

PREVALENCE OF DEPRESSION AMONG MEDICAL STUDENTS OF QAUID-E-AZAM MEDICAL COLLEGE, BAHAWALPUR

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ABSTRACT

Background: Depression is psychological disorder that affects the person's mood, physical functions and social interactions. Medical students remain under stress that often exerts a negative effect on the academic performances, physical health and psychological well-being of students. **Objective:** To determine the prevalence of stress among medicals students. **Methodology:** Study Design: Cross-sectional study. Setting: Quaid-e-Azam Medical College Bahawalpur, Duration: 27th April to 30th May 2016. 100 students of either sex of Quaid-e-Azam Medical College were included in the study. A predesigned, pretested questionnaire and counting sampling technique was used to collect the data. Hamilton depression scale was used assess depression. The data was entered and analyzed by using SPSS version 16. **Results:** This study included 100 undergraduate medical students to assess prevalence of depression. Mean age was 21±2 years with age range of 18-27 years. 25% students were mildly depressed, 13% moderately and 15% severely depressed, whereas, 47% were normal. **Conclusion:** High prevalence of depression was found in medical in undergraduate level. Students it poses additional challenges for student's support service delivery.

Keyword: Depression, Medical students, Undergraduate.

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INTRODUCTION

Depression is a common mental disorder that presents with depressed mood, loss of interest or pleasure, feeling of guilt or low-self-worth, disturbed sleep or appetite, low energy, and poor concentration.¹

Depression causes a very high rate of diseases and in a public health problem. Burden is expected to show a rising trend during the coming 20 years.² Medical education is perceived as being stressful. It has been observed that medical students experience a high incidence of personal distress during their under graduate course. High level of stress may have a negative effect on mastery of the academic curriculum. Stress, health and emotional problems increase during the period of undergraduate medical education.³ This can lead to mental distress and has a negative impact on cognitive functioning and learning.^{4,5}

The objectives of the study was to determine the prevalence of depression among medical students of Quaid-e-Azam Medical College, Bahawalpur.

METHODOLOGY

This was a cross sectional study that was used to measure the prevalence of depression, stress and related factors among the Medical students of 1st

year to final year.

Setting: Quaid-e-Azam Medical College, Bahawalpur.

Duration Of Study: From 27th April to 30th May 2016.

Study Population: Medical students of Quaid-e-Azam Medical College, Bahawalpur.

Sample Size: Study was conducted on 100 Medical students half of them were females and other half were male. The study technique used was stratified sampling, in which 20 students from each class were selected randomly.

Inclusion Criteria: All the medical students of Quaid-e-Azam Medical College, Bahawalpur, willing to give data.

Exclusion Criteria: Unwilling students were excluded.

Data Collection: Hamilton scale of depression was used to assess prevalence of depression among medical Students.¹ Depression was labeled as “no depression” (<10 score), “Mild depression” (10-13 score), “Moderate depression” (14-17 score) and “severe depression” (17 and above score). Predesigned questionnaire containing variables like age, sex and various questions regarding depression was used to collect the data regarding prevalence of depression among medical students the data was entered and analyzed by using SPSS version 16.

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RESULTS

Data was collected from 100 students giving a response rate of 100% out of them 50 were male and 50 were females. There were 47% students who were non depressed. (Table I)

Table I: Overall level of depression among medical students

Level of depression (score)	Frequency	Percent
Non depressed (<10)	47	47%
Mildly depressed (10-13)	25	25%
Moderately depressed (14-17)	13	13%
Severely depressed (> 17)	15	15%
Total	100	100%

Table II: Depression according to sex

Depression Level	Sex		Total No (%)
	Female No (%)	Male No (%)	
Non-depressed	22 (44%)	25 (50%)	47 (47%)
Mildly depressed	10 (20%)	15 (30%)	25 (25%)
Moderately depressed	12 (24%)	1 (2%)	13 (13%)
Severely depressed	6 (12%)	9 (18%)	15 (15%)
Total	50 (100%)	50 (100%)	100 (100%)

25% students were mildly depressed, 13% were moderately depressed and 15% severely depressed. The overall prevalence of depression among Quaid-e-Azam Medical College students was 53%. The study has shown that 56% of female has depression. (Table II)

Table III: Depression according to class

MBBS Class	Level of Depression				Total No (%)
	Non depressed No (%)	Mildly depressed No (%)	Moderately depressed No (%)	Severely depressed No (%)	
1 st year	8 (40%)	5(25%)	4(20%)	3(15%)	20(100%)
2 nd year	6(30%)	3(15%)	3(15%)	8(40%)	20(100%)
3 rd year	12(60%)	8(40%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	20(100%)
4 th year	14(70%)	2(10%)	3(15%)	1(05%)	20(100%)
5 th year	7(35%)	7(35%)	3(15%)	3(15%)	20(100%)
Total	47(47%)	25(25%)	13(13%)	15(15%)	100(100%)

Frequency of depression was highest among 2nd year students (70%) followed by 5th year (65%). (Table III)

Analysis of depression with age found that the prevalence of depression was highest among hostelides (59%). (Table IV)

Table IV: Score for depression according to stay

Stay	Score for depression				Total
	Non depressed	Mildly depressed	Moderately depressed	Severely depressed	
Day Scholars	12(80%)	2(13.3%)	0	1(0.063%)	15 (100%)
Hostelides	35(41%)	23(27%)	13(15.5%)	14(16.5%)	85 (100%)
Total	47(47%)	25(25%)	13(13%)	15(15%)	100 (100%)

DISCUSSION

Medicine has always been regarded as popular choice in tertiary education.⁹⁻¹⁵ A descriptive self-administered questionnaire based study got a response rate of 100% which provided an adequate sample size to fulfill the objective of this study. The result of this study indicated higher prevalence of stress in our undergraduate students. The level of stress or depression varied between stages of education. This increased level of stress indicated a decrease of psychological health in our students which may impairs student's behavior, diminishes learning, and ultimately affect patient care.

Overall prevalence of stress in this study was 53% which is consistent with the results of studies done at private university of Pakistan where the prevalence rate was 60%,¹² at Saudi Arabia 63%,¹⁶ at Thai 64%¹¹ and at Egypt 57.9%.¹²

The prevalence of depression was higher among female medical students 56% as compared to male 50%. The study results were coherent with the results conducted at Saudi Arabia where prevalence of depression was more in females as compared to males.¹⁶ The difference in the depression rate might be due to more leisure time activities, better interaction with faculty, proper guidance and advisory services.

That study found that depression was significantly associated with pressure prior to exam. The long hours as well as difficulty in lectures and tutorials among medical students would be due to information overload.¹⁶

Findings of our study were not consistent with the findings at Nepal 20.9%,¹³ at and Nishtar Medical College, 43.89%.¹² The difference in the depression rate may be due to the fact that said study reported that emotional disorders in medical students were caused by uncertainties about their lecturer's expectations which led to uncertainties about their

academic performances.

In a study,¹⁷ depression was most common among the 1st year and the 2nd year medical students as compared to other years. Students should be taught on self-learning and critical thinking, skills, enable them to deal more effectively with the changes in their professional lifetime. Besides educational demands, social and friendship related factors are reasons for psychological disturbance in our students. Our students may be able to develop coping mechanism with the help of our student's support system.

CONCLUSION

Our study showed high prevalence of mild to severe depression among medical students. This study presents empirical evidence regarding the psychological health of students in our medical. This suggests that when students are taken into colleges, special care has to be taken to find out obvious psychiatric problems or just psychological distress in them. The major finding is that psychological distress in students is more common than population based estimate; therefore, it may require to address mental health problems along with common health strategies for our students. Student Mentorship Programs is suggested for most medical faculties, which offers consultation to students who may need assistance by academic staff.

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