

## A Preliminary Study of Depression among Students

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Depression is one of the most commonly encountered emotional distresses in both the general public and in various types of clinical populations. Now a day's emotional disorders among students are quite common. They have adverse effect on their functioning and adjustment which has, in turn, repercussion in denting their vital period for learning and social development. This study was conducted to evaluate depression among students. **Materials & Methods:** This study was conducted in department of Psychiatry in year 2015. It included 500 undergraduate students of both gender. The nine-item depression Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) was designed for use in primary care and non-psychiatric settings. It contained items derived from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th Edition (DSM IV). The classification system pertains to: (1) anhedonia, (2) depressed mood, (3) trouble sleeping, (4) feeling tired, (5) change in appetite, (6) guilt or worthlessness, (7) trouble concentrating, (8) feeling slowed down or restless, and (9) suicidal thoughts. A total score more than 11 was used as the cut point to diagnose depression in this study. **Results:** Out of 500 students, 220 were males and 280 were females. The difference was non - significant ( $P > 0.05$ ). The mean age of males was  $22.04 \pm 1.5$  years and in females was  $20.17 \pm 1.3$  years. The difference was non - significant ( $P > 0.05$ ). In arts group, males were 51 and females were 49, from science group, males were 55 and females were 45, from commerce group, males were 30 and females were 70, from medicine/ nursing group, males were 40 and females were 60, from engineering group, males were 44 and females were 56. Except commerce group ( $P = 0.05$ ), the difference was non- significant ( $P > 0.05$ ). 154 males and 196 females were normal (score  $< 10$ ), 33 males and 34 females had mild depression (score 11-15), 22 males and 36 females had moderate depression (score 16-19) and 11 males and 14 females had severe depression with score  $> 20$ . The difference was significant ( $P < 0.05$ ). In arts group, 70% students were normal, 16% had mild depression, 10% had moderate and 4% had severe depression. In science group, 60% students were normal, 22% had mild depression, 8% had moderate and 10% had severe depression. In commerce group, 61% students were normal, 18% had mild depression, 14% had moderate and 7% had severe depression. In medicine/ Nursing group, 40% students were normal, 16% had mild depression, 20% had moderate and

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## A Preliminary Study of Depression among Students

24% had severe depression. In engineering group, 35% students were normal, 26% had mild depression, 18% had moderate and 21% had severe depression. The difference was significant ( $P < 0.05$ ). **Conclusion:** Depression is common among males and females students. There is higher prevalence among science, medicine and nursing students. There is need to avoid the depression by decreasing work load and education burden on students.

**Keywords:** *Depression, Restless, Students*

**D**epression is one of the most commonly encountered emotional distresses in both the general public and in various types of clinical populations. Depressive disorders are becoming common nowadays. It has high mortality and morbidity. It is a great public health problem. Depression has been considered 4th causes of diseases worldwide according to World Health Organization (WHO). Depression requires proper diagnosis and management in different age groups.

The management of depression is very challenging especially in older where there are diminished all types of systems. However, treatment of elderly patients includes psychotherapy, pharmacotherapy and electroconvulsive therapy (ECT), similar to young adults. Psychological therapies are strongly recommended for elderly depressed patients as they are vulnerable to adverse effects and high rates of medical problems and medication use. Older adults often have better treatment compliance, lower dropout rates, and more positive responses to psychotherapy than younger patients.

Now a day's emotional disorders among students are quite common. They have adverse effect on their functioning and adjustment which has, in turn, repercussion in denting their vital period for learning and social development. Emotional distress in young adults is associated with an increased risk of alcohol and drug abuse and suicidal behaviors.<sup>8</sup> In addition, the disruption in relationships and learning caused by depression has been associated with academic and social disadvantages. There are various factors that could contribute to depression on such cohort. University life marks a transitional period for students, during which some students move away from family home for the first time, lose the traditional adult supervision and the traditional social support. In addition, some students might have to deal with financial difficulties for the first time in their lives. These changes have been recognized as risk factors for developing depression. According to Porter, up to 60% of university students left university without finishing their studies due to inability to manage psychological conditions such as depression, anxiety and maladjustment.

This study was conducted to evaluate depression among students.

## A Preliminary Study of Depression among Students

### MATERIALS & METHODS

This study was conducted in department of Psychiatry in year 2015. It included 500 undergraduate students of both gender. They were informed regarding the study and written consent was obtained. Demographic data such as name, age, gender etc. was recorded.

The nine-item depression Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) was designed for use in primary care and non-psychiatric settings. It contained items derived from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th Edition (DSM IV). The classification system pertains to: (1) anhedonia, (2) depressed mood, (3) trouble sleeping, (4) feeling tired, (5) change in appetite, (6) guilt or worthlessness, (7) trouble concentrating, (8) feeling slowed down or restless, and (9) suicidal thoughts. A total score more than 11 was used as the cut point to diagnose depression in this study. Results thus obtained were subjected to statistical analysis. P value less than 0.05 was considered significant.

### RESULTS

*Table I Distribution of subjects*

Total - 500		
Male	Female	P value
220	280	0.1

*Table II Mean age of subjects*

Males (Mean age)	Females (Mean age)	P value
22.04±1.5	20.17±1.3	0.3

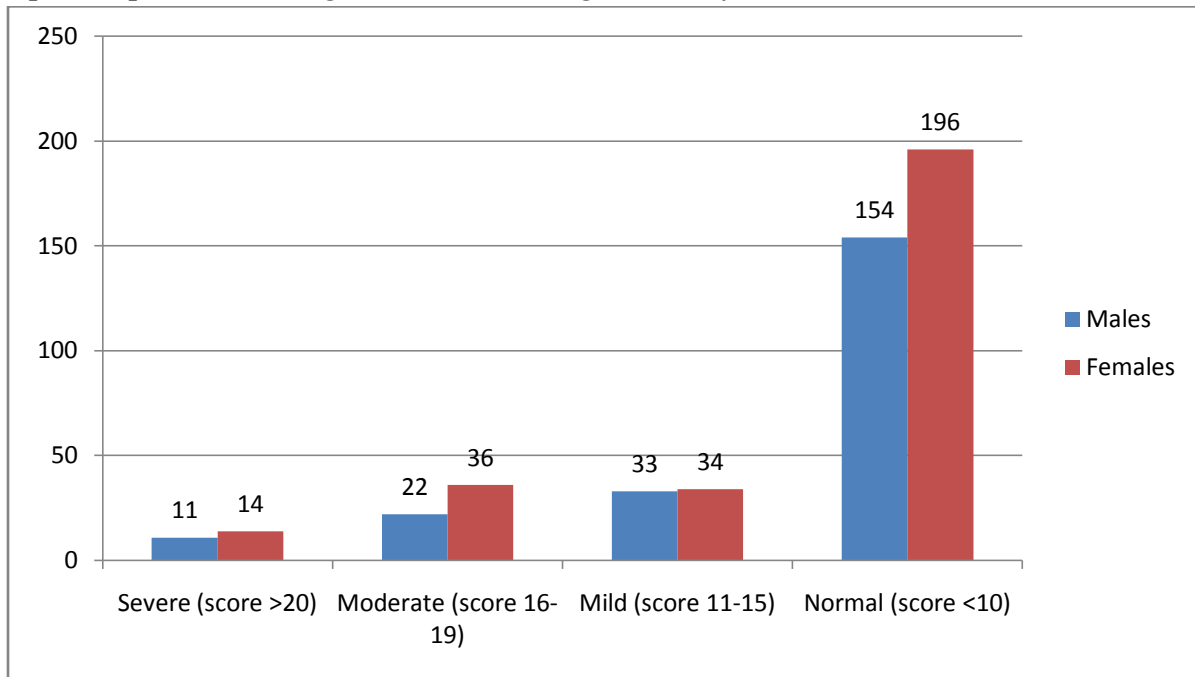
**Table III students from different education stream**

Stream	Males	Females	P value
Arts	51	49	1
Science	55	45	0.2
Commerce	30	70	0.05
Medicine/Nursing	40	60	0.3
Engineering	44	56	0.2
Total	220	280	0.1

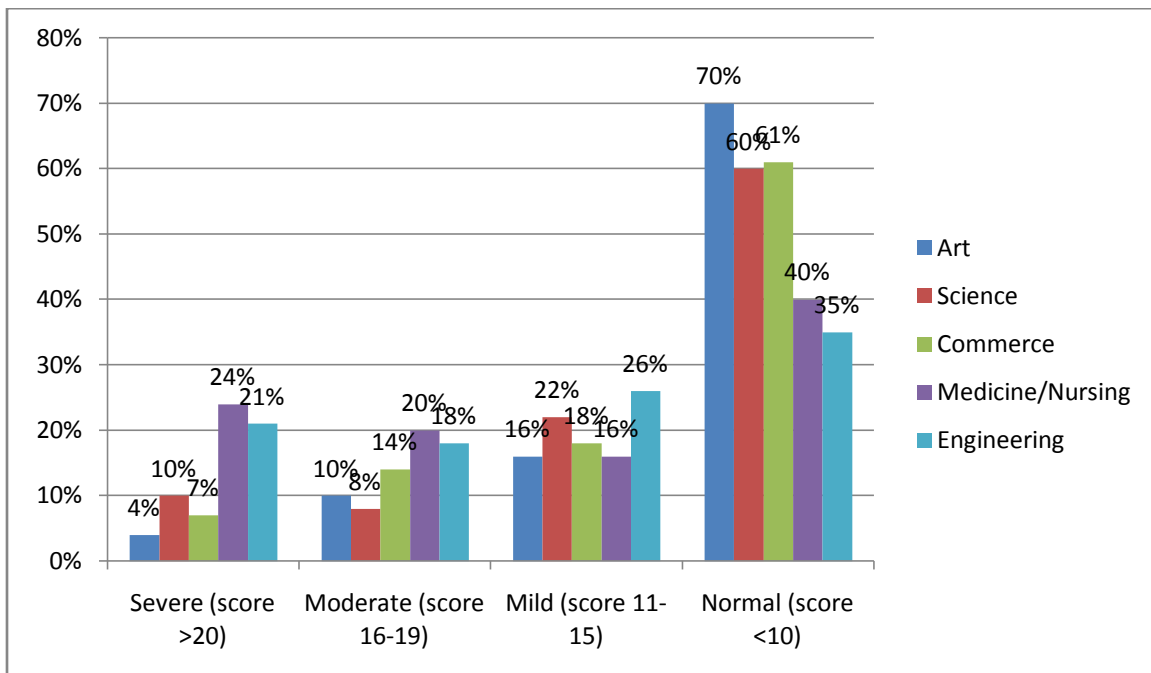
Table I shows that out of 500 students, 220 were males and 280 were females. The difference was non - significant ( $P > 0.05$ ). Table II shows that mean age of males was 22.04±1.5 years and in females was 20.17±1.3 years. The difference was non - significant ( $P > 0.05$ ). Table III shows that from arts group, males were 51 and females were 49, from science group, males were 55 and females were 45, from commerce group, males were 30 and females were 70, from medicine/ nursing group, males were 40 and females were 60, from engineering group, males were 44 and females were 56. Except commerce group ( $P = 0.05$ ), the difference was non- significant ( $P > 0.05$ ).

## A Preliminary Study of Depression among Students

**Graph I Depression among students according to severity**



**Graph II Depression among different education stream**



Graph I shows that 154 males and 196 females were normal (score < 10), 33 males and 34 females had mild depression (score 11-15), 22 males and 36 females had moderate depression (score 16-19) and 11 males and 14 females had severe depression with score > 20. The difference was significant ( $P < 0.05$ ). Graph II shows that in arts group, 70% students were

## A Preliminary Study of Depression among Students

normal, 16% had mild depression, 10% had moderate and 4% had severe depression. In science group, 60% students were normal, 22% had mild depression, 8% had moderate and 10% had severe depression. In commerce group, 61% students were normal, 18% had mild depression, 14% had moderate and 7% had severe depression. In medicine/ Nursing group, 40% students were normal, 16% had mild depression, 20% had moderate and 24% had severe depression. In engineering group, 35% students were normal, 26% had mild depression, 18% had moderate and 21% had severe depression. The difference was significant ( $P < 0.05$ ).

### DISCUSSION

Depression is the 4<sup>th</sup> most common disease occurring not only in older but young adults too. Sadness is something we all experience. It is a normal reaction to difficult times in life and usually passes with a little time. When a person has depression, it interferes with daily life and normal functioning. It can cause pain for both the person with depression and those who care about him or her. Doctors call this condition “depressive disorder,” or “clinical depression.” It is a real illness. It is not a sign of a person’s weakness or a character flaw.

This study was conducted to evaluate depression among students. Out of 500 students, 220 were males and 280 were females. We involved 100 students each from arts, science, engineering, commerce and medicine/nursing. Similar study was conducted by Becker S et al.

In this study, a nine-item depression Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) was designed for use in primary care and non-psychiatric settings. It contained items derived from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th Edition (DSM IV).

We found that 70% males and 70% females were normal (score  $< 10$ ), 15% males and 12% females had mild depression (score 11-15), 10% males and 12% females had moderate depression (score 16-19) and 5% males and 7% females had severe depression with score  $> 20$ . This is in accordance to German GA et al.

We conducted this study on 500 students of various streams. Out of 100 students from arts group, 70% students were normal, 16% had mild depression, 10% had moderate and 4% had severe depression. In science group, 60% students were normal, 22% had mild depression, 8% had moderate and 10% had severe depression. In commerce group, 61% students were normal, 18% had mild depression, 14% had moderate and 7% had severe depression. In medicine/ Nursing group, 40% students were normal, 16% had mild depression, 20% had moderate and 24% had severe depression. In engineering group, 35% students were normal, 26% had mild depression, 18% had moderate and 21% had severe depression. Our study shows that the prevalence of severe depression is common in medicine/ nursing group. This is in accordance to Bostanky M et al & Kaplan G et al However, Nogueira-Martins LA found in her study that depression is more common among arts group.

### CONCLUSION

Depression is common among males and females students. There is higher prevalence among science, medicine and nursing students. There is need to avoid the depression by decreasing work load and education burden on students.

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**Conflict of Interests:** The author declared no conflict of interests.

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