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Short Communication**Mental health morbidity among medical students****Chincholikar Sanjeev Vasantrao and Surendra Kulkarni****Department of Community Medicine, MIMER Medical College, Talegaon Dabhade, Dist Pune 410507, India***QR Code*****Correspondence Info:**

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Article History:*Received:** 09/10/2017**Revised:** 25/10/2017**Accepted:** 27/10/2017**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.7439/ijbr.v8i10.4429>**Abstract**

Background: Mental morbidity is a state of mental and emotional discomfort. It often cripples the ability of the person to cope with day-to-day living. The undergraduate medical training is a stressful period and medical students undergo tremendous stress during various stages of the MBBS course.

Aims and Objective: To study mental health morbidity among undergraduate medical students using self reporting Questionnaire in a private medical college.

Materials and Methods: A cross-sectional study carried out among 331 MBBS students (178 females and 153 males) in a private medical college. A validated Self-Reporting Questionnaire (SRQ-20) was used for finding the probable psychiatric morbidity.

Results: The study population comprised of 331 students and all of them returned the filled questionnaire of which 41 % were females and 59% males. The composition of the study population was (first-year MBBS students, 75; second year MBBS students, 111; third-year MBBS students, 145). There were total 35 students having SRQ score more than 10 meaning that mental health morbidity was 11% (10.57%) among MBBS students.

Conclusion: Mental morbidity in medical students calls for early detection, intervention and support.

Keywords: Medical Students, Mental health morbidity, Self-reporting Questionnaire (SRQ-20).

1. Introduction

Mental morbidity is defined as unpleasant mental or emotional state, often impairing one's ability to cope with day-to-day living.[1] Mental morbidity may be of various types like, anxiety neurosis, Depression, Manic Depressive Distress and Schizophrenia.

Due to advancement in life-style and rapid urbanization, the mental health is disturbed by various reasons and mental disorders account for nearly 12% of the global burden of disease. By the year 2020, it is likely to account for 15% Disability Adjusted Life Year loss from 6.1% in 1993 and expected to become second most important cause of disability in the world.[2,3]

Mental health problems of medical students are a neglected subject up till now. The undergraduate medical training is a stressful period and medical students undergo tremendous stress during various stages of the MBBS course.

Increased number of medical students has amplified the competition especially in getting admissions to post graduate courses. Family responsibilities, financial condition of the family, peer pressure are the other factors which may lead to mental morbidity of students. All such factors have synergistic effect on the susceptibility of medical students to mental distress. High levels of stress for a long period leads to symptoms such as upset stomach, tremors, muscle tension, feeling restless, sleeplessness, extreme sadness or despair, a loss of interest in doing anything for example work, hobbies or hygiene; loss of appetite; weight loss, lack of energy .

Mental morbidity influences the academic performance, healthy habits and self-esteem.[4]

2. Material and methods

A cross-sectional study was carried out among the medical students of a private medical college. The participants in the study were medical students enrolled in a private medical college. Considering the prevalence of mental health morbidity as 10% to 60% as reported in various studies [5-12], estimated sample size was 331.

$$\text{Sample size} = 1.96 \times 1.96 \times 35 \times 65$$

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{-----} \\ & (15\% \text{ of } 35)^2 \\ & 8739.64 \\ = & \text{-----} \\ & 27.56 \\ = & 316 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} & = 5\% \text{ non- responsive error of sample size} \\ & = 316 + 15 \\ & = 331 \end{aligned}$$

The students who were present in the class and gave the consent were included in the study. A total of 331 students participated in the study.

A validated screening instrument SRQ was used to study the mental health morbidity Dr Chincholikar⁵ in his study in Pune, India, this tool was validated and found that SRQ score more than 10 may be considered as probable psychiatric morbidity. SRQ score equal or less than 10 is considered as no psychiatric morbidity. Experience for scientific utilization of SRQ was obtained under a qualified psychiatrist.

Information on socio demographic variables was collected. Written consent was taken from the students and they were asked to fill the questionnaire. Reasons for the study were explained. The study design was approved by the institutional research committee (I.E.C.). Socioeconomic status was assessed by using modified Prasad classification.[6]

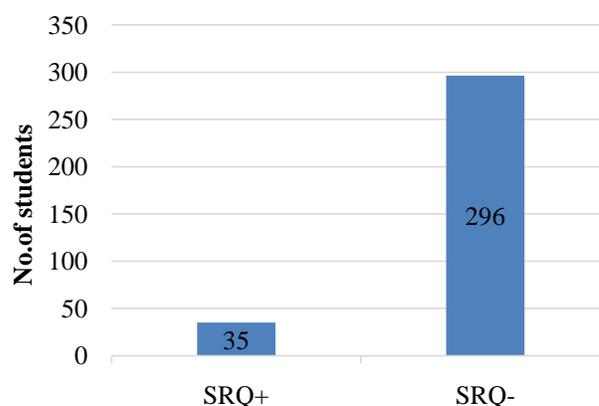
Annexure 2	
Self- Reporting Questionnaire	
1. Do you often have headache?	
2. Is your appetite poor?	
3. Do you sleep badly?	
4. Are you easily frightened?	
5. Do your hands shake?	
6. Do you feel tense, worried?	
7. Is your digestion poor?	
8. Do you have difficulty in thinking clearly?	
9. Do you feel unhappy?	
10. Do you cry more than usual?	
11. Do you feel difficult to enjoy your daily activities?	
12. Do you find difficult to take decisions?	
13. Is your daily work suffering?	
14. Are you unable to play a useful part in life?	
15. Have you lost interest in things?	
16. Do you feel that you are a worthless person?	
17. the thought of ending life in your mind?	
18. Do you feel tired all the time?	
19. Do you have uncomfortable feelings in stomach?	
20. Are you easily tired?	

3. Results

A total of 331 students participated in the study and all of them returned the filled questionnaire. The study population comprised of 41 % females and 59% males. The composition of the study population was - first-year MBBS 75; second year MBBS 111 and third-year MBBS 145 students. It is mentioned that in some tables total is not 331 indicating some students have not responded to that part of question.

It can be observed from Fig 1, there were total 35 students having SRQ score more than 10 meaning that mental health morbidity was 11% (10.57%) among MBBS students.

Figure 1: Mental health morbidity among medical students



It was observed that parameters like parent’s occupation, gender, type of family, attempts in earlier examination, peer pressure, self-addiction, as well as parent’s addiction, sports activity, were not associated with mental distress details of which are not mentioned in this study.

4. Discussion

As revealed from Fig 1, mental health morbidity among medical students was 11%. A high mental morbidity among medical students is a cause of concern as it may alter behavior of students, affect their learning. Studies carried out in other countries and in other states of India have reported still higher prevalence of stress among medical undergraduates. A study conducted in Mumbai (India) reported that 73% of the students perceived stress at some point or the other during their medical schooling.[7]. In another study in India, prevalence was reported as 15%.[8] Chatterjee in her study, reported prevalence of mental distress as 14.5%.[9] It reveals that prevalence of mental disorder varied in different studies. Different parameters have been used in these studies to measure the stress. This limits the comparability among these studies.

5. Conclusion

Mental health morbidity was 11% among medical students in a private medical college. The study revealed that sociodemographic risk factors like parents occupation, type of family, attempts in earlier examination, peer pressure, self-addiction, as well as parents addiction, sports activity, gender, residence (urban, rural), year of MBBS study of the subjects are not associated with mental distress details of which are not mentioned in this study .

6. Recommendations

High mental morbidity in medical students calls for early detection, intervention and support. It is therefore suggested that psychological counseling center may be established at each medical college. Recreation and entertainment acts as a buffer and releases stress and elevates mood. Confidence should be created in medical students to seek help for probable psychiatric symptoms and associated stigma should be removed.

7. Limitations

The study was conducted in a private medical school. Sample may not be representative. The study results cannot be generalized. Entire study is based on verbal response of the students. Longitudinal studies on a representative sample, involving more medical schools are needed to substantiate the findings.

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Conflicts of interest: There are no conflicts of interest.

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