



GROWING DEPRESSION AMONG STUDENTS AND ITS IMPACT ON LIFE

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Abstract

Students are not exempt from the prevalent mental health issue of depression, which affects people of all ages. Growing depression among students can significantly affect their quality of life, education, and opportunities for the future. This abstract attempt to explore the factors that lead to student depression and its effects while highlighting the pressing necessity to deal with this problem.

According to research, financial hardships, social isolation, academic pressure, and bad lifestyle choices are the main contributors to depression in students. Poor academic achievement, substance misuse, self-harm, suicide, and a decline in mental and physical health are just a few of the negative effects these issues may have. Students' daily lives, interpersonal interactions, and future prospects are all impacted by depression. It may result in low motivation, social isolation, and cognitive impairment.

Key Words: Mental health, Depression, Teenagers, Adolescence, Clinical Interview

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Introduction

People of all ages, genders, and socioeconomic backgrounds are susceptible to depression, a common mental health problem. Due to a variety of reasons, including their reluctance to ask for help and express their thoughts, it is unfortunate that it is frequently underrecognized and neglected in adolescents. Significant morbidity and mortality linked to depressive illnesses might result from this. Recognising and addressing this issue are essential if long-term harmful effects are to be avoided.

It was often thought that children lacked the mental and cognitive development necessary to exhibit symptoms of depressive illnesses.

Recent research, however, has refuted this idea and shown that children and adolescents do experience the whole range of mood disorders. Furthermore, research have shown that depression affects adolescents frequently, with rates ranging from 10% to 60%.

Teenagers are especially susceptible to depression as they pass from infancy to adulthood. This period is characterised by emotional lability and behavioural adjustments brought on by hormonal changes. As a result, diagnosing depression in adolescents can be difficult, making it even more important to raise awareness of the condition and develop better screening and diagnostic methods. Unfortunately, more than 70% of kids who have depression don't get the right care. This emphasises the necessity of efficient treatment approaches and early identification. The fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders lists depressed moods, psychomotor agitation or retardation, diminished interest or pleasure, insomnia, fatigue or loss of energy, impaired concentration, significant weight loss, feelings of worthlessness or excessive guilt, and more as symptoms of depression. For diagnosis and therapy, a mix of diagnostic instruments and clinical interviews is frequently employed.

For the purpose of creating prevention and control measures, it is essential to evaluate the severity of depression among adolescents and the associated sociodemographic characteristics. This entails determining the risk factors for developing depression, such as a person's family history, environmental stressors, and traumatic life events. Healthcare providers can create focused strategies to alleviate depression and stop its long-term detrimental effects by recognising these characteristics.

In conclusion, depression affects many adolescents' mental health, yet it is frequently underdiagnosed and neglected. To avoid long-term

negative effects, such as social and academic deficits, higher risk of substance abuse, and suicide, it is imperative to identify and address this issue. We can successfully treat teenage depression and enhance their general wellbeing by establishing tailored therapies, enhancing screening and diagnostic tools, and improving diagnostic methods.

Analysis

The respondents in the aforementioned survey ranged in age from 17 to 27. We deduced from the survey's results that university students frequently worry about mental health difficulties, and that there is a need for more help and resources to address this problem. It also emphasises how critical it is to eliminate the stigma associated with mental illness and to encourage open dialogue about it. University students who experience depression may find it difficult to focus, which highlights the significance of getting professional assistance to deal with these symptoms. University students' emotions, such as feelings of impatience and anger, can be significantly impacted by depression, which emphasises the significance of getting professional support to deal with these symptoms. Feeling overwhelmed or stressed while studying in college is a normal experience for many students, but it is important to address these feelings before they become overwhelming and affect academic performance or mental health. It's important for individuals who are experiencing symptoms of depression to seek professional help, such as talking to a therapist or counselor or consulting with a mental health professional. There are also many strategies that can help manage depression, such as medication, psychotherapy, exercise, and healthy sleep and eating habit. Where may students hesitate to seek for help for mental health where It's worth noting that seeking help for mental health issues can be a challenging and stigmatized experience for some individuals, which may contribute to the low proportion of students who have sought help to encourage more students to seek help when needed.

Prevalence of Depression

Adolescents are not exempt from the effects of depression, which is a widespread mental health issue. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that over 264 million individuals experience depression globally. Due to the emotional instability brought on by the transition from childhood to maturity, adolescents are particularly prone to depression. According to studies, depression affects between 10% and 60% of teenagers.

The effects of depression can be severe and protracted, adversely affecting a person's mood, behaviour, and general well-being. Depression can raise the risk of substance misuse, self-harm, and suicide as well as cause problems at work, school, and in interpersonal relationships. One of the main factors causing disability and the fourth biggest contribution to the global illness burden is depression.

Depression is more common in some countries and regions than others, with low- and middle-income nations reporting the highest prevalence rates. It is believed that the gap in prevalence is brought about by issues including social and economic inequality, poverty, and restricted access to mental health care. Depression can be effectively treated with psychotherapy, medicine, and daily living style adjustments like exercising and eating well. However, due to a number of circumstances, including as stigma, a lack of access to care, and insufficient resources, many people who suffer from depression do not receive proper treatment. It is significant to remember that depression is curable, and that persons with depression can benefit from early intervention.

Addressing the prevalence of depression requires a comprehensive approach that includes increased awareness, improved access to mental health services, and reduced stigma surrounding mental illness. By addressing the factors contributing to the prevalence of depression and providing effective treatment and support, we can reduce the burden of this mental health problem and improve the well-being of individuals and communities.

Depression Among University Students In India:

In India, there is a rising worry about depression among university students. Studies on this population's high frequency of depression in recent years have been emphasised. In India, university students had signs of depression to the extent of 56%, according to one study. Academic stress, financial strains, social isolation, and cultural expectations are some of the factors that university students in India experience depression.

Academic stress is a significant factor in the development of depression among university students in India. The pressure to succeed academically and secure employment after graduation can be overwhelming, leading to feelings of anxiety and hopelessness. In addition, the lack of adequate support and resources for mental health issues on university campuses can exacerbate the problem.

Another significant factor in Indian university students' depression is financial pressures. Many

students come from low-income families who find it difficult to cover expenses like housing, food, and other essentials. Financial stress can result in low self-esteem, powerlessness, and hopelessness, which can all contribute to depression.

Another typical problem among Indian university students is social isolation. Many pupils who attend this school are transplants from other regions of the nation and struggle to fit in. Students who don't have a support system may feel isolated and alienated, which can cause unhappiness and depression.

University students in India may experience depression as a result of cultural expectations. Family and societal pressures to live up to expectations and conventions from the past can be a major source of stress and anxiety. For instance, feeling obligated to follow particular professional routes or get married by a certain age might result in melancholy and feelings of unworthiness.

It is important to address the prevalence of depression among university students in India through increased awareness, access to mental health resources, and supportive environments. Universities can play a critical role in providing counseling services, mental health education, and creating a supportive community for students. Additionally, parents, teachers, and society as a whole can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues and provide support and resources to those in need.

Causes And Prevention Of Depression Among Students:

Depression among university students is a significant mental health concern that can have profound impacts on their academic, social, and personal lives. It is a complex issue that can arise from various factors, including academic stress, social isolation, financial difficulties, relationship problems, and family issues. Understanding these causes is crucial to developing strategies to prevent and address depression among university students.

- **Academic stress** is one of the main reasons why college students experience depression. For some children, the pressure to perform well on exams, satisfy high expectations, and achieve academically can be too much. Students frequently believe that getting the best marks is necessary to land a good job or be accepted to graduate school. Because of the competition and high expectations, people may feel inadequate and anxious, which can worsen depression. Burnout, which can make students feel helpless and unmotivated, can result from the ongoing stress of deadlines, tests, and assignments.

- **Social isolation** is another typical factor in university students' depression. University life can be difficult socially, especially if you're timid, introverted, or from a foreign culture. Students who find it difficult to establish friends or who feel left out of social events may experience feelings of loneliness, alienation, and disconnection that can worsen melancholy.
- **Social media and technology** can also exacerbate this problem, because student could feel like they are missing out on social activities or that their achievements fall short of those of their peers.
- **Financial difficulties** are a key contributor to depression in college students. For many students, the hefty cost of tuition, books, and living expenses can be a substantial financial strain. Students who must put in long hours at work to support themselves or their families may find it difficult to juggle their academic and employment obligations, which can result in stress, exhaustion, and melancholy. Financial challenges can also make it difficult for students to participate in extracurricular activities or social gatherings, which can worsen feelings of loneliness and social isolation.
- **Relationship problems(both romantic and platonic)** can also exacerbate depression in college students. Breakups, arguments, and misunderstandings with friends or love partners can cause emotions of worry, loneliness, and rejection that can worsen depression. Students who struggle to build and maintain relationships could feel distant and alone, which can cause depressive symptoms.
- **Family** issue, a lack of supportive relationships, and parental expectations can all lead to depression in college students. Family problems can be caused by a number of things, such as divorce, money problems, cultural differences, and parental expectations. Students who have dysfunctional families, unsupportive parents, or who feel pressure to achieve academic or financial success may experience high levels of stress and anxiety, which may eventually result in depression.

Preventing and addressing depression among university students

- It necessitates a comprehensive strategy. Universities and mental health professionals can take a number of actions to assist students in overcoming depression's causes and fostering good mental health. Increasing awareness and reducing the stigma associated with mental health concerns are two successful strategies. Universities can assist students cope with stress and worry and stop the onset of depression by offering mental health resources and counselling services.

- Fostering social bonds and a feeling of community among students is another tactic. Universities can provide a range of social gatherings and activities that support tolerance and diversity, including volunteer opportunities, cultural clubs, and student organisations. These activities might lessen students' feelings of social isolation and loneliness by fostering friendships and connections with their classmates.
- Financial assistance programmes can also help university students feel less stressed about money and lower their risk of developing depression. Scholarships, financial aid, and employment opportunities can ease students' financial burdens by enabling them to pay for the high cost of tuition and living expenses.
- Finally, Universities can provide students with academic support services like counselling to assist them deal with the pressure and stress of their studies. Workshops on study techniques, time management instruction, and academic counselling are a few examples of these services.

Symptoms of Depression in University Students

Depression can manifest in different ways, and the symptoms can vary from person to person. Some of the most common symptoms of depression in university students in India include:

- **Persistent Sadness:** Persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and emptiness are hallmark symptoms of depression. Students could experience a sense of being engulfed in a thick cloud and unable to escape. These emotions can be debilitating and may persist for weeks or more. Additionally, they could have fits of crying or feelings of worthlessness and guilt because they think their emotions are out of control. A student's social life and academic performance might be affected by persistent sorrow, therefore it's crucial to get professional assistance if these symptoms continue.
- **Loss of Interest:** Students who are depressed may find themselves less interested in hobbies, sports, and socialising than they formerly were. They could experience a lack of desire and feel as though they have lost their sense of purpose. This may result in feelings of loneliness and isolation, which may worsen depression. Students should continue participating in activities that make them happy and seek assistance if they are having trouble staying motivated.
- **Fatigue:** Fatigue, a typical sign of depression, can have an effect on a student's day-to-day activities. They could experience physical exhaustion and struggle to do everyday tasks. They could still feel worn out and lethargic even after getting enough sleep. Due to this, it could be

challenging for them to socialise or enjoy the things they used to like. It's crucial to address exhaustion as a sign of depression and to get support if it's interfering with daily life.

- **Sleep Disturbances:** Depression can cause students to have difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep, leading to insomnia. They may also experience nightmares or vivid dreams that disrupt their sleep. Lack of sleep can further exacerbate feelings of fatigue and can make it difficult for students to concentrate on academic work. Addressing sleep disturbances is an important part of treating depression.

- **Appetite Changes:** Depression can cause changes in appetite, including overeating or undereating. Students may turn to food as a way to cope with their negative feelings, leading to weight gain. On the other hand, some students may lose their appetite and may experience weight loss. These changes in appetite can further exacerbate feelings of low self-esteem and self-worth. It is important to address changes in appetite as a symptom of depression and to seek help if they persist.

- **Concentration Difficulties:** Depression can make it difficult for students to concentrate on academic work, leading to poor grades and academic performance. They may struggle to remember information and may feel like they are falling behind in their studies. These difficulties can further exacerbate feelings of worthlessness and can make it difficult for students to find motivation to complete academic tasks. Addressing concentration difficulties is an important part of treating depression and improving academic performance.

- **Suicidal Thoughts:** In severe cases, depression can lead to suicidal thoughts and behavior. Students may feel like life is not worth living and may contemplate suicide as a way to escape their pain. They may also engage in self-harm behaviors, such as cutting or burning themselves. It is important to seek help immediately if you or someone you know is experiencing suicidal thoughts or behaviors.

Impact of Depression on University Students in India

Depression is a serious mental health issue that affects people of all ages, including university students in India. The impact of depression on university students can be profound, affecting academic performance, social relationships, physical health, and career opportunities. Let us delve deeper into each of these impacts.

Academic Performance: The performance of a student at institute might be significantly impacted by depression. Poor academic performance can result from depression, which can also cause concentration problems, memory recall issues, and a lack of drive to study. The cognitive side-effects of depression can be particularly difficult for students, who may find it difficult to retain knowledge, finish tasks, and do well on tests.

Additionally, depression can result in absenteeism, which increases the likelihood that children will perform poorly academically by skipping classes, examinations, and assignments. Students may withdraw from their academic duties if they feel overburdened and unable to handle the demands of university life. Missing classes and assignments can make depression symptoms worse, which perpetuates a vicious cycle of subpar academic performance and declining mental health.

Social Relationships: Students who are depressed may find it difficult to establish and sustain social connections. Students may experience feelings of loneliness, isolation, and alienation from their peers, which can worsen depressive symptoms. A student suffering from depression may find it difficult to organise or take part in social activities, which can result in feelings of social isolation and disengagement.

Additionally, depressed students may find it difficult to speak clearly, which can cause misunderstandings and make it harder to make friends. Students' social lives are crucial to their overall wellbeing, and a lack of them can lead to feelings of hopelessness and melancholy.

Physical Health: There are various ways in which depression might harm a student's physical health. Sleep issues, exhaustion, and appetite problems are some of the signs of depression. Lack of sleep can make it difficult for a student to focus and can have an impact on their academic performance. Having trouble staying awake during lectures may cause students to miss class, which will make their academic difficulties worse.

Appetite: Additionally, depression can affect appetite, which can result in overeating or a lack of appetite. In contrast to a lack of appetite, which can lead to malnutrition and poor physical health, overeating can contribute to weight gain. In addition to contributing to poor physical health and a worsening of depressed symptoms, depression can also result in a lack of physical activity.

Career Opportunities: Depression can impact a student's career opportunities, both during and after

university. Poor academic performance and a lack of social skills can make it challenging for students to find employment after graduation. Employers often look for candidates who can work well in a team, communicate effectively, and handle stress well. Depression can impact all these skills, making it challenging to find employment opportunities.

Additionally, sadness might affect a student's capacity for networking and forging connections with future employers. Finding a job after graduation requires a lot of networking. Students may find it difficult to connect with experts in their field due to depression and a lack of social skills, which may further restrict their career options.

The stigma associated with mental health problems can hinder a student's work prospects. Many students may feel embarrassed or humiliated to talk about their depression difficulties, which can hinder their ability to get support and assistance. Students with depression may have fewer employment options because employers may be reluctant to recruit applicants who have mental health difficulties. Universities must offer assistance and resources to help students manage their depression and advance their job prospects. Universities can assist students enhance their talents and get past depression-related obstacles by providing career counselling services, mental health programmes, and other resources.

Treatment Options for Depression in University Students

India's university students are not exempt from the prevalent mental health disease known as depression, which affects people of all ages. In India, depression is relatively common among university students, and it can result in a variety of detrimental effects, such as academic failure, social disengagement, and suicidal thinking. Fortunately, depression among Indian university students can be successfully treated using a variety of methods. The most popular therapies for treating depression among Indian university students will be covered in this article.

- **Psychotherapy:** In psychotherapy, you meet with a mental health expert to speak about your issues and how to handle them. Psychotherapy is a type of talk therapy. One of the most often utilised types of psychotherapy for depression is cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT). The main goal of CBT is to spot depressive thought patterns, including catastrophizing or negative self-talk, and replace them with more upbeat and realistic ones. The therapy also entails learning coping mechanisms and approaches to deal with difficult feelings and circumstances. CBT may be especially beneficial

for Indian university students since it can help them learn how to deal with the stresses of social pressures, academic expectations, and other issues that are specific to their age group.

- **Medications:** In India, antidepressant drugs are frequently used to treat depression in university students. Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) and serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs) are two classes of antidepressants that are frequently used for depression. These drugs function by raising the concentrations of brain chemicals like serotonin and norepinephrine that control mood. These drugs may be helpful, but they may take a few weeks to start functioning, and they may have unwanted side effects like nausea, vertigo, or sexual dysfunction. University students should also be careful not to take any drugs that can make them drowsy or otherwise affect their ability to concentrate on their studies.

- **Exercise:** Exercise on a regular basis can help Indian university students with depression. Exercise releases natural mood enhancers called endorphins. Students who exercise regularly can feel less stressed and have better overall health. Additionally, engaging in physical activities that you enjoy and find energising can be a beneficial way to take a break from academic work. University students in India can consider incorporating fitness into their daily schedule by taking a yoga or dancing class, riding a bike or walking to class, or joining a sports team.

- **Mindfulness:** A type of meditation called mindfulness entails paying attention to the current moment without passing judgement. Students at universities can benefit from this practise by feeling less stressed and anxious, which can lessen the symptoms of depression. Students at universities can benefit from mindfulness by learning self-awareness and self-compassion, which can enhance general wellbeing. By setting aside time each day to concentrate on their breath or other sensory sensations, university students in India can practise mindfulness. They can also do this by taking part in a guided meditation session or programme.

- **Self-Care:** Self-care techniques can help Indian university students who are depressed manage their condition. Getting enough sleep, maintaining a nutritious diet, spending time with friends and family, and participating in enjoyable and relaxing hobbies are all examples of self-care practises. University students can manage academic stresses and put their own well-being first by practising self-care. University students can also gain from asking friends, family, or a mental health professional for social support.

- **Group Therapy:** For university students, group therapy can be a useful approach to get support and inspiration from those going through similar problems. University students who feel alone or isolated may benefit from the sense of camaraderie that group therapy can give them. Group therapy can be led by a mental health professional or peer support group and may involve practising skills like communication or coping.

- **Lifestyle Changes:** Making lifestyle adjustments can help Indian university students who are depressed manage their condition. For instance, cutting back on caffeine intake, stopping smoking, and alcohol and drug use can all help to elevate mood and lessen the symptoms of depression. Students at universities should also try incorporating healthy behaviours like consistent exercise, a balanced diet, and enough sleep into their daily schedule. Additionally, university students can gain from taking breaks from their studies and participating in fun activities.

Conclusion

University students' depression is a complicated, multifaceted issue that can have a variety of effects on their life. According to the research, there are many stressors and difficulties that students face nowadays that can hasten the onset of depression. These stresses can include, among others, familial problems, financial stress, social isolation, and pressure in the classroom. Additionally, some students may find it challenging to adjust to university life, which can result in emotions of homesickness, loneliness, and worry. Although the signs and symptoms of depression can vary greatly, they frequently include melancholy, a sense of helplessness, and despair, as well as a loss of interest in once-pleasurable activities. In addition to having altered appetites and sleeping schedules, many students also struggle with concentration and decision-making. Students may find it challenging to prosper and thrive in their university careers as a result of these symptoms, which can affect quality of life in general and academic performance in particular. Despite the high rate of depression among college students, only a small percentage of them have sought treatment for mental health problems. This may be caused by a variety of things, such as stigma, a lack of knowledge about mental health, and difficulties in obtaining supports for mental health. Many students can be reluctant to ask for assistance because they don't want to come off as needy or burdensome.

Universities can take a number of proactive measures to support students' mental health to address this issue. This may entail increasing the

number of counselling services and mental health resources on campus, offering outreach and education programmes in this area, and working with local mental health organisations to offer off-campus support. In order to foster a more accepting and inclusive campus culture, universities must also work to lessen stigma and raise awareness of mental health issues.

Ultimately, addressing the growing problem of depression among university students is crucial for promoting academic success and maintaining good mental health. By taking proactive steps to support the mental health of students, universities can help to create a more supportive and inclusive campus culture that benefits everyone.

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