

## **ABSTRACT**

### **Background**

Aggression may be characterized as a psychological condition, an aggressive physical or verbal act, or behavior that causes property damage or personal injury to others. Types of aggression include; verbal aggression, aggression towards property, self-harm/auto-aggression, and physical aggression. Studies done from elsewhere show that the prevalence of aggression among psychiatric inpatients ranges from 8% to 44%. Despite a prevalence of aggression of 44.1% that was found in northern Uganda, few studies have been done on prevalence and factors associated with aggression among patients with mental illness admitted in psychiatric wards. This study aimed to investigate aggression and associated factors among people with mental illness admitted at tertiary hospitals in Southwestern Uganda.

**Method:** We used a cross-sectional study design and enrolled 280 participants in the study. We collected information on the sociodemographic and clinical characteristics using the sociodemographic questionnaire and aggression and types of aggression using the Modified Overt Aggression Scale.

**Results:** The prevalence of aggression was 37.5%. Verbal aggression was the commonest type of aggression while the least was auto aggression. The factors associated with aggression included coming from a rural area (AOR= 2.72, 95%CI=1.17 – 6.38;p=0.021), involuntary admission/ under police urgency order mode of admission (AOR= 2.81, 95%CI=1.22 – 6.49;p=0.015), having a positive family history of mental illness (AOR= 3.80, 95%CI=1.93 – 7.47;p=<0.001), personal history of aggression (AOR= 0.12, 95%CI=0.02 – 0.67;p=0.015): personal history of aggression against property (AOR= 8.92, 95%CI=3.18 – 25.07;p=<0.001) and personal history of physical aggression (AOR= 4.63, 95%CI=1.68 – 12.78;p=0.030).

**Conclusion:** The prevalence of aggression is high among patients with mental illness admitted at tertiary hospitals in southwestern Uganda. The commonest type of aggression was verbal and the least was auto aggression. Coming from a rural area, involuntary admission/ under police urgency order mode of admission, having a positive family history of mental illness, personal history of aggression. It is important to pay attention to those significant factors to manage and control aggression among people admitted with mental illness in tertiary hospitals in Southwestern Uganda.