Depression Severity and Depression Stigma Among University Students: A Five Nation Survey

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Introduction

• Depression rates may be as high as 23.8% among university students1
• Stigmatized beliefs about depression constitute a barrier to seeking mental healthcare2
• Whether rates of depression and stigmatized beliefs are consistent across nations is unknown
• The goal of this study was to survey university students about depression and depression beliefs

Methods

• Three-part survey includes demographic section, Patient Health Questionnaire 9 (PHQ-9), and Depression Stigma Scale (DSS)

Results

• 1287 responses were obtained from students in the United States (n=593, 46.1%), United Arab Emirates (n=134, 10.4%), Taiwan (n=217, 16.9%), Egypt (n=105, 8.2%), and Czech Republic (n=238, 18.5%)
• 30.7% screened positive for depression (18.0% for major depressive disorder and 12.7% for other depressive disorder) (Fig. 1)
• Emirati, American, and Czech students were significantly more depressed than Taiwanese counterparts (p<0.001) (Fig. 2)
• Emirati students had the most personal stigma (p<0.001), followed by Egyptian, Czech, Taiwanese, and American students (Fig. 3)
• Egyptian students had the most perceived stigma (p<0.001) followed by Emirati, Taiwanese, American, and Czech students (Fig. 3)

Conclusions

• Prevalence of depression remains high among university students across multiple countries
• Rates of depression among students vary considerably between nations
• Degree of stigmatized beliefs varies significantly between students in multiple countries

References