Mental Health Status of Undergraduate Students: A Scenario in a Medical College of Kolkata.

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Abstract: *Mental health problems are as common among students as they are in the general population. Mental disorders account for nearly 12% of the global burden of disease. Mental health problems of medical students are a neglected domain still now. So an Observational , descriptive institution based cross sectional study was undertaken to determine the prevalence of mental distress, anxiety and depression & to find out socio-demographic factors & academics related factors among the undergraduate students of Medical College, Kolkata, India using a questionnaire containing General Health Questions (GHQ-12), Zung Self Rating Anxiety Scale, Zung self-rating Depression scale. 56% of them were adolescents and 67.8% were male students. 14.5% of the students were smokers. 11.7% were current alcoholics. Around 5% of the students chew tobacco while 2.1% of them have other kinds of addictions like cannabis, cough syrup, etc.   About 70% of the students find it difficult to manage the pressure of the MBBS course.37.3% of the students were here out of their own wish. About 54% of the study population has a lack of concentration in studies, while about 43% have a lack of interest.10.5% students were severely distressed. Students suffer from academics related stress the most. 15.6% students were feeling anxious & 12% Medical students were suffering from depression. So it is necessary that regular career counseling & practice of stress coping mechanisms should be made available for the undergraduate medical students at medical college levels.*
Keywords: *Depression, Anxiety, Stress, MBBS examination, addiction*

I.   Introduction

Mental Health is one of the three important aspects of health, incorporating following abilities like adjusting to one's environment pleasantly without being disturbed, fully utilizing one's talents in creative work and help others to do the same etc.

The problem is gradually on the rise due to such factors as urbanization, industrialization and increase in lifespan, together with breakup of the joint family system, which has increased the psychiatric problems of the population as a whole. Mental health problems are as common among students as they are in the general population.

Mental disorders account for nearly 12% of the global burden of disease. By 2020, it is likely to account for 15% DALY loss from 6.1% in 1993 and expected to become second most important cause of disability in the world. [1]

Mental health problems of medical students are a neglected domain still now. Stress that begin in the student period may continue to future life and if adjustments are not made, then inevitably detrimental effects will occur.

So thisstudy was undertaken with the objectives to determine different socio-demographic factors, academics related factors & the prevalence of mental distress, anxiety and depression among the undergraduate medical students of Medical College, Kolkata, India.

II.   Methodology

The study was an observational, descriptive and institution based study having a total sample size of 332 students encompassing the 2nd, 4th, 6th and 8th semesters done from March to May,2016. Among the total 900 students these were selected by stratified random sampling method using the random number table on each semester's class register.

After obtaining written consent from IEC and verbal consent from students study was conducted with aPredesigned, pre tested, semi structured, self-administered questionnaire containing validated questionnaires like General Health Questions (GHQ-12), Zung Self-Rating Anxiety Scale and Zung Self-Rating Depression Scale . Data was compiled in Microsoft Excel 2007 and analyzed using appropriate statistical methods like number, percentage, etc.

III. Results

In this study of 332 students, 56% of them were below the age of 19 years and 67.8% were male students. Hostelites accounted for 39.1% of the study subjects while 43.4% stayed with their parents here in Kolkata. 38.4% of the students had a family income of < Rs. 50,000. More than 75% students were from nuclear families.

14.5% of the students are smokers. 11.7% are current alcoholics while 0.6% have left the habit. Around 5% of the students chew tobacco while 0.9% has stopped it. 2.1% of them have other kinds of addictions like cannabis, cough syrup, etc. but none of them has stopped it.

About 70% of the students find it difficult to manage the pressure of the MBBS course & 74.1% students find the University MBBS examination difficult. Though most of the undergraduate students think that the class hours are adequate enough for them to manage, about 47% think that it is lengthy.37.3% of the students are here out of their own wish while almost 23% are here since their parents/families wanted them to become doctors.About 54% of the study population has a lack of concentration in studies, while about 43% have a lack of interest.53.6% of the students do not have any idea competition that one encounters in clearing their PG entrance examinations while almost 39.3% of them find it difficult to clear.

10.5% students are severely distressed. Students suffer from academics related stress the most.Overall 15.6% students are feeling anxious. About 12% Medical students are suffering from depression.

IV. Tables

Table 1: Socio demographic factors of Undergraduate Medical Students (n=332)

Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage
Age group	≤ 19	186	56.0
	20-21	127	38.3
	≥ 22	19	5.7
Gender	FEMALE	107	32.2
	MALE	225	67.8
Family Income(Rs.)	< 50000	118	38.4
	50000-100000	115	37.5
	>100000	74	26.1
TYPE OF FAMILY	NUCLEAR FAMILY	256	77.1
	JOINT FAMILY	72	21.7
	3 GENERATION FAMILY	4	1.2
PRESENT RESIDENCE	HOSTEL	130	39.1
	WITH PARENTS	144	43.4
	PAYING GUESTS	44	13.3
	WITH OTHER RELATIVES	14	4.2

Table 2: Substance abuse among under graduate Medical students (n=332)

SUBSTANCE ABUSE	EVER		NEVER
	CURRENT N (%)	PAST N (%)	n(%)
Smoking	43(13.0)	5(1.5)	284(85.5)
Chewing tobacco	17 (5.1)	3 (0.9)	312 (94.0)
Alcohol	39 (11.7)	2 (0.6)	291 (87.7)
Others*	7 (2.1)	0 (0.0)	325 (97.9)

Table 3: Academics related factors among under graduate Medical students (n=332)

* multiple response

Characteristics	N	%
Reasons to study MBBS*		
Own wish	125	37.4
Family pressure	76	22.9
Social work	78	23.3
Financial gain	35	10.3
Don't know	28	8.1
Perception about MBBS course		
Easy	89	26.8
Manageable	10	3.0
Difficult to manage	233	70.2
Class Hours		
Lengthy	158	47.6
OK	162	48.8
Short	12	3.6
Lack of concentration		
No	150	45.9
Yes	177	54.1

Lack of Interest		
No	187	57.4
Yes	139	42.6
Perception about University examination		
Easy	72	21.7
Difficult	246	74.1
No idea	14	4.2
Clearance of Post graduate entrance examination		
Easy	23	7.1
Difficult	127	39.3
No Idea	173	53.6

Table 4: Mental morbidities among under graduate Medical students (n=332)

Characteristics	N	%
Distress (As per GHQ-12) (n=332)		
No Distress	202	60.9
Distress	95	28.6
Severe Distress	35	10.5
Anxiety Level (n=326)		
No Anxiety	275	84.4
Mild to Moderate Anxiety	47	14.4
Severe Anxiety	4	1.2
Depression Status (n=318)		
No	277	87.1
Mild to Moderate	39	12.3
Severe	2	0.6

V. Discussion

It has long been recognised as involving numerous stressors that can affect the wellbeing of the student. [2]Psychological morbidities like mental distress, different level of anxiety and depression are imposed on to the physician -in- training. In the present study result also, showed that the considerable level of depression, anxiety and mental distress prevails among the study subjects which is in consonance with earlier study conducted in Bhubaneswar, India. [3]These findings underscore the importance of nurturing a positive learning environment for them.

Another interesting finding in our study was high prevalence of addiction which is 14.5% for smoking, 12 % for alcohol 6% for chewing tobacco and 2.1% for cannabis and drugs. Whether due to increasing mental distress or some other factors it was difficult to find out with this study but is of major concern.

Another finding in our analysis was higher prevalence of anxiety (15.6%) and depression (12%) among the students which was consistent with previous study done in agartala India.[4] The reason could be vast course including clinics and higher expectation from parents. This is of course a paramount concern as it may impair behaviour of students, diminish learning, and ultimately affect patient care after their graduation.

VI. Conclusion

From this study it can be concluded that regular career counselling and stress coping mechanism should be encouraged for the undergraduate medical students at Medical College level 7.Conflict of interest -none

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