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Patterns of Health Status: A Study of University Students in Meerut City

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ABSTRACT

Background: Health is a multidimensional concept encompassing physical, mental, and social well-being, essential for personal development, academic success, and long-term productivity. Globally, research indicates a concerning decline in the health status of young adults, particularly university students. **Objective:** Our paper aimed to assess the patterns of health status among university students. **Methods:** This study was based on descriptive research design. A sample size of 300 students was selected through simple random sampling method from a university in Meerut city of Uttar Pradesh state in India. Data had been collected through online self-administered questionnaire and analyzed by using simple statistical techniques and SPSS. **Result:** The study highlighted that majority of respondents occasionally experienced laziness, stress, body pain, and eye strain, while anxiety, sleep troubles and digestive problems were rarely reported among them. Social support during illness was sometimes available to most of the respondents, though a small portion among them never received it. More than half of the respondents occasionally skipped meal. Overall, the findings show the moderate health and lifestyle challenges, with occasional stress and discomfort being more common than severe or chronic issues. **Conclusion:** Thus, the study reveals significant insights into the physical, mental, and lifestyle-related health trends among the students. The findings underscore the importance of promoting balanced lifestyles, regular health check-ups, and mental well-being initiatives within university settings.

Keywords: Health, Health Status, Patterns, University Students, Meerut City.

Introduction

Good health is a prerequisite for the adequate functioning of any individual or society. In general terms ‘health’ can be defined as ‘the ability to function’. If our health is sound, we can engage in numerous

types of activities. But if we are ill, or distressed, or injured, we may face the curtailment of our usual round of daily life and we may also become so pre-occupied with our state of health that other pursuits are of secondary importance or quite meaningless (Cockerham, 1998) [1]. Sociologist Talcott Parsons (1951) [2] defines health as 'the state of optimum capacity of an individual for the effective performance of the roles and tasks for which he has been socialized. The leading organization in the field of health, World Health Organization (WHO) talks about an inclusive approach in relation to health. It defines health in terms as 'a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of any disease or infirmity' (Nagla, 2018) [3].

There are few studies assessing health status of College students. Kamble et al. (2016)[4] evaluated oral hygiene awareness and practices using a pretested questionnaire. The findings revealed that all students brushed their teeth daily using a toothbrush and toothpaste, the vast majority (98.7%) abstained from tobacco, and all abstained from alcohol. Only 13.2% knowingly used fluoride toothpaste and 67.4% were unaware of the fluoride content in their paste. Although 74.7% rated their oral health as good, 27.7% had experienced dental pain or discomfort in the past year, with toothache being the most common reason for a dental visit. Kamble et al. (2016)[5] assessed knowledge of hand hygiene practices using the world health organization's and hygiene questionnaire. The study revealed moderate level of knowledge among students. The importance of hand hygiene after emptying a bedpan (80%) or after visible blood exposure (72.7%) but significant gaps in others including understanding the main root of pathogen transmission (27.2%) and the correct use of alcohol based rubs (38.1%) new the require the 22nd duration. Logaraj et al. (2016)[6] found a high prevalence of pre-hypertension (49.6%) and hypertension (19.1%) among the study population. Significant associations were identified between pre-hypertension and several cardiovascular risk factors, including age over 20 years, lack of regular physical exercise, and a Body Mass Index (BMI) greater than 25kg/m^2. Rawat et al. (2016)[7] found a high prevalence (58%) of depression, with 43% exhibiting mild, 12% moderate, and 3% severe symptoms. Factors significantly associated with higher risk of depression included being in a junior year of study, financial stress, substance abuse, a family history of depression, family problems, and personal health issues. Conversely, having a romantic partner and participating in extracurricular activities were identified as protective factors. Waghachavare et al. (2016)[8] found a high prevalence of psychological problems (67.5%), with anxiety (38.7%) and depression (31.9%) being the most common. Furthermore, 58.4% of female students reported menstrual problems, primarily dysmenorrheal. The study identified significant associations between psychological issues and factors such as educational stream (with arts students most affected), body image behavior, with only a minority of students consulting a doctor for reproductive or psychological issues. Yadav et al. (2016)[9] found a high prevalence of depression (57%) and anxiety (71%) among the student population, with the majority of cases being mild to moderate in severity. The study identified significant associations between these psychological morbidities and factors such as substance use, family problems, staying in a hostel, and a family history of depression or anxiety. Chand et al. (2016)[10] assessed the health practices and health status of 200 college students (aged 18–25) in Pune, India, using a descriptive research design and structured questionnaires. Results showed that 66% of

students had good health practices, while 51% reported good health status, with a significant association between the two ($p < 0.05$). Key findings highlighted that better health practices such as moderate alcohol use, adequate sleep, and physical activity, correlated with improved health status.

Joy (2018)[11] provided a comprehensive review of the multifaceted health and nutritional issues faced by adolescents, with a particular focus on Indian adolescent girls. The paper highlighted challenges such as malnutrition, anemia, obesity, poor dietary habits, early pregnancies, mental health issues, substance abuse, and gender inequality. Bhavani et al. (2019)[12] examined the physical activity patterns of 500 male college students in Chennai, India, revealing that only 41.4% engage in regular physical activity, with walking (34.3%) and gym workouts (30%) being the most common forms. Most students (49.8%) exercise 0–2 days per week, and 67.1% spend 30 minutes per session. Key motivators included enjoyment (41.5%) and fitness (23.2%), while the primary barrier is lack of time (32%). Sonthalia et al. (2022)[13] examined the prevalence and risk factors of stress among 236 college students (aged 18–30) in Giridih, Jharkhand, India, using the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10). The results revealed that 89% of students experienced moderate stress, while 6% reported high stress. The study, conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighted the significant mental health burden on students due to academic, social, and psychological pressures. Such as Bhakat et al. (2023)[14] revealed that mental health issues among students such as depression, anxiety, and stress significantly increased during the second wave of COVID-19 pandemic compared to the first one. The study highlighted that female students, urban residents, and those from lower economic backgrounds were particularly vulnerable. Gomathirajyashyamala et al. (2023)[15] investigated the health and eating habits of 57 postgraduate students at Alagappa University, Tamil Nadu. It found that nearly half of the students, especially females, were within the healthy Body Mass Index (BMI) range and had satisfactory dietary practices, including daily consumption of fruits, vegetables, milk, and cereals. However, issues like meal skipping, under nutrition risks, and poor dietary diversity were observed in nearly 50% of participants. Asha S et al. (2024)[16] examined mental health issues among 110 college students in India, focusing on their perceptions, support systems, and institutional resources. Findings revealed that 43.6% of students experience stress, anxiety, or depression, yet 58.2% are reluctant to seek professional help. While 63.6% find peers supportive, only 25.4% feel comfortable discussing mental health with faculty. Over 62% believe institutional culture impacts mental health, and 50% identify environmental triggers like academic pressure. Social media's negative influence is acknowledged by 75.4%. The study highlights gaps in mental health services and stigma. By understanding these dynamics, the main aim of the present study is to understand the health status patterns among students of a selected university in Meerut city of Uttar Pradesh state.

Objectives of the study

This research paper has two objectives in the following ways:

a) To describe socio-economic details of the university students.

b) To assess patterns of health status among university students.

Methodology of the Study

For the current study, the researchers used descriptive research design. This study was conducted in Chaudhary Charan Singh University Campus, Meerut in Uttar Pradesh, India. It included a sample size of 300 students who were selected through simple random sampling method. Data were collected through self-administered questionnaire which was circulated through online mode via Mail, WhatsApp, Telegram among the students. Collected data were analyzed through appropriate statistical techniques and SPSS.

Results

In the light of above mentioned objectives the results of the present study are described in the following ways and are represented in the form of tables:

a) Socio-economic details of university students:

The socio-economic details of the respondents provide an essential context for understanding the health status of the students. This section presents a detailed analysis of socio-economic status of students.

Table 1: Socio-economic details of the sample population

Variables	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Age		
17-20	88	29.33
21-24	90	30.00
25-28	78	26.00
29-35	44	14.67
Gender		
Male	114	38.00
Female	186	62.00
Category		
General	114	38
OBC	144	48
SC	42	14
Religion		
Hindu	288	96
Muslim	8	2.67
Sikh	4	1.33
Education Level		
Under-Graduate	114	38
Post-Graduate	144	48
Doctorate	42	14
Employment Status		
Working	78	26
Non-Working	222	74

Family Income		
(p.m.)	66	22
Up to 15000	38	12.67
15001-25000	34	11.33
25001-35000	162	54
Above 35000		
Family Type		
Joint	134	44.67
Nuclear	166	55.33
Locality		
Rural	170	56.67
Urban	130	43.33

Table 1 indicates the socio-economic details of university students. Less than one-third (30%) students belonged to 21-24 years age group and 62% among them were females. Large number (48%) of the respondents were from OBC category and almost all (96%) the respondents were Hindu. 48% of the respondents were pursuing post graduation and three-fourth of them were non-working. More than half (54%) of the respondents had a family income of above Rs. 35000. More than half (55.33%) lived in nuclear family and 56.67% were from urban area.

b) Patterns of Health Status among University Students:

Several researchers have measured health status in different dimensions such as physical functioning, mental health, social well-being, role-functioning, general health perceptions and symptoms. In the present study, health status of the students has measured in terms of body pain, stress, anxiety, laziness, social support etc.

Table 2: Patterns of Health Status among Sample Population

	Patterns of Health Status		
Variables	**Often, n (%)**	**Sometimes, n (%)**	**Rarely, n (%)**
Body Pain	24(8.00)	162(54.00)	114(38.00)
Stress	36(12.00)	170(56.67)	94(31.33)
Anxiety	28(9.33)	100(33.33)	172(57.34)
Laziness	42(14.00)	184(61.33)	74(24.67)
Social Support during Illness	124(41.33)	132(44.00)	44(14.67)
Sleeping Troubles	30(10.00)	120(40.00)	150(50.00)
Eye Strain	24(8.00)	150(50.00)	126(42.00)
Skipping Meal	24(8.00)	156(52.00)	120(40.00)
Digestive Problems	24(8.00)	126(42.00)	150(50.00)

Table 2 shows the pattern of health status among university students. More than half (54%) of the respondents sometimes experienced body pain, 38% experienced it rarely, and only 8% experienced it often. More than half (56.67%) of the respondents sometimes experienced stress, 31.33% experienced it rarely, and only 12% experienced it often. More than half (57.34%) of the respondents rarely experienced anxiety, one-

third (33.33%) among them sometimes experienced it and only 9.33% experienced it often. Around 61.33% of the respondents sometimes had laziness, one-fourth (24.67%) of them experienced it rarely and around 14% respondents experienced it often. 44% of the respondents sometimes had social support during illness, about 41.33% of them often had it and only 14.67% of the respondents rarely had it. Half (50%) of the respondents rarely had sleeping troubles while 40% of them sometimes felt it and only 10% of the respondents often had sleeping troubles. Half (50%) of the students sometimes had eye strain while 42% of them rarely had it and only 8% of the respondents often experienced eye strain. More than half (52%) of the respondents sometimes skipped their meals while 40% of them rarely skipped it and only 8% of the respondents often skipped it. Half (50%) of the respondents rarely had digestive problems while 42% of them sometimes had it and only 8% of the respondents often experienced digestive problems.

Conclusion

The current study sheds light on the patterns of health status of university students in Meerut city of Uttar Pradesh state in India. The results highlight that the students have moderate health status and lifestyle challenges, with occasional stress and discomfort being more common than severe or chronic issues. The study reveals significant insights into the physical, mental, and lifestyle-related health trends among respondents. These findings underscore the importance of promoting balanced lifestyles, regular health check-ups, and mental well-being initiatives within university settings.

Limitations

The limitation of this study is that it was restricted only to students of the selected university of Meerut city.

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