

Mental Distress among University Students

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BACKGROUND

Mental distress is believed to be a key reason why one student commits suicide every hour in the country. The university study period is a stressful period. In the recent years, due to strong competition and aspiration for achievement, the pressure on the students had increased manifold making students more vulnerable for developing mental distress.

OBJECTIVE/AIM

To study the prevalence of mental distress and its association with sociodemographic, personal and academic related variable among university students.

METHODS/MATERIALS

A cross-sectional observational study was done on 300 university students between July-September 2019. We used SELF REPORTING QUESTIONNAIRE (SRQ-20) for the assessment of mental distress. It was conducted during mid-semester to ensure that there was no university examinations or events. Descriptive and Chi-square statistics was done and p value <0.05 was considered significant.

RESULT

The study participants were predominantly female (58.7%) and majority resided with parents (66.3%). It was noted that 59% were always fearful about future life and 14% were unsatisfied with life. It was also observed that 16.7% were unsatisfied with admission in college, 17.3% were unsatisfied with their academic performance and 16.3% were unsatisfied regarding coping up with course.

On bivariate analysis, higher proportion of students with mental distress had history of mental illness ($p < 0.000$). Similarly, family history of mental illness ($p = 0.002$), level of study ($p < 0.007$), history of parental conflict ($p = 0.000$), satisfaction with life ($p = 0.000$), self perception of current mental status ($p = 0.000$) and satisfaction with their academic performance ($p = 0.000$) were significantly associated with mental distress.

CONCLUSION

It is noted that mental distress is common among university students and there is need for attention, support and personalized counseling.