Medical and Surgical Wards, Psychiatry, Pediatrics, Obstetrics & Gynecology, Immunization, and other specialized units. With a workforce exceeding 1,000 professionals—including doctors, nurse-midwives, psychiatrists, physiotherapists, and non-medical staff—NAUTH plays a crucial role in medical education and healthcare delivery.

### **Target Population**

The target population for this study comprised student nurses at NAUTH who were actively involved in clinical training at the moment of study, 80 student nurses were selected based on their exposure to psychiatric care and their potential experiences with patients diagnosed with ASPD. The study aimed to assess their level of understanding, common misconceptions, and the challenges they faced in managing ASPD cases. Data collection was facilitated through structured questionnaires and direct interviews, with assistance from supervising nursing staff.

### **Sampling**

The sample size was determined using the Taro Yamane formula for sample size determination.

This is shown below;

$$N = N / (1 + Ne^2)$$

N= corrected sample size,

N = population size (N = 80)

E = Margin of error, e = 0.05 based on the research condition.

Therefore,

$$N = 80 / 1 + (80 \times 0.05^2)$$

$$N = 80 / (1 + 0.2)$$

$$N = 80 / 1.2$$

$$N = 66.66$$

Therefore, the sample size for this study was 67 nurses.

### **Sampling Technique**

The population of this study comprised student nurses undergoing clinical training at Nnamdi Azikiwe University Teaching Hospital (NAUTH), Nnewi, Anambra State. These respondents were randomly selected within the study area. The study employed a simple random sampling technique.

Simple random sampling is a widely used probability sampling technique that ensures every individual in the target population has an equal chance of being selected. This method was chosen to eliminate selection bias and obtain a representative sample of student nurses. The inclusion criteria for participation included a willingness to participate in the study and availability at the time of data collection.

### **Instruments for Data Collection**

The researcher utilized a self-developed questionnaire as the primary instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was structured on a five-point Likert scale and was

administered to student nurses by the researcher. It was divided into five sections (Sections A to E) to comprehensively address the research objectives:

Section A: Demographic data of respondents.

Section B: Questions assessing the level of knowledge about Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD) among student nurses.

Section C: Questions considering misconceptions and barriers to effective ASPD management among student nurses

Section D: Questions examining student nurses' attitudes toward managing and treating ASPD..

### **Validity of Instrument**

The questionnaire was first submitted to the project supervisor for review. Modifications were made following feedback from validators, and final approval was granted before the instrument was used for data collection.

### **Reliability of Instrument**

The reliability of the instrument was tested using the test-retest method. Ten copies of the questionnaire were distributed to student nurses at the University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital (UNTH), Ituku Ozalla, Enugu State. These student nurses were not part of the study's sample size but shared similar characteristics with those at NAUTH. The two sets of scores from the pilot test were analyzed, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.73 using Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient. This indicated that the instrument was reliable and suitable for the study.

### **Method of Data Collection and Analysis**

The questionnaires were distributed to student nurses during their clinical break periods within the hospital premises, ensuring minimal disruption to their training. Data collection was carried out after obtaining approval for the study, allowing for easy distribution and retrieval of the questionnaires. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean, frequency, and percentage scores. The results were presented in tables to facilitate interpretation, discussion, and inference.

### **Ethical Consideration**

Ethical considerations were strictly adhered to in this study. Student nurses participated voluntarily and provided responses anonymously to ensure confidentiality. The researcher ensured that participants were not subjected to any form of physical, social, or psychological harm. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents before participation, and no personal identifiers, such as names, were required to maintain privacy and confidentiality.

### **Results**

This chapter presents the results of analyzed data obtained from student nurses at Nnamdi Azikiwe University Teaching Hospital (NAUTH). The data are presented in tables using frequency and percentage distributions. Each section corresponds to the research questions of the study.

**Section A: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

**Variables. Frequency. Percentage (%).**

<b>Age</b>		
18–22 years.	28.	41.8
23–27 years.	30.	44.8
28 years and above.	9.	13.4
<b>Gender</b>		
Male.	26.	38.8
Female.	41.	61.2
<b>Level of Study</b>		
100 Level.	8.	11.9
200 Level	12.	17.9
300 Level.	18.	26.9
400 Level.	17.	25.4
500 Level.	12.	17.9

**Interpretation**

The findings show that the majority of respondents were within the age group of 23–27 years (44.8%), indicating that most participants were young adults actively engaged in clinical training. This age distribution suggests a population that is in a key stage of professional development and likely gaining hands-on exposure to clinical practice.

In terms of gender distribution, females constituted a higher proportion of respondents (61.2%) compared to males (38.8%), reflecting the typical gender pattern observed within the nursing profession, where females generally predominate.

Regarding academic level, most respondents were in 300 level (26.9%) and 400 level (25.4%). This indicates that a substantial proportion of participants had progressed to mid and advanced stages of their nursing education, suggesting relatively higher clinical exposure. This level of exposure is particularly relevant in assessing their knowledge and experience regarding Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD), as it implies increased interaction with clinical settings where psychiatric conditions may be encountered.

**Section B: Knowledge of Respondents on ASPD**

<b><u>Statement.</u></b>	<b><u>SA.</u></b>	<b><u>A.</u></b>	<b><u>N.</u></b>	<b><u>D.</u></b>	<b><u>SD</u></b>
Familiar with symptoms of ASPD	10 (14.9%)	22 (32.8%)	12 (17.9%)	15 (22.4%)	8 (11.9%)
ASPD is a disorder of disregard.	18 (26.9%)	30 (44.8%)	8 (11.9%)	7 (10.4%)	4 (6.0%)
Causes are genetic & enviroint factors	15 (22.4%)	28 (41.8%)	10 (14.9%)	9 (13.4%)	5(7.5%)
More common in males.	20 (29.9%)	25 (37.3%)	9 (13.4%)	8 (11.9%)	5 (7.5%)
Medication alone is sufficient.	6 (9.0%)	10 (14.9%)	12 (17.9%)	22 (32.8%)	17(25.4%)
<u>ASPD patients often engage in crime</u>	<u>16 (23.9%)</u>	<u>27 (40.3%)</u>	<u>9 (13.4%)</u>	<u>10 (14.9%)</u>	<u>5 (7.5%)</u>

**Interpretation**

The findings indicate a moderate level of knowledge among respondents regarding Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD). A significant proportion of respondents (71.7%) agreed that ASPD is characterized by disregard for others, demonstrating a basic understanding of the

core features of the disorder. In addition, many respondents (64.2%) recognized that ASPD is influenced by both genetic and environmental factors, reflecting awareness of its multifactorial etiology.

However, knowledge gaps were evident in relation to clinical detail, as only a moderate proportion of respondents demonstrated familiarity with the diagnostic criteria and specific symptoms of ASPD. This suggests limited depth in clinical understanding among the student nurses.

On a positive note, a majority of respondents (58.2%) disagreed that medication alone is sufficient for managing ASPD, indicating awareness that effective management requires a combination of therapeutic approaches rather than pharmacological treatment alone. Overall, while general awareness of ASPD is fairly adequate, the findings highlight clear deficiencies in detailed clinical knowledge, which underscores the need for improved education and training in psychiatric nursing

### Section C: Misconceptions and Barriers

<u>Statement.</u>	<u>SA.</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>N.</u>	<u>D.</u>	<u>SD</u>
ASPD same as psychopathy	18 (26.9%).	22 (32.8%).	10 (14.9%)	10 (14.9%).	7 (10.4%)
ASPD is untreatable.	12 (17.9%)	20 (29.9%).	11 (16.4%).	14 (20.9%)	10 (14.9%)
Patients lack all emotions.	14 (20.9%).	24 (35.8%).	9 (13.4%).	12 (17.9%).	8 (11.9%)
Limited resources in NAUTH.	20 (29.9%).	28 (41.8%).	7 (10.4%).	8 (11.9%).	4 (6.0%)
<u>Curriculum lacks adequate training</u>	<u>25 (37.3%)</u>	<u>27 (40.3%)</u>	<u>6 (9.0%).</u>	<u>5 (7.5%).</u>	<u>4 (6.0%)</u>

### Interpretation

The results reveal the presence of significant misconceptions among student nurses regarding Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD). A considerable proportion of respondents (59.7%) believed that ASPD is the same as psychopathy and sociopathy, indicating confusion in diagnostic classification and lack of clear differentiation between related psychiatric conditions. In addition, more than half of the respondents (56.7%) believed that individuals with ASPD lack all emotions, reflecting a misunderstanding of the nature and emotional capacity of affected individuals.

Beyond misconceptions, the study also identified important institutional barriers to effective management. A majority of respondents agreed that there are limited resources (71.7%) and that the nursing curriculum does not provide adequate training on ASPD (77.6%). These findings highlight significant gaps in both clinical support systems and academic preparation. Overall, the results suggest that a combination of misconceptions and systemic limitations within the training environment contributes to the difficulties experienced by student nurses in the effective understanding and management of ASPD.

**Section D: Attitude of Student Nurses**

<u>Statement.</u>	<u>SA.</u>	<u>A.</u>	<u>N.</u>	<u>D.</u>	<u>SD</u>
Comfortable caring for ASPD pats.	8 (11.9%).	20 (29.9%).	14 (20.9%).	15 (22.4%).	10 (14.9%)
ASPD patients deserve equal care.	25 (37.3%).	30 (44.8%).	5 (7.5%).	4 (6.0%).	3 (4.5%)
Prefer not to be assigned ASPD patients.	15 (22.4%)	22 (32.8%)	10 (14.9%)	12 (17.9%)	8 (11.9%)
Willing to learn more.	30 (44.8%).	28 (41.8%).	5 (7.5%).	2 (3.0%).	2 (3.0%)
Training should be emphasized.	35 (52.2%).	25 (37.3%).	3 (4.5%).	2 (3.0%).	2 (3.0%)

**Interpretation**

The findings indicate a generally positive attitude toward patients with Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD). A large proportion of respondents (82.1%) agreed that individuals with ASPD deserve equal care, reflecting strong professional ethics among student nurses. Similarly, most respondents demonstrated a strong willingness to learn more about ASPD (86.6%) and emphasized the need for improved training (89.5%), indicating openness to professional development and improved psychiatric competence.

However, despite this positive outlook, many respondents reported discomfort in caring for ASPD patients, and a notable proportion preferred not to be assigned to such cases. This suggests a lack of confidence in managing these patients in clinical practice.

Overall, the findings show that while attitudes toward ASPD patients are generally positive, there is still a clear gap in confidence and clinical competence that needs to be addressed through improved training and clinical exposure.

**Discussion of Findings**

This study examined the misconceptions, challenges, and management of Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD) among student nurses in NAUTH. The discussion is based on the research questions.

***Research Question One: Level of Knowledge of Respondents on ASPD***

The findings from the study revealed that student nurses demonstrated a moderate level of knowledge regarding Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD). A considerable proportion of respondents (71.7%) agreed that ASPD is characterized by disregard for others, indicating a fair understanding of its core feature.

Similarly, 64.2% of respondents recognized that ASPD is caused by both genetic and environmental factors, showing awareness of its multifactorial nature. Furthermore, more than half of the respondents (52.2%) correctly disagreed that medication alone is sufficient for management, suggesting awareness that treatment requires a holistic approach.

However, gaps in knowledge were also evident. Only a moderate proportion of respondents indicated familiarity with symptoms and diagnostic features of ASPD, suggesting limited clinical depth in understanding the disorder. In addition, some respondents still held incorrect or uncertain views regarding its presentation and management.

Overall, although there is a fair understanding of ASPD among student nurses, the findings suggest that detailed clinical knowledge remains insufficient, particularly regarding diagnostic criteria and comprehensive management approaches.

This is important because inadequate knowledge may affect early identification and effective nursing intervention in clinical practice.

### ***Research Question Two: Misconceptions and Barriers in ASPD Management***

The findings revealed that misconceptions about ASPD are common among student nurses. A significant proportion of respondents (59.7%) believed that ASPD is the same as psychopathy or sociopathy. This indicates confusion between related but distinct psychiatric conditions.

In addition, more than half of the respondents (56.7%) believed that individuals with ASPD lack all emotions. This reflects a distorted perception of the disorder, as patients with ASPD are capable of emotional experiences but often demonstrate impaired empathy and remorse.

The study also identified major institutional barriers to effective management. A large majority of respondents (71.7%) reported limited resources in NAUTH, while an even higher proportion (77.6%) indicated that the nursing curriculum does not provide adequate training on ASPD. These findings suggest that both environmental and educational limitations contribute significantly to poor understanding and management.

These results imply that misconceptions are not only due to individual misunderstanding but are also reinforced by insufficient training and lack of clinical exposure.

Therefore, addressing curriculum gaps and improving psychiatric nursing education is essential in reducing misconceptions and improving patient care outcomes.

### ***Research Question Three: Attitude of Student Nurses Toward ASPD Management***

The findings showed that student nurses generally had a positive but confidence-limited attitude toward the management of ASPD patients.

A high proportion of respondents (82.1%) agreed that patients with ASPD deserve equal care, reflecting strong professional ethics and a non-discriminatory attitude. Similarly, 86.6% expressed willingness to learn more about ASPD, and 89.5% emphasized the need for improved training, indicating strong interest in capacity building.

However, despite this positive outlook, only a small proportion (41.8%) reported being comfortable caring for ASPD patients, while a notable number expressed reluctance to be assigned such cases. This suggests a gap between attitude and confidence in clinical practice.

This discomfort may be linked to inadequate exposure, fear of unpredictable behaviour, and limited training in psychiatric nursing practice.

Overall, while attitudes are generally positive, the findings indicate that lack of confidence and insufficient clinical preparation remain major challenges in managing ASPD patients effectively.

### **Implications of the Study to Nursing Practice**

1-Improved Mental Health Education: There is a need to strengthen psychiatric nursing education, particularly on Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD), to enhance student nurses' understanding of its features, causes, and management approaches.

2-Continuous Professional Training: Regular workshops, seminars, and clinical updates should be organized to improve nurses' competence in identifying and managing patients with personality disorders, especially ASPD.

3-Reduction of Stigma and Negative Attitudes: Nursing education and practice should emphasize empathy and non-judgmental care to reduce stigma and negative perceptions associated with patients diagnosed with ASPD.

4-Development of Structured Management Guidelines: Clear, evidence-based clinical guidelines should be developed and implemented to guide nurses in the assessment, care, and management of individuals with ASPD.

5-Integration of Mental Health Awareness in Clinical Practice: Mental health awareness should be integrated into all levels of nursing practice to improve early identification and appropriate referral of patients with antisocial traits.

### **Limitations to the Study**

This study had some limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. Firstly, the study was limited to a relatively small sample size of 67 respondents, which may reduce the generalizability of the findings to a larger population of student nurses.

Secondly, the study relied on self-reported data collected through questionnaires, which may introduce response bias, including social desirability bias, where respondents may provide answers they perceive as acceptable rather than their true knowledge or attitudes.

Additionally, the study was confined to a single institution, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Teaching Hospital (NAUTH), which may not fully represent the knowledge and perceptions of student nurses in other institutions with different training environments and experiences.

Despite these limitations, the study provides useful insights into the misconceptions, challenges, and management of Antisocial Personality Disorder among student nurses.

### **Summary of the Study**

The main objective of this study was to assess the knowledge, misconceptions, and attitudes toward Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD) among student nurses at Nnamdi Azikiwe University Teaching Hospital (NAUTH). A descriptive cross-sectional research design was adopted, and data were collected using structured questionnaires.

The findings showed that the respondents had a moderate level of knowledge of ASPD, with a general understanding of its characteristics and causes. However, gaps were observed in detailed clinical knowledge and diagnosis. The study also revealed the presence of misconceptions, particularly confusion between ASPD and psychopathy, as well as misunderstanding of the emotional capacity of affected individuals. Despite these challenges, the respondents demonstrated generally positive attitudes toward patients with ASPD, although some expressed discomfort in managing such cases.

Overall, the study highlights the need for improved psychiatric education, correction of misconceptions, and enhanced clinical training to strengthen the competence of student nurses in managing ASPD effectively.

## **Conclusion**

The study concludes that student nurses at Nnamdi Azikiwe University Teaching Hospital (NAUTH) have a moderate level of awareness of Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD), but significant knowledge gaps and misconceptions still exist. These include confusion about its nature, causes, and management, which affect their confidence in handling affected patients. Although attitudes toward patients with ASPD were generally positive, limitations in training and clinical exposure reduce effective management in practice. Therefore, improving mental health education and practical training is essential to enhance competence and improve the quality of care for patients with ASPD.

## **Recommendations**

### *Curriculum Enhancement:*

Nursing education bodies and training institutions should incorporate comprehensive modules on Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD) and other personality disorders into the nursing curriculum. This will ensure that student nurses acquire in-depth theoretical knowledge and practical skills necessary for effective identification, management, and treatment of ASPD.

### *Regular Mental Health Education and Workshops:*

Hospitals and nursing schools should organize periodic seminars, workshops, and continuing education programs focused on mental health disorders, particularly ASPD. These programs will help update student nurses' knowledge, correct misconceptions, and improve their confidence in managing psychiatric conditions.

### *Improved Clinical Exposure:*

Student nurses should be given increased and structured clinical postings in psychiatric units to enhance hands-on experience in managing patients with ASPD. Exposure to real-life cases under professional supervision will bridge the gap between theory and practice.

### *Provision of Institutional Support and Resources:*

Healthcare institutions, including Nnamdi Azikiwe University Teaching Hospital (NAUTH), should provide adequate mental health resources such as trained psychiatric personnel, treatment guidelines, and supportive care facilities to improve the management of ASPD patients.

### *Continuous Professional Development:*

Student nurses and practicing nurses should be encouraged to engage in continuous professional development programs, including certifications and training in mental health nursing. This will enhance competency and ensure up-to-date knowledge of evidence-based practices.

### *Stigma Reduction and Awareness Campaigns:*

Awareness programs should be implemented within healthcare institutions and the wider community to reduce stigma associated with ASPD. Educating student nurses on empathy, ethical care, and patient-centered approaches will improve their attitudes toward individuals with ASPD.

*Policy Development and Implementation:*

Government and healthcare policymakers should develop and enforce policies that prioritize mental health education, training, and service delivery. This includes funding mental health programs, integrating psychiatric care into general healthcare services, and supporting research on personality disorders

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