

PREVALENCE OF DEPRESSION SYMPTOMS IN 6TH YEAR MEDICAL STUDENTS

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Introduction. The importance of depression diagnostics and treatment increases with every year because its prevalence also rises (better diagnostics, specific lifestyle of information age, stressful environment). Studies indicate that depression not only decreases well-being and overall state of person's health, but also is creating enormous depression related financial losses (decreased productivity, extra expenses (social and medical care expenses)). Because of prolonged and stressful medical education programme, medical students are expected to have higher depression prevalence in comparison to general population. Student depression can be the reason for study failure leading to university dropout. In this way student's health can suffer, potential for success decreases and society loses potential specialist and funding that was invested in him, therefore researching and addressing this problem is very important.

Aim. Research aim is to determine prevalence of depression symptoms in the 6th year medical students of RSU and LU medical faculties, and compare these results with depression symptom prevalence in people of similar age that are not attending higher education establishment.

Results. Research participant assessment using PHQ-9 questionnaire revealed that 66.01% (N=134) of the student respondents had total score below 10 points, meaning they didn't had enough depression symptoms for the diagnosis. 33.99% (N=69) of respondents had total score above or equal to 10 (at 10 points test's sensitivity is 88% and a specificity is 88% for depression). Students of both researched medical faculties displayed almost identical depression prevalence - Rigas Stradins University 34.078% and University of Latvia 33.333%. People in the same age group (23-26 years old) that are not learning in a higher education establishment had 22.58% (N=14) prevalence of depression symptoms and 77.42% (N=48) had no or only mild symptoms that couldn't be attributed to depression disorder. In medical student group females had 37,34% (N=59) and males had 22.22% (N=10) depression symptom prevalence. 15.27% (N=31) of students had severe or moderately severe symptoms that require specialist consultation, but only 4.84% of comparison

group had severe or moderately severe symptoms. The most common symptom was fatigue and lack of energy.

Conclusions. Depression symptom prevalence is higher in 6th year medical student group than in people of similar age that are not attending higher education establishment. Depression prevalence in different medical faculties is almost identical. Prevalence of depression in female students is higher than in male students.