



ASSESSMENT OF HAPPINESS AMONG FINAL YEAR MEDICAL STUDENTS IN A TERTIARY CARE CENTRE, MANDYA – A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

Dr Poornima S

Assistant Professor, Community Medicine

Dr Monisha K*

PG student, Community Medicine *Corresponding Author

ABSTRACT The intricate components of mental well-being include happiness and life satisfaction among the students especially under academic stress. This was a cross-sectional study conducted to assess happiness and life satisfaction among final-year medical students at Mandya Institute of Medical Sciences using the general happiness scale method, oxford happiness questionnaire, PANAS scale, satisfaction with life scale. The results revealed that the mean happiness score was 4.25 ± 0.68 and 90.47% of the participants were happy. Emotional balance was calculated through positive and negative affects, where 55.2% of participants reported being either satisfied or at least slightly satisfied with life. The study emphasizes the importance of meaningfully integrating mental health interventions to the systems aimed at improving student well-being.

KEYWORDS : Medical students, Mental Well-Being, Life Satisfaction, Happiness, Oxford Happiness scale and PANAS scale.

INTRODUCTION

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) health is a 'state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity'. As stipulated in WHO's definition of health the concept of well-being includes mental well-being. WHO describes mental well-being as a state in which an individual can realize his or her own abilities, cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.¹

Many scholars, especially in philosophy and theology, use the word 'happiness' as a synonym for 'well-being'. There are two ways to conceptualize happiness: as a mental state or as a successful life for the one experiencing it. Happiness is a psychological concept that includes things like pleasure, life satisfaction, and good emotional states. In the context of well-being, it refers to a life of flourishing one in which the one leading it experiences success. Based on a value evaluation, this experience of enjoyment indicates that the individual has whatever it is that helps them. Hedonism and life satisfaction theory are two subcategories of happiness theories. While life satisfaction theories emphasize having a positive outlook on one's life overall, hedonists define happiness as the ratio of pleasurable to painful events. Since life satisfaction theories appear to represent the judgment that matters for well-being, they appear to align more closely with liberal principles of individual self-reliance. Life-satisfaction is the degree to which a person positively evaluates the overall quality of his/her life as a whole.²

For majority of individuals, happiness is a feeling of wellbeing and purpose. A person's physical and mental health can benefit from this optimistic outlook in a number of ways, such as: Opening one's mind to optimism; Enhancing an individual's capacity to solve problems; Developing social, intellectual, and physical resources; Maintaining your health as being happy helps you sleep better, lower your blood pressure, maintain a healthy weight through regular exercise, lessen your risk of cardiovascular disease, and manage stress.³ Inner happiness is necessary to be healthy, to mature in professional life which in turn increases Quality of Life and Life Expectancy of healthy people.⁴

Compared to others, medical students are less happy, which might be because of their demanding academic schedules. The most difficult aspect is when students encounter the harsh and real-world realities of the medical field. The most often reported causes of stress are fear of failing, the overwhelming quantity of material that has to be learned, and an inability to handle the high demands of classmates and parents.⁴ Due to the paucity of research in this topic, the study will be conducted to evaluate the level of happiness and life satisfaction of medical students among the aspiring physicians.

Objectives

- To assess happiness among final year medical students of Mandya Institute of Medical Sciences, Mandya using General Happiness Scale, Oxford Happiness Questionnaire and Positive Affect and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS).

- To assess satisfaction with life using Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) among the study participants.

METHODOLOGY

Study Design: Cross-sectional study

Study Period: 1 month

Study Population: Final year medical students

Sampling Method: Universal sampling

Inclusion Criteria

Final year medical students who have given consent to participate in the study

Exclusion Criteria

Students who are not available at the time of study will be excluded

Method of Data Collection (Study Tools):

- Self-administered study tool using the online Google forms having parts.
- The first part will collect general information like Name, age, sex, etc.
- The second part will be General Happiness Scale questionnaire. It's a 4-item scale designed to measure happiness, each of the item is completed by choosing one of 7 options that finishes a given sentence fragment. The options are different for each of the four questions. This scale has scoring from 1 to 7 for each question. The maximum score will be 28. The total score will be calculated by adding the sum of all the scores and then dividing it by total number of questions. Scores, 1 to 3 will be considered as not happy, 4 is considered as neither happy nor sad and 5 to 7 is considered as happy.
- The third part will be Oxford Happiness questionnaire. It contains 29 questions and each question with 6 options on a Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = moderately disagree; 3 = slightly disagree; 4 = slightly agree; 5 = moderately agree; 6 = strongly agree. There are 12 reverse questions and it should be scored in reverse. For example, if given a "1," cross it out and change it to a "6," Change "2" to a "5," Change "3" to a "4," Change "4" to a "3," Change "5" to a "2" and Change "6" to a "1". The numbers for all 29 questions should be summed up and divided by 29.
- The fourth part will be the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule or (PANAS). It consists of different words that describe feelings and emotions. It has two parts, one of these scales' measures positive affect, and the other measures negative affect. It's a questionnaire with 20 items. A 5-point Likert scale is then used for scoring. Very slightly or not at all -1; A little -2; Moderately -3; Quite a bit -4; Extremely -5. The final score is derived out of the sum of the 20 items. Scores can range from 10 to 50 for both the Positive and Negative Affect, with the lower scores representing lower levels of Positive/Negative Affect and higher scores representing higher levels of Positive/Negative Affect.
- The fifth part will be Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS). It's a 5-item scale designed to measure global cognitive judgments of one's life satisfaction. Participants indicate how much they

agree or disagree with each of the 5 items using a 7-point scale that ranges from 7 strongly agree to 1 strongly disagree. (7 - Strongly agree; 6 - Agree; 5 - Slightly agree; 4 - Neither agree nor disagree; 3 - Slightly disagree; 2 - Disagree; 1 - Strongly disagree). The total score ranges from, 31 - 35 - Extremely satisfied; 26 - 30 - Satisfied; 21 - 25 - Slightly satisfied; 20 - Neutral; 15 - 19 - Slightly dissatisfied; 10 - 14 - Dissatisfied; 5 - 9 - Extremely dissatisfied.

Analysis: Data will be entered in MS Excel worksheet and descriptive statistics like frequency, proportion, mean, etc. will be used. Chi-square test will be used to determine the association between the variables. A value of $p < 0.05$ will be considered as significant.

RESULTS

A total of 105 students responded out of 148, of them 57(54.2%) were females and 48(45.7%) were males. Also, 42(40%) of participants were from rural and 63(60%) are from urban areas.

According to the total scoring of participants in General Happiness Scale (GHS) questionnaire 10(9.5%) were reported that they were not happy, 24(22.8%) of them were neither happy nor sad and 71(67.6%) were reported to be happy.

According to Oxford Happiness Questionnaire the mean happiness score is found to be 4.25 ± 0.68 . The results of the study show 95(90.47%) participants were in the happy group and 10(9.52%) of the participants were in the unhappy group.

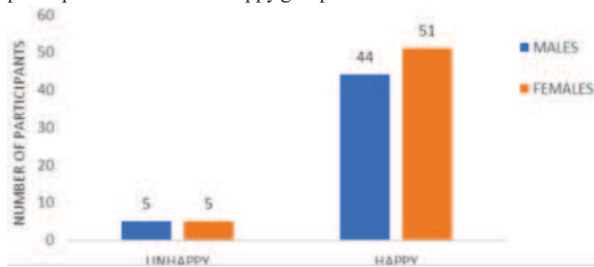


Figure 2 Shows Gender Wise Distribution Of Participants According To Oxford Happiness Questionnaire Scoring.

In the PANAS scale the first part comprises question regarding positive affects such as excitement, determination and enthusiasm, etc and second part with negative affects such as distress, sadness, anxiety, fear, anger, irritability, nervousness and guilt. Figure 3 shows the results in terms of positive and negative affects of study participants respectively.

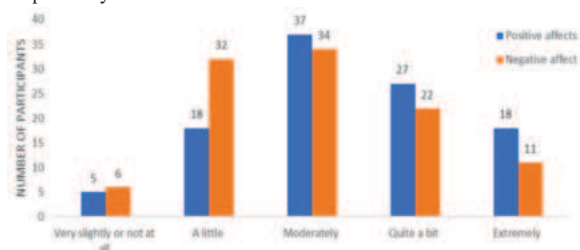


Figure 3. Shows PANAS Scale Scoring According To Their Positive And Negative Affects.

Figure 5 shows the scoring of study participants regarding their perception on life satisfaction using a Satisfaction with Life scale. Here, majority 55.2% were either satisfied or slightly satisfied with their life.

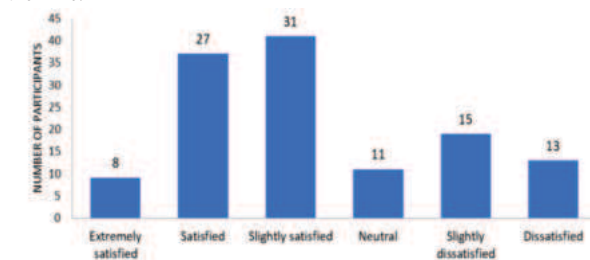


Figure 5. Shows SWLS Scoring of Participants.

DISCUSSION

According to the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire, students who were happy made up 34. 6%, with men (38. 2%) showing more happiness levels than women (29. 2%). This is in contrast to our study where majority of those happy are females.

In our study, according to Oxford Happiness Questionnaire the mean happiness score is found to be 4.25 ± 0.68 which is higher compared to the mean score of 3.6 found in the study conducted at Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute.

Also results in our study shows 90.47% participants were in the happy group and 9.52% of the participants were in the unhappy group which is higher compared to the above study where 67% categorized as happy and 33% as unhappy.⁴ A study by Singh D et al., in Western Maharashtra showed that among 420 medical students surveyed, 67.62% were found to be happy, which is lower compared to our study.⁵

CONCLUSION

The study analyzed students' happiness, well-being, and life satisfaction through the use of validated psychological scales. From the findings, it can be inferred that most participants were happy based on both the General Happiness Scale and the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire with a mean score of 4.25 ± 0.68 , 90.47% of students surveyed reported being classified as happy.

The participants' scores on the PANAS scale reveal that there is an emotional balance which was emphasized through their positive and negative affects. Moreover, in regard to the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), more than half of the respondents reported that they were at least slightly satisfied with their lives.

The results highlight that while most students reported having positive well-being, a subset of them still reported feelings of unhappiness or dissatisfaction. This suggests a need for focused mental health support strategies to improve the overall well-being of students.

REFERENCES

1. World Health Organization. Simplest of papers. 45th edition. Geneva: WHO; 2005 [cited 2025 January 26]. From: <https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/205709/B5012.pdf?sequence=1>.
2. Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy. Joy [Internet]. Subatomic Research Laboratory, Stanford University; 2022 [Quoted 26 January 2025]. From: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/happiness/>
3. Western medicine. Google - How happiness influences physical fitness [InfoBase] Wild Medicine; Chicago 2021 [cited 2025 Jan 26]. From the link above: <https://www.nm.org/healthbeat/healthy-tips/how-happiness-impacts-health>
4. Krishnan SR, Thangaraj S, Sahanaashree G, Krishna MGJ, Matthew CAP, Lakshmikanth N. A cross-sectional study to assess happiness and its correlates among medical undergraduates and interns of Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute, Bengaluru, India. *GJMEDPH*. 2024;13(5).
5. Singh D, Shetty R, Nimonkar R, Singh PMP. Happiness level in medical undergraduates: a cross-sectional study. *Int J Pharm Clin Res*. 2024;16(6):504-11.
6. Kamthan S, Sharma S, Bansal R, Panta B, Saxena P, Chansoria S, Shukla A. Happiness among second year MBBS students and its correlates using Oxford Happiness Questionnaire. *J Oral Biol Craniofac Res*. 2018;8(3):190-192.
7. Rao R, Naik BN, Shekhar S, Nirala SK, Singh CM, Verma M, et al. Level of happiness among medical students in Bihar - An online survey. *J Edu Health Promot* 2023;12:305.