Review of: "Prevalence of Common Mental Illness and Its Associated Factors among Hawassa City High School Students in Hawassa, Sidama Region, Ethiopia"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

The article provides a clear and insightful information on the mental illness among the high school students by highlighting the significance of studying mental health among adolescents and how their experiences during this time can have far-reaching consequences. However, here are some specific suggestions for improvement and clarity of the article.

1. Make sure to include relevant citations for the statements and statistics you've included in introduction.

2. Please consider adding a statement on the gaps/lacunae in existing literature on the same in the introduction (problem statement) and methods (study setting)

3. Given that your study is specific to Hawassa City and the Sidama region in Ethiopia, consider giving a rationale for conducting the study in the particular region by adding a brief overview of the local context and relevance.

4. Consider addition of a flow chart for the sampling technique to providing clarity to the readers since multistage (four stages) sampling was employed.

5. Since pre-testing is done, please consider including the internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) and other reliability measures.

6. In the data collection, explain on how was the privacy of the students maintained?, as the questionnaire involves the questions on the mental illness and it cannot be collected in a group due to social desirability bias and subjectivity.

7. The description of the results can be shortened by including only the relevant/significant results from the table, since many of the descriptions are self-explanatory and redundant for the readers.

8. Consider explaining others in table 2 under frequency of khat chewed per week and frequency of drinking per week as a foot note (If the others means 3-6 times per week, consider adding 3-6 times directly int he table rather than keeping it as others)

9. Table 4: There is an asterisk (*) for others under type of illness and the explanation for the others is not provided in the footnote or anywhere in the description. Please consider revising it.

10. Since the scores of SRQ-20 are discrete, consider using median and not mean.

11. Since you have mentioned that the variables that shows $p<0.25$ in univariable logistic regression will be used as co-variated for multivariable logistic regression, try to show the the crude p value of the univariable regression to understand the variables included in the model for multivariabe logistic regression. (Some variables like fathers educational status, grade of students and residence doesn't seem to have a $p<0.25$ in univariable logistic regression.

Please make it clear for the understanding of the readers.)

12. Discussion: "The other possible reason for this difference might be the data collection method used in the current study was a self-administered tool, and this might overestimate the prevalence." The explanation for the observed difference in the prevalence looks inappropriate since most of the studies quoted as reference also have employed self adminstered questionnaire and self-adminstered questionnaires for sensitive and social issues like mental illness will indeed underestimate the prevalence in majority of the instances, though overestimation is possible rarely. So its advisable to provide a clearer explanation on the same, if the author still feels like it is overestimated.

13. If possible it will be better if the author can provide reasons for relatively wider confidence interval for the observed prevalence in the study, since confidence interval gives the inferential statistics of the population (The calculated point prevalence provides only sample statistics).

14. When discussing the association between khat chewing and mental illness, you could briefly mention the potential impact of substance-induced anxiety or depression and how it relates to academic and personal well-being.

15. Consider adding the possible strengths and limitations at the end of the discussion, as there are many potential limitations in the study design that you have opted for.

16. Under conclusion and recommendations or at the end of the discussion, you could briefly touch on the practical implications of your findings. How might your study inform interventions, policies, or mental health support systems for high school students in the region? which could provide the significance of your research.

17. Consider checking the grammar for the whole write up.

Thanks.