

A Study to Assess the Knowledge, Attitude and Practices on Mental Health among Higher Secondary Students in Selected Institutions of East Khasi Hills District, Shillong Meghalaya

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Abstract

Mental health is a vital component of adolescent well-being, influencing academic performance, social functioning, and quality of life. This study aimed to assess the knowledge, attitude, and practices related to mental health among higher secondary students. A descriptive cross-sectional design was adopted, and 300 students were selected using stratified disproportionate random sampling. Data were collected through validated structured questionnaires. The findings revealed that 61.0% of students had average knowledge, 31.3% had good knowledge, and 7.7% had poor knowledge regarding mental health. A favorable attitude was observed among 98.3% of participants. Common practices to maintain mental wellbeing included physical activity, listening to music, and seeking support from trusted individuals. Awareness is required to enhance the mental well being of the adolescent.

Methods

A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 300 higher secondary students selected using stratified disproportionate random sampling. Data were collected using validated structured questionnaires to assess knowledge, attitude, and practices related to mental health.

Results

The study revealed that 61.0% of students had average knowledge, 31.3% had good knowledge, and 7.7% had poor knowledge regarding mental health. A favorable attitude towards mental health was observed in 98.3% of participants. Common practices for emotional management included physical activity or listening to music (52.3%) and talking to a trusted person (29.0%). Nearly half of the students preferred seeking help from parents or guardians for substance abuse-related issues.

Keywords: Mental health; Adolescents; Higher secondary students; Knowledge; Attitude; Practices; School-based mental health.

Introduction

Mental health has been defined as a state of wellbeing in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to contribute to his or her surroundings. Mental health is an essential aspect of overall wellbeing especially during adolescence. School students face various challenges such as academic pressure, social relationship emotional changes impact their mental health. Unfortunately, mental health issues often go unrecognized and untreated leading to negative consequences on academic performance, relationship, and overall quality of life

Hence, this study was carried out to evaluate the level of the knowledge, attitude, and practices on mental health and to find out the associations between the knowledge, attitude, and practices with the selected socio – demographic variables among higher secondary students in selected institutions of East Khasi Hills district, Shillong, Meghalaya.

Objectives of the Study

Primary objectives:

1. To assess the knowledge on mental health among higher secondary students.
2. To determine the attitude towards mental health among the higher secondary students.
3. To identify the practices adopted to maintain their mental wellbeing among higher secondary students.

Secondary objective:

1. To find out the associations between the knowledge, attitude, and practices with the selected socio-demographic variables.

Research Hypothesis

There will be significant associations between knowledge, attitude practice towards mental health with selected socio demographic variables.

Research Methodology

Research Design

A descriptive cross-sectional study design was used to conduct the research study.

Research Setting

The study was conducted in two Institutes: Kendriya Vidyalaya School NEHU and BSF Senior Secondary School, Shillong Meghalaya.

Study Population

The study samples included were higher secondary school students both male and female.

Sampling Design

Sample Size Calculation: The sample size calculation adopted was an attempt for total census enumeration

Sampling Technique: A stratified disproportionate random sampling method (Attempt for total census enumeration from arts, science, and commerce stream) technique was adopted.

Sample Size: The sample size was 300.

Description of The Tool

The data collection tool were developed which consists of four (4) sections:

Section I: Demographic proforma which includes age (in years), gender, class, stream (arts/science/commerce).

Section II: A self-administered Questionnaire of 25 items to assess the knowledge regarding mental health based on various domains (over all knowledge, depression/suicide, anxiety/stress/eating disorder, substance abuse, internet/AI use) that was taken from school health programme.

Section III: A 5-point Likert scale of 10 items was used to assess the school students' attitude towards mental

health.. The content included the opinions and concerns towards mental health on various domains (over all knowledge, depression/suicide, anxiety/stress/eating disorder, substance abuse, internet/AI use) that was taken from school health programmed.

Section IV: A 10items self-administered questionnaire related to practice towards mental health and items covers the various domains (over all knowledge, depression/suicide, anxiety/stress/eating disorder, substance abuse, internet/AI use) that were taken from school health programmed.

Validity of Tool

The content validity was obtained from 9 experts from department of psychiatry from various medical Institutes. The experts were requested to give their valuable opinions. Based on their suggestion and opinion, minor changes and modifications were made.

Data Collection Procedure

Approval was obtained from Review and monitoring Committee and the Institute Ethics Committee (IEC) at NEIGRIHMS. Subsequently, permission obtained from the Principals of the concerned schools where the study took place. Once institutional approvals were in place, potential participants were provided with an information sheet that detailed the study's purpose and procedures. Following this, written ascent or consent was obtained from all individuals participating in the study. The actual data collection phase involved using specific tools: a structured questionnaire to gather data on the participants knowledge and practice, while a 5-point scale was employed to assess their attitude. The final step in the procedure involved the analysis of all collected data using both descriptive and inferential statistics.

Scoring Method and Interpretation

Section I: It consists of socio demographic characteristics and was not scored.

Section II: The maximum score was 25 and the minimum was zero. Scores were interpreted as good, average, and poor with the score range of 20 to 25, 14to19 and 0 to 13 respectively

Section III: Positive statements were scored 5 ,4,3,2,1 with reverse scoring for the negative statements.

Analysis and Interpretation

Finding Related To the Demographic Data of The Participants

Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of the participants according to demographic data n=300

Variables	Participants	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
AGE (in years)		
15-17	153	51
18-20	147	49
GENDER		
Female	158	52.7
Male	142	47.3
CLASS		
11 th	184	61.3
12 th	116	38.7
STREAM		
Science	180	60
Arts	68	22.7
Commerce	52	17.3
OCCUPATION OF PARENTS		
Government services	122	40.7
Others	75	25
Business	65	21.7
Private services	32	10.7
Retired	6	2

Table 1 shows that there were in total of 300 participants out of which there were 153(51.0%) participants belongs to age group 15-17 years and 147(49.0%) participants belongs to the age group of 18-20 years. The distribution according to the gender shows that out of 300 participants 142(47.3%) were male and 158(52.7%) were female. 184(61.3%) participants were taken from class 11 and 116(38.7%) were taken from class 12th, out of which 180(60.0%) participants belong to science stream, 52(17.3%) participants belong to Commerce, and 68(22.7%) participants belongs to Arts. The distribution of the occupational status of the parents according to various sectors reveals that there were 122(40.7%) people working under government services, 32(10.7%) were under private sector, 6(2.0%) were retired, 65(21.7%) were businessman and 75(25.0%) was working in others sector.

Findings Related To The Knowledge of The Participants On Mental Health

Table 2: Frequency and percentage distribution of the participants knowledge on mental health. n=300

Knowledge	Range of scoring	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Mean
Good	20-25	94	31.3	17.65
	(≥76.0%)			
Average	14-19	183	61	
	(≥51-75%)			
Poor	0-13	23	7.7	
	(≤50%)			

Table 2 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of participants knowledge towards mental health. The knowledge score obtained by the participants out of maximum possible score of 25. The table depicts that majority of the participants 183(61.0%) had average knowledge regarding mental health, 23(7.7%) had poor

knowledge and only 94(31.3%) of them had good knowledge regarding mental health. This also reveals that majority of the participants in the selected institutions had an average knowledge towards mental health.

Findings Related To The Attitude of The Participants Towards Mental Health

Table 3: Frequency and percentage distribution of the participants attitude towards mental health. n=300

Attitude Category	Score	Participants Response		Mean
		Frequency	Percentage	
		(f)	(%)	
Favourable	26-50	295	98.3	
Unfavourable	Oct-25	5	1.7	

Table 3: The data presented in the above table shows that out of 300 participants, majority of them that is 295(98.3%) participants have favourable attitude while only 5(1.7%) participants have unfavourable.

Expressed Practices Adopted By The Participants To Maintain Their Mental Wellbeing

Figure 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of participants regarding the strategy to deal with stress. n= 300

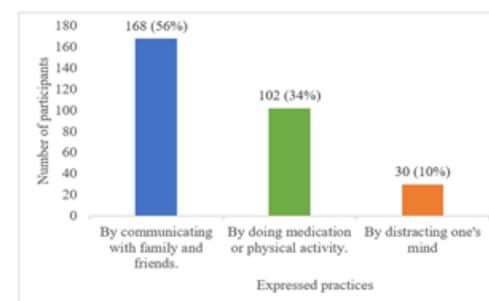


Figure 1 Depicts frequency and percentage distribution of participants regarding practice on strategy to deal with stress. The figure shows that out of 300 participants, 168(56.0%) responded by communicating with family and friends, 102 (34.0%) responded by doing medication or physical activity and 30 (10.0%) participants responded by distracting one's mind.

Association between Knowledge, Attitude and Practice Towards Mental Health With Selected Socio-Demographic Variables

Table 4: Association between knowledge towards mental health with selected socio-demographic variables N=300

Demographic variables	Level of knowledge						P value
	Good		Average		Poor		
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	
Age (years)	(f)	(%)	(f)	(%)	(f)	(%)	
15-17	56	18.6	88	29.33	9	3	0.138
18-20	38	12.66	95	31.66	14	4.66	
Gender							
Male	32	11	91	30.33	19	6.33	0.001*
Female	62	20.6	92	30.6	4	1.33	
Class							
11 th	63	21	104	34.66	17	5.6	0.112
12 th	31	10.3	79	13.66	6	2	
Stream							
Science	68	21.66	106	35.33	6	2	
Commerce	9	3	36	12	7	2.33	0.001*
Arts	17	5.6	41	13.66	10	3.33	

Table 4 The above table depicts the association between the gender of respondent and the knowledge regarding mental health where the calculated value was found to be 0.001 which is less than the value of $p > 0.05$ level of significance. Hence there is an association between gender of respondent and knowledge regarding mental health.

In the association between the stream of respondent and the knowledge regarding mental health where the calculated value was found to be 0.001 which is less than the value of $p > 0.05$ level of significance. Hence there is an association between stream of respondent and knowledge regarding mental health.

Discussion

Mental health is an essential aspect of overall wellbeing especially during adolescence. School students face various challenges such as academic pressure, social relationship, emotional changes impact their mental health. The aim of study is to assess the knowledge, attitude, and practices on mental health among higher secondary students in selected institutions of East Khasi Hills district, Shillong Meghalaya.” In the present study it was found that among 300 participants majority of the participants 61.0% (183) have average knowledge regarding mental health, 98.3% (295) have favorable

attitude towards mental health and participants adopt various positive practices such as communication, physical activity, self-compassion and seeking support to maintain mental wellbeing. There is a significant association between knowledge attitude and practice regarding mental health among the students based on different demographic variables.

Similarly in a study conducted by Shobha Misra, Rajat Oswal, Mehul Patel, and Anu Patel (2022) found that among 59 students from 8th to 12th standard, the 50th percentile scores for knowledge and attitude-practice were 55.77% and 63.64% respectively. The average overall knowledge score was 56.26%, with no significant gender differences. Nearly half of the participants believed that temples and faith healers were treatment options. However, a majority (96%) were aware of medical treatments.

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