



Research Article

TO FIND THE PREVALENCE OF DEPRESSION AMONGST FIRST AND FINAL YEAR MEDICAL STUDENTS (MBBS 2017 & 2013 BATCH)

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Depression is a common mental disorder, characterized by persistent sadness and a loss of interest in activities that you normally enjoy, accompanied by an inability to carry out daily activities, for atleast 2 weeks.

Aims & Objectives:

- To study the prevalence of depression amongst first and final year medical students of Subharti Medical College, Meerut.
- To study the views and attitude of medical students on depression.

Material & Methods: A cross-sectional study which was done on 200 MBBS students of 2017 & 2013 batch. The type of Sampling Technique used was Simple Random Technique. The Research Tool used was Previously structured & used questionnaire (Public Health Questionnaire-9)

Result: The study aimed towards assessing overall attitude and prevalence held by medical students upon depression which was indeed positive. Study subjects were aware about depression and were willing to participate.

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INTRODUCTION

According to WHO, Depression is a common mental disorder, characterized by persistent sadness and a loss of interest in activities that you normally enjoy, accompanied by an inability to carry out daily activities, for atleast 2 weeks.

In addition, people with depression normally have several of the following

1. A loss of energy
2. A change in appetite
3. Sleeping more or less
4. Anxiety
5. Reduced concentration
6. Difficulty in thinking
7. Restlessness
8. Loss of libido
9. Feeling of worthlessness, guilt or hopelessness
10. Thoughts of self-harm & suicide.¹

According to the American Psychiatry Association, depression is a common and serious medical illness that negatively affects how you feel, the way you think and how you act. Depression causes feelings of sadness and/or loss of activities once enjoyed.

Depression symptoms can vary from mild to severe. Symptoms must last at least 2 weeks for a diagnosis of depression (i.e. Clinical Depression).²

According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), depression is a common but serious mood disorder. It causes severe symptoms that affect how you feel, think and handle daily activities, such as sleeping, eating or working.³

Types of Depression: According to the NIMH³, some forms of depression may develop under unique circumstances, such as-

1. Persistent Depressive Disorder (Dysthymia)
2. Perinatal Depression (Post-partum Depression)
3. Psychotic Depression
4. Seasonal Affective Disorder
5. Bipolar Disorder

Global Incidence

1. Globally, more than 300 million people of all ages suffer from depression.
2. Depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide and is a major contributor to the overall global burden of disease.
3. More women are affected by depression than men.
4. At its worst, depression can lead to suicide and close to 8,00,000 people die due to suicide every year.
5. 10-15% of women develop post-partum depression.

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Indian Scenario

1. More than 10 million cases per year.
2. Depression is more common in the urban and more developed cities compared to the rural areas.⁴

Risk Factors: Depression results from complex interaction of social, psychological and biological factors. Risk factors include:

1. Personal or family history of depression, alcohol abuse or suicide.
2. A history of alcohol or substance abuse.
3. Major life changes, trauma or stress.
4. Certain physical illnesses and medications.⁵

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Study Design: A cross-sectional study

Study Setting: Subharti Medical College

Study Population: MBBS 2017 & 2013 batch

Sample Size: 200

Sampling Technique: Simple Random Technique

Inclusion Criteria: Students who were present and willing to participate

Exclusion Criteria: Students who are absent and not willing to participate

Research Tool: Previously structured & used questionnaire (Public Health Questionnaire-9)

RESULT

MBBS batch 2013 and 2017 were included in this study, i.e. around 250 out of which 200 medical students participated and the questionnaire was distributed amongst them. They all responded positively and willingly by returning the filled questionnaire along with their socio-demographic characteristics.

In this study, only 10% of the students showed little interest or pleasure in doing things nearly every day over the last 2 weeks.

1. 34% students felt down, depressed and hopeless.
2. 43% students had trouble falling or staying asleep or sleeping too much.
3. 31% students had a feeling of tiredness or little energy.
4. 19% students had poor appetite or were over-eating.
5. 28% students felt bad about themselves or that they are a failure or that they have let themselves or their family down.
6. 24% students had trouble concentrating while reading the newspaper, watching television or while studying.
7. A few of the students experienced moving/speaking slowly or being fidgety/restless.
8. 25% students thought that they would be better off dead or of hurting themselves in any way.

Socio-demographic study showed that 64% students of 2013 batch consumed alcohol, in comparison to only 15% students of 2017 batch.

In 2013 batch, 46% of students were indulged in smoking out of which 28% were female from 21-24 years; whereas in 2017 batch, only 16% of students were indulged in the same.

Nearly every day	More than half the days	Several days	Not at all
Little interest or pleasure doing things	10%	21%	46%
Feeling down, depressed or hopeless	34%	11%	28%
Trouble falling or staying asleep or sleeping too much	43%	18%	28%
Feeling tired or having little energy	31%	21%	16%
Poor appetite or over-eating	19%	21%	35%
Feeling bad about yourself or that you are a failure or have let yourself or your family down	28%	15%	32%
Trouble concentrating on things like reading a newspaper or watching television or while studying	25%	18%	32%
Moving or speaking so slowly that other people could have noticed? Or the opposite being so fidgety or restless that you've been moving around a lot more than usual	13%	15%	20%
Thoughts that you would be better off dead or of hurting yourself in some way	25%	6%	12%
			57%

Interpretation: 46% students did not experience little interest or pleasure doing things at all, whereas 10% students experienced the same nearly every day over the last 2 weeks. 34% of students feel down, depressed or hopeless nearly every day over the last 2 weeks, whereas 28% of student did not feel the same at all. 43% of students had trouble falling or staying asleep or sleeping too much nearly every day over the last 2 weeks, whereas 28% of students did not face any such trouble at all. 32% of students felt tired or had little energy several days over the last 2 weeks, whereas 31% of the students felt the same nearly every day. 35% of the students had poor appetite or over-eating habits several days over the last 2 weeks, whereas 25% of the students did not face the same at all. 32% of the students felt bad about themselves or that they were a failure or had let themselves or their family down several days over the last 2 weeks, whereas 28% students felt the same nearly every day. 32% of students had trouble concentrating on things like reading a newspaper or while studying several days over the last 2 weeks, whereas 25% of the students experienced the same nearly every day. 52% of the students did not experience moving or speaking slowly or fidgety or restless at all, whereas 20% of the students experienced the same several days over the last 2 weeks. 57% of the students did not have thoughts that they would be better off dead or of hurting themselves at all, whereas 25% of the students thought the same nearly every day over the last 2 weeks.

Variables	2013	2017
Alcohol Consumption	64%	15%
Smoking	46%	16%
Students who pray	70%	56%
Smokers who pray	36%	17%

Interpretation: Alcohol consumption as well as smoking was seen more common in the final year medical students (MBBS 2013 batch) in comparison to the first year medical students (MBBS 2017 batch). Out of the 70% students who pray in 2013 batch, 36% indulged in smoking compared to only 17% indulging in smoking out of 56% students who pray in 2017 batch.

CONCLUSION

The study aimed towards assessing overall attitude and prevalence held by medical students upon depression which was indeed positive. Study subjects were aware about depression and were willing to participate.

According to this study the features of depression such as a loss of interest or pleasure in activities; feeling down or hopeless; sleep, appetite and concentration problems; tiredness or restlessness and even thoughts of hurting oneself was quite common even amongst both male and female medical students aging from 18-25 years.

In addition to this, we found that alcohol consumption and smoking habits were more common in final year medical students as compared to the first year students.

Thus we may conclude that the signs and features of depression were more marked and prominent in the final year students due to increase in their level of stress which is influenced by a number of factors.

Furthermore, the stake-holders and officials should encourage students to talk about their problems or troubles and arrange counselling sessions and therapy for those who are suffering from depression.

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