



A Study of Depression Among Female University Students: Professional And Non Professional

KEYWORDS

Academic performance, Depression, Professional and non professional students.

Zeenat Fatima

Ph.D Scholar, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh

Dr. Shahina Maqbool

Prof. Dept of Psychology, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh

ABSTRACT *Introduction:* Depression is one of the major psychiatric disorders in all over the world and the annual occurrence of depression is 6.6% in general population. There is also a high prevalence of depression in university students. Depression greatly affects the academic performance and health of university students. Depressive people have low academic achievements and have frequent academic failure. The objective of the present study is to examine the predictive relationship of depression and academic performance, and difference in the level of academic performance and depression among female university students (professional and non professional).

Material and Methods: 75 female students enrolled in various professional courses (MBBS, BDS and B.Tech) and 75 female students enrolled in various non professional courses (B.A, B.Sc) were selected randomly from Aligarh Muslim University. Centre for epidemiological studies scale for depression and demographic form was administered.

Result: Female students enrolled under professional courses score high on CES-D scale as compared to the female non professional students. Professional students are at high risk of depression in comparison to non professional students.

Introduction:

Background of the study:

Depression is a very common and most prevalent disorder among university students. The chances of its prevalence even increases among the students enrolled under professional courses like MBBS, MBA, MSW, B. tech, BDS, etc. Academic stress and job pressure results in depression among professional students. Contrary to this, non-professional students like in B.A, B. Sc, etc do not feel that much academic pressure as a result these students are much less on reporting depressive symptoms as compared to professional students. Present study focuses on the level of depression due to academic pressure on the female professional and non-professional students.

Depression:

Depression is a state of low mood and aversion to activity that can affect a person's thoughts, behaviour, feelings and sense of wellbeing. The lifetime occurrence of depression is 16.2%. People with a depressed mood can feel sad, anxious, empty, hopeless, helpless, worthless, guilty, irritable, ashamed or restless. They may lose interest in activities that were once pleasurable, experience loss of appetite or overeating, have problems concentrating, remembering details or making decisions, and such disturbed behaviours may also lead to commit suicide. Insomnia, excessive sleeping, fatigue, aches, pains, digestive problems or reduced energy may also be present. Depressed mood is a feature of some psychiatric syndromes such as major depressive disorder, it may also be a normal reaction to life events such as bereavement, a symptom of some bodily ailments or a side effect of some drugs and medical treatments. Besides all these causes, academic stress can also be a major cause of depression. The estimated prevalence rate of depression among students is 10%. However, students in professional courses have more academic burden and placement pressure in comparison to the students doing non professional courses. There are several studies in support of this phenomenon. According to a study conducted in Multan in 2008 on Medical students it as found

that a high prevalence of anxiety and depression (43.89%) was found amongst medical students. The incidence of major depression or probable major depression by DSM-III criteria during the first two years of medical school was 12%. The lifetime prevalence was 15%, three times greater than the rate in the general population. Depression among university students is extremely prevalent and widespread problem across the country. University students are a special group of people that are enduring a critical transitory period in which they are going from adolescence to adulthood and can be one of the most stressful times in a person's life. Trying to fit in, maintain good grades, plan for the future, and be away from home often causes anxiety for a lot of students. As a reaction to this stress, some students get depressed. They find that they cannot get themselves together. They may cry all of the time, skip classes or isolate themselves without realizing they are depressed. Previous studies reported that depression in university students is noted around the world and the prevalence seems to be increasing. The average age of onset is also on the decline, making depression a particularly salient problem area for university student populations. Over two-thirds of young people do not talk about or seek help for mental health problems. Mental health is regarded as an essential component of health by the World Health Organization. A person could be termed depressed if he/she shows a variable combination of low mood; loss of interest or pleasure; feelings of guilt; low self-esteem; disturbed appetite; disturbed sleep; or disturbed concentration. The American Psychological Association characterizes anxiety and stress by feelings of tension, worried thoughts, and physical changes. Undergraduate medical education comprises strenuous study and training for 5–6 years. The curricular objectives are dynamic due to expanding knowledge and evolving therapies. However, the demands of the learning and training might adversely affect the student's physical and mental health. It has been reported that medical students consequently suffer from depression, anxiety, and stress. Yusoff, et.al. have previously reported that healthy students develop depression and stress after commencing

their medical education. The competition for getting post-graduate training and job opportunities could be an additional trigger for psychological illness. Kulsoom and Afsar (2015) conducted a study on Stress, anxiety, and depression among medical students in a multiethnic setting. They conclude that the medical students had high levels of traits of depression, anxiety, and stress. Students suggested that study burden and busy schedule were major reasons for their high scores on depression.

Methodology:

Objectives:

- To assess the level of depression among female students in professional courses.
- To assess the level of depression among female students in non-professional courses.
- To compare the level of depression among professional and non-professional female students.

Tools:

Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D): The CES-D scale was developed by Lenore Sawyer Radloff in 1977. This scale is a short self-report scale designed to measure depressive symptoms in the general population. It was found to have very high internal consistency and adequate test-retest repeatability. Reliability, validity, and factor structure were similar across a wide variety of demographic characteristics in the general population samples tested. The scale should be a useful tool for epidemiologic studies of depression.

Participants:

75 female students enrolled in various professional courses (MBBS, BDS, MBA, MSW and B.Tech) and 75 female students enrolled in various non professional courses (B.A, B.Sc), age range between 18-23, were selected randomly from Aligarh Muslim University for the completion of the present study.

Procedure:

The data was collected on subjects individually by administering CES-D. Prior to data collection researcher had to establish a rapport with the subject. The purpose of the research was explained to the subject to develop the subject's keen interest to cooperate the task and after the subject's readiness to support the purpose, they were asked to fill the questionnaires. After the completion of the questionnaires subject was thanked and informed that his or her responses would be kept confidential and should be used for research purpose only.

Result and Discussion:

TABLE-1

Showing the comparison of the scores of Depression among professional and non professional female university students.

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t
Professional Female Students	75	27.18	5.004	22.45
Non-Professional Female Students	75	12.52	2.652	22.45

Table-1 is showing the difference between the scores of professional and non professional females on CES-D scale. The mean score and standard deviation of the professional female university students are 27.18 and 5.004, respectively and the mean score and standard deviation of non pro-

fessional female university students are 12.52 and 2.652. The value of t is 22.45 which show a significant difference between the scores of the two groups.

Conclusion:

The average age of onset for many mental health conditions is the typical college age range of 18 to 24 years old. The present study focuses on the higher level of depression among female university students enrolled in professional courses as compared to the non professional female students. The students perceive the course burden and hectic schedule as the most important reasons underlying their high CES-D scores. The demands of the learning and training might adversely affect the student's physical and mental health. A person could be termed depressed if he or she shows a variable combination of low mood; loss of interest or pleasure; feelings of guilt; low self-esteem; disturbed appetite; disturbed sleep; or disturbed concentration. It has been reported that students in professional courses consequently suffer from depression, anxiety, and stress. Depression is considered a stigma for professional students as this could be perceived as devastating to their professional and personal life. Depression affects the academic performance of the students in the professional courses. The higher scores of the female university students enrolled in professional courses in comparison to the scores of the students in non professional courses are mainly due to the fact that professional courses are highly demanding, expensive, hectic and competitive. Students in professional courses are always surrounded with their studies, exams, trainings, etc and because of the tight schedule their personal life gets affected. They hardly get time for their family, friends and most importantly for themselves. As a result they start feeling lonely, depressed, frustrated and anxious which in turn negatively affect their sleeps, appetite, mood, self esteem, mental and physical health, etc which directly affects the academic performance results in lower grades, failure, loss of interest, shaking confidence level, lower subjective well-being, drop outs and even suicides. It is observed that the students suffering from depression feel guilty about sharing their emotional state with others, or are reluctant to receive treatment. This do not allows them to share their negative and low feelings with family and friends and feel light hearted. They take the burden on themselves and end up as a failure with no positive hopes for the future. We can safely conclude that the medical students had high levels of traits of depression. Students suggested that study burden and busy schedule were major reasons for their high scores. The students should generally support as well as supervised by their parents or guardians and teachers in terms of sustenance, nurture, and education so that they feel free to share their negative and depressed thoughts and worries and gets the best guidance required for their growth and well being. A great deal of research is required in this field to get the best results.

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