

# Mental health of Medical Students in Almaarefa College

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**Abstract:** Introduction: Mental health describes a level of psychological well-being or an absence of a mental disorder. Mental health may include an individual's ability to enjoy life, and create a balance between life activities and efforts to achieve psychological resilience. Objective: Described the types of mental health problems encountered with students in Almaarefa College. Described the distribution of mental health problem in different colleges. Identified the factors mental health associated with grades. Methods: A cross sectional study was completed in Al-maarefa colleges in thirty percent from each college\included all female Section in Almaarefa College using a close ended questioning In 2014. Results: 245 students participated in this study; half of them were medical students. In the findings of this study majority of the medical students were found suffering from anxiety and having unpleasant feelings like sadness and unhappiness, while nervousness and tenseness were higher in the other students that were majoring in other fields. Regarding the results of the symptoms of depression there was high percentage of students feeling pessimistic about their future. Conclusion: This study shows high significant of feeling sad and unhappiness was in medical students more than students in other collage, and other symptoms ( tenseness, anxiety, and nervous ) were similar in both medical students and non-medical students. The highly prevalence of symptoms of depression was feeling pessimistic about the future and not enjoying thing as before. The majority live with their family and had good GPA and those who developed decreasing in their GPA was during study in the collage. The majority of students not feel ashamed of consulting a psychologist. They have good knowledge about mental health. Recommendation: Deal with negative stress factor to minimize of depression and mental deterioration and power of fatalism and trust their god

**Keywords:** Mental health of Medical Students in Almaarefa College

## 1. Introduction

Mental health describes a level of psychological well-being or an absence of a mental disorder. Mental health may include an individual's ability to enjoy life, and create a balance between life activities and efforts to achieve psychological resilience.<sup>1</sup> Medical education does not provide a favorable environment for medical students' mental health. In general, the proportion of medical students suffering from psychological distress is similar to that in the general population before they begin medical education.<sup>2</sup>

According to world health organization's (WHO) definition about health where they said that the health is "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease".<sup>3</sup>

So to be considered healthy we should be healthy in all aspects physically, socially, and mentally. But what draws our attention is that people in general pay more attention to their physical health forgetting all about their mental health, which is really important aspect that could be responsible and behind many of their physical illnesses. Mental health is just as important as physical health, because it plays a very important role in people lives. Psychological, emotional, and social well-being are all included in mental health. Mental health has a direct effect on how one feels, thinks, acts, and how he handle stress. It also helps in making choices, coping with life, and having a healthy relationship with the people. Therefore mental health is very important in every stage of life from childhood till adulthood. Whenever mental health is affected causing mental illnesses and disorders, then it will surely interfere with lifestyle and personality. Mental health illnesses can occur due to genes and presence of family history of mental disorders or it could be due to

social and environmental experiences such as stress that can be in any form.

The college lifestyle is one of the scenarios where students will be under a lot of pressure and stress which may affect their mental health. According to Hunt and Eisenberg (2010) "that college student's mental health has been on the rise".<sup>4</sup>

The college students can be affected by the academic and the non-academic stress that they might face during their college years, which might possibly affect their mental health which can lead to mental health disorders.

There are many opinions about what causes mental health problems. This is part of a wider debate about whether personality is shaped by life experiences, or determined by genes. The following are some of the factors that may play a role in the development of mental health problems:-

- Genetic factor (heredity): Experts believe that many mental conditions are linked to abnormalities in many genes, not just one. A person may inherit a susceptibility to a mental disorder and doesn't necessarily develop the illness. The disorder may occur from the interaction of multiple genes and other factors such as stress, abuse, or a traumatic event. Which can influence, or trigger, an illness in a person who has an inherited susceptibility to it.<sup>5</sup>
- Social problems: Social factors such as poverty, domestic violence, solitude, poor housing and addiction have been associated with mental health problems. It is not always clear whether these factors trigger the problems, or whether having a mental health problem can lead to social problems you might not otherwise experience.<sup>5</sup>
- Environmental stressors: Certain stressors such as a death, divorce, conflict in family life, changing jobs or schools,

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and substance abuse can trigger a disorder in a person who may be at risk for developing a mental illness.<sup>5</sup>

Depression and anxiety levels in the community are considered as specific indicators for mental status of a person. Depression is an illness that involves the body, mood, and thoughts that affects the way a person eats, sleeps, think about things, and feels about him or herself.

The most common form of depression is Major depression, they may feel and see symptoms of extreme sadness, hopelessness, lack of energy, irritability, changes in sleep or eating habits, physical pain, and thoughts of death or suicide. For an official diagnosis, your symptoms must last for more than two weeks. Dysthymia is a type of depression that causes a low mood over a long period of time, perhaps for a year or more and it's less severe than major depression. Psychosis is a mental state characterize by false beliefs. People with this psychotic depression may become catatonic. People with anxiety disorders respond to certain objects or situations with fear and dread, as well as with physical signs of anxiety or nervousness, such as a rapid heartbeat and sweating. An anxiety disorder is diagnosed if the person's response is not appropriate for the situation, if the person cannot control the response, or if the anxiety interferes with normal functioning.<sup>5</sup>

Mood disorders involve persistent feelings of sadness or periods of feeling overly happy, or fluctuations from extreme happiness to extreme sadness. The most common mood disorders are depression, mania, and bipolar disorder. Mood disorders tend to appear earlier than major depression, although it can begin anytime from childhood to later in life.<sup>5</sup>

Low self esteem is always linked to people who have negative image and thoughts about themselves, which makes the self esteem status really close to depression. That's why one of the ways to treat depression is by learning how to improve the self esteem of the person. According to Julia Friederike Sowislo, there is relationship between low self esteem, depression, and anxiety. She found that low self esteem can increase depression, but depression didn't really affect the self esteem, and after the analysis of depression and anxiety she found that both of them can negatively affect each other.<sup>6</sup>

So we are trying to assess the mental health status of Almaarefa students in all the departments of the college, and try to compare between the results of the departments to assess the mental health status of Almaarefa college students.

## 2. Objective

- Described the types of mental health problems encountered with students in Almaarefa College .
- Described the distribution of mental health problem in different colleges.
- Identified the factors mental health associated with grades.

## 3. Methodology

**Study Design** is cross sectional university base study.

**Study Area** in Almaarefa College for Science and Technology.

**Population** Thirty percent from each college

**Study** included all female Section in Almaarefa College, excluding of preparatory year.

### Sampling Size

- 30 % of Medicine students = 123 students
- 30% of Pharmacy students = 63 students
- 30 % of Nursing students =40 students
- 30% of Respiratory Care students = 11 students
- 30% of Computer Science students =3 students
- 30% of Information Technology students =5 students
- Thirty percent from Second , Third and fourth years of Medicine students :-- 30 % of Second year Medicine students =65 students
- 30 % of Third year Medicine students =29 students
- 30 % of Fourth year Medicine students =29 students

### Data collection tools

The data gathered self administered by questionnaire include close and open questions. Which covered Personal information , Symptoms of Mental illness and factor associated with mantel illness.

**Analysis:**--After we Collected the data, excluded unclear and incomplete questionnaire we did Clearance, Coding, Entry and after that Analysis done using SPSS .

## 4. Results

In our survey of the 245 student, 50% of them medical students in ALMAAREFA COLLAGE. Regarding the marital status was (88.2 %) single. (see Fig. 1). The tuition fees of (60%) of students was granted by Ministry of Higher Education. (see Fig. 2).

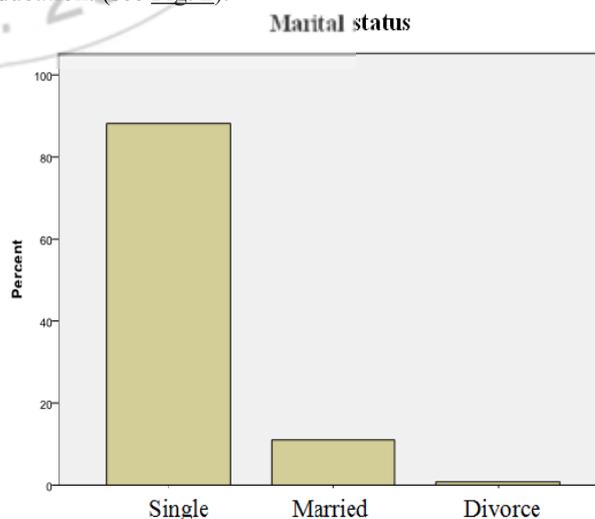
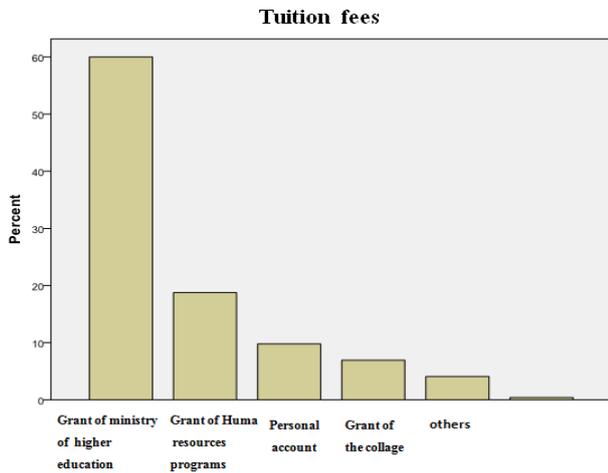
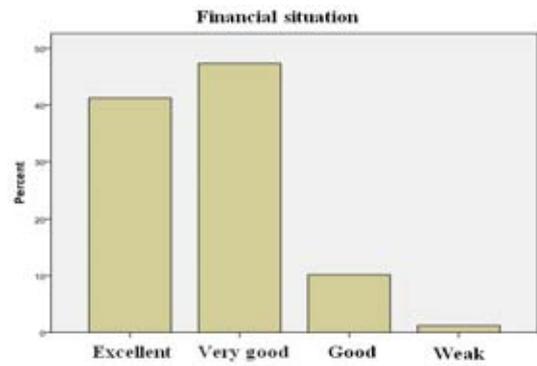


Figure 1



**Figure 2**

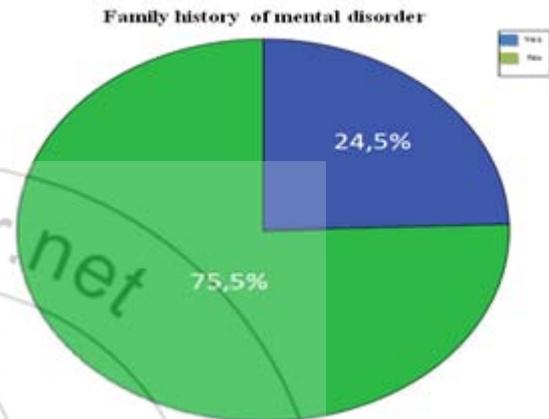


**Figure 3**

Regarding medical students the higher rates founded in feeling sad and unhappiness was (31.8%) opposite to other collage. Other symptoms are almost equal between medical students and students in other collage. (see Table (1)).

**Table 1: Symptoms the student suffering from**

Suffering from	Tenseness	Anxiety	Nervous	Feeling sad and unhappiness
Medical student	24,2%	24,5%	20,2%	31,8%
Other college	25,1%	24,3%	22,5%	15,8%



**Figure 4**

There is depression among students, deductions that base on the most of them feeling pessimistic about future (64,4%), students suffer from mental distraction and feeling tired from minimal effort (41.6%) .(see Table (2)).

**Table 2: Symptoms of depression**

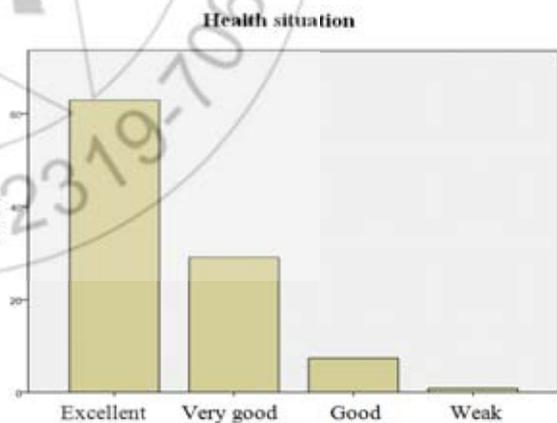
Depression	Yes	No
Feeling tired from minimal effort	41,6%	58,4%
Enjoying things as before	49%	51%
Feeling pessimistic about the future	64,9%	35,1%
Having mental distractions	41,60%	58,4%

Regarding the personal factors, we found (38%) was not good health situation (see Fig. 5) . Satisfaction about them self (29.4%) was not satisfaction (see Table (4)) , most of them their GPA between excellent and very good (62%) (see Table (5)).

In term of home environment and living with family, we found students who were living far from family are (16.3%) (see Table (3)) . In case of financial situation (47%) founded relatively very good (see Fig. 3). The family history of mental disorder present in ( 24,5%) of total student. (see Fig. 4) .

**Table 3: Family factor**

Living with	Frequency	Percent %
Family	186	75,9%
Husband	19	7,8%
A relatives	10	4,10%
Alone	30	12,2%
Total	245	100%



**Figure 5**

**Table 4: Personal factors**

Self-satisfaction	Frequency	Percent %
Highly satisfied	81	33,1%
Satisfied	92	37,6%
Somewhat satisfied	64	26,1%
Not satisfied	8	3,3%
Total	245	100%

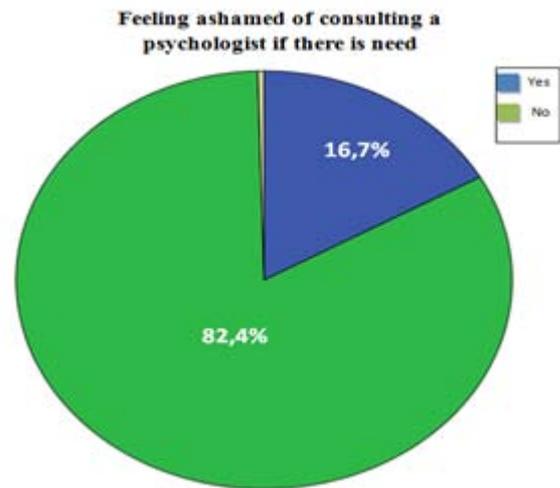
**Table 5:** Personal factors

GPA	Frequency	Percent %
Excellent	67	27,3%
Very good	85	34,7%
Good	84	34,3%
Weak	9	3,7%
Total	245	100%

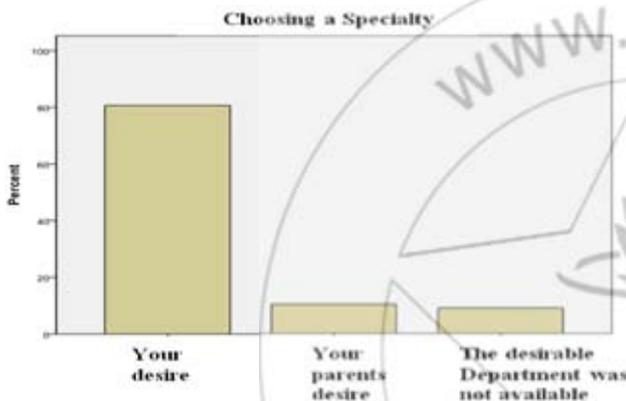
In other hand most of students with low GPA had decreasing during study in the collage (93,1%) (see Table (6) ) ( 19.2 % ) they didn't choose their specialty (see Fig. 6) , and ( 43.7%) want to be in another college (see Fig. 7) . These are personal factors associated with mental health.

**Table 6:** Personal factors

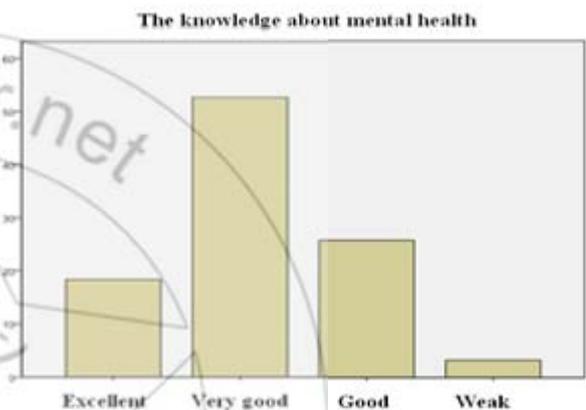
GPA decreasing	Frequency	Percent %
Before entering collage	7	6,9%
During collage	95	93,1%
Total	102	100%



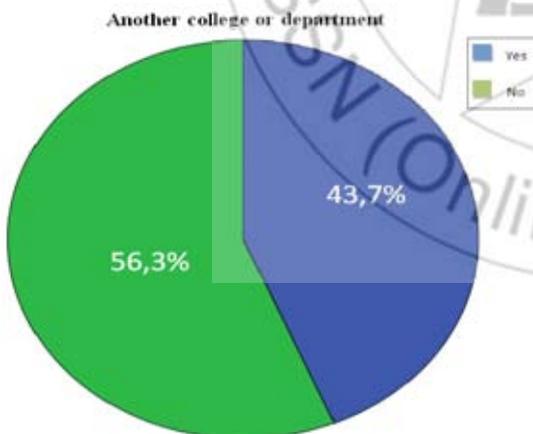
**Figure 8**



**Figure 6**



**Figure 9**



**Figure 7**

Also we found some of them (82%) do not feel ashamed of consulting a psychologist(see Fig. 8). the knowledge about mental health in student was very good ( 57.7%)(see Fig. 9)

## 5. Discussion

245 students participated in this study; half of them were medical students. In the findings of this study majority of the medical students were found suffering from anxiety and having unpleasant feelings like sadness and unhappiness, while nervousness and tenseness were higher in the other students that were majoring in other fields. Regarding the results of the symptoms of depression there was high percentage of students feeling pessimistic about their future.

Anxiety and depression can be considered an important elements for assessing the mental health, so the prevalence of anxiety in female medical students was found to be quarter of the population of this study and the percentage of students suffering from depression symptoms was high. However in a study made in Qassim University for 105 female medical students almost two-thirds of them were having anxiety and depression which is high when compared to this study<sup>12</sup>, and in a study made by Imam Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University were 191 medical students participated almost half of them were found having anxiety and depression which is double the result of this study and it can be explained due to the difference in the gender of the population<sup>13</sup>. Regarding the symptoms of depression in this study more than two-thirds were feeling pessimistic about future, half of them were not enjoying things as before, and less than half of the population were suffering from mental distraction and feeling tired after minimal effort. So it was found that the prevalence of the

symptoms of depression in almaarefa college students is higher compared to medical students in B.P. Koirala institute of health sciences in Nepal, which can be due to the difference in the teaching method, academic stress, tuition fees, and the decrease in the GPA which can affect their scholarship.

This study showed increased prevalence of anxiety and having unpleasant feelings such as being sad and unhappy in medical students more than in the other students who are majoring in different fields which may be explained by having different reasons such as having more responsibility of their learning, the difference in the teaching method, having more academic stress, personal factors, and the hectic life style they could be going through all these are main reasons for having changes in the mental health. Positive high results were noticed in this study that more than half of the population have very good knowledge about mental health when compared to a study done for medical and non-medical students and staff in Lahore, Pakistan<sup>14</sup>. This study also showed that more than three-quarters of the population are not ashamed of consulting a psychologist, which is a very high result compared to study that was done in university of California were less than quarter of the population were using mental health counseling<sup>15</sup>.

## 6. Conclusion

This study shows high significant of feeling sad and unhappiness was in medical students more than students in other collage, and other symptoms ( tenseness, anxiety, and nervous ) were similar in both medical students and non-medical students. The highly prevalence of symptoms of depression was feeling pessimistic about the future and not enjoying thing as before. The majority live with their family and had good GPA and those who developed decreasing in their GPA was during study in the collage. The majority of students not feel ashamed of consulting a psychologist. They have good knowledge about mental health.

## 7. Recommendation

- 1) Deal with negative stress factor to minimize of depression and mental deterioration
- 2) Power of fatalism and trust their god
- 3) Further study should connected in same way in advanced level

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