

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 title "Prevalence of Common Mental Illness and Its Associated Factors among Hawassa City High School Students in Hawassa, Sidama Region, Ethiopia" is clear and concise. It accurately describes the content of the article, which is a study of the prevalence of common mental illness among high school students in Hawassa, Ethiopia. The title also includes the location of the study, which is important for readers who are interested in the specific context of the study.

In the Metodology

The provided section is a clear and detailed explanation of the methods and materials used in the study. It provides a good overview of the study setting, design, and the population under investigation. However, I have a few suggestions to enhance clarity and completeness:

Study Setting Clarification: You mentioned that Hawassa is the capital city of the Sidama region and that it's located 275km from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. You could consider briefly describing any relevant characteristics of the city, such as its urban or rural nature, its economic or social context, or any other factors that might influence the prevalence of mental illness.

Population Distribution: Instead of just mentioning the total population of Hawassa, you could also mention the total number of adolescents (10-19 years) in the city based on the proportion provided from the 2007 census. This could give a clearer picture of the target population.

Student Clubs: You mentioned the existence of student clubs focusing on health issues. It might be beneficial to provide a bit more detail about what these clubs specifically do and how they relate to the study objectives. Additionally, if they have any potential impact on mental health or the factors being investigated, this could be briefly highlighted.

Study Design Clarity: The study design is well-stated as an institution-based cross-sectional study, but you could also briefly explain what a cross-sectional study entails. This helps readers who might not be familiar with the term.

Exclusion Criteria Rationale: You mentioned that students absent during data collection were excluded. It could be helpful to add a sentence explaining why this exclusion criterion was necessary, as it relates to the quality and reliability of the data.

Academic Year Clarification: In the inclusion criteria, you mentioned students enrolled in high schools in 2020/2021GC.

It might be helpful to clarify what "GC" stands for, especially if your readers are not familiar with Ethiopian academic year designations.

Remember that your description should provide enough information for readers to understand the context, process, and decisions made during the study. It's always good to strike a balance between being concise and offering sufficient detail for clarity.

Sample size determination

Your explanation of the sample size determination and sampling technique is well-structured and informative. However, there are a few suggestions that might further enhance the clarity and understanding:

Prevalence Clarification: Since you mentioned that no similar study was conducted in the setting, you might want to briefly clarify that the 50% prevalence assumption is often used when there is no prior knowledge about the expected prevalence, rather than indicating an actual estimated prevalence.

Explanation of Design Effect: When explaining the design effect of 1.5, you could add a brief sentence explaining what the design effect is and why it's considered. This helps readers who might not be familiar with the concept.

Final Sample Size Clarification: In the sentence "After adding a 10% non-response rate the final sample size was 634," you could include a bit more information on how the non-response rate was incorporated into the calculation. For example: "To account for potential non-responses, a conservative 10% non-response rate was added to the calculated sample size, resulting in a final sample size of 634."

Clarity in Sampling Procedure: When you mention "stratified by their levels as 9, 10, 11, and 12," you could clarify whether these levels correspond to different academic grades or something else. This ensures that readers understand what these levels represent.

Roster Explanation: When explaining the use of a roster as a sampling frame, you might briefly explain what a roster is in this context (a list of students) and why it's a useful tool for sampling.

Contacting Class Representatives: You could provide a brief rationale for why class representatives were contacted for ease of contacting study participants. This could help readers understand the practical aspect of the decision.

Overall, your description is comprehensive and provides a clear understanding of how the sample size was determined and the sampling technique used. The additional clarifications and explanations will help readers, especially those less familiar with research methods, grasp the process more easily.

Results:

The presented results for the socio-demographic characteristics are well-organized and provide relevant information. To

enhance clarity and understanding, you might consider the following:

Response Rate Clarification: When you mention a response rate of 96.7%, you could briefly explain how this rate was calculated (e.g., the ratio of participants to those invited to participate) and why it's important for understanding the representativeness of the sample.

Age Range Explanation: Since the age range is quite broad (15 to 24 years), you could provide a brief rationale for including participants up to the age of 24, especially if the study is focused on high school students.

Ethnic Group Clarification: For readers who might not be familiar with the ethnic groups in the study area, you could consider providing a brief description or context of the Sidama ethnic group.

Educational Status of Parents: While you've provided the educational status of the parents, you could briefly mention why this information is relevant to your study. For example, how might the educational status of parents be related to mental health?

Single vs. Both Parents Living Situation: You might consider adding a brief note about the potential implications of living with a single parent or both parents, especially in relation to the mental health outcomes you're investigating.

Urban Dwelling Explanation: Provide a brief explanation of why the urban/rural dwelling distinction is important in your study. For instance, how might urban/rural residence impact mental health?

Consistency in Numbers: It seems there might be a small discrepancy in the number of participants in the "Socio-demographic characteristics" section (613) and the final sample size mentioned in the methods (634). If this is indeed the case, it's good practice to briefly explain any discrepancy or clarify that the numbers may differ due to non-response.

By providing context and explanations for the numbers and terms you've presented, you ensure that readers have a complete understanding of the demographic makeup of your sample and how these characteristics relate to your study's objectives.

Consistency in Terminology: Ensure consistent use of terminology. For example, "common mental illness" is sometimes referred to as "common mental disorder" (CMD). It's a good practice to use the same term throughout the text to avoid confusion.

Discussion of results

Your discussion section provides a comprehensive and insightful analysis of the study findings, comparing them to previous research and discussing potential reasons for the observed outcomes. But is quite long. To further enhance the discussion, consider the following suggestions:

Synthesize Key Findings: After presenting each individual finding, you could consider summarizing the key findings to provide a clear overview of the factors associated with common mental illness in your study.

Interpretation of Magnitude: For each significant predictor, you might discuss the magnitude of the effect (e.g., odds ratios), offering insight into the practical significance of the relationships observed.

Implications of Findings: Discuss the broader implications of your findings. For example, how might the identified predictors impact mental health intervention programs for high school students? What changes in policies or school practices could help address these concerns?

Contrasting Results: When discussing variations in prevalence rates across different studies, it could be useful to delve into potential reasons for these differences. For instance, why might your study show a higher prevalence compared to certain other studies?

Methodological Considerations: Reflect on the strengths and limitations of your study. Address potential sources of bias or limitations in data collection or analysis. This demonstrates your awareness of the study's constraints and builds credibility.

Theoretical Framework: If your study was guided by a theoretical framework, this could be a good point to briefly revisit it and discuss how your findings align or differ from what was expected.

Clinical Relevance: Discuss how the identified factors can inform mental health interventions and prevention strategies specifically for high school students. How can the findings be translated into actionable steps?

Future Research: Highlight potential avenues for future research. Are there gaps in the current understanding that your study has highlighted? Are there areas that require further exploration or validation?

Consideration of Cultural Context: Given that mental health is influenced by cultural, social, and economic factors, discuss how cultural norms or specific contextual elements might have impacted your findings.

Policy Recommendations: Depending on the depth of your study and its potential impact, you might consider discussing broader policy recommendations related to mental health support in high schools or broader educational settings.

By addressing these points, you can enrich your discussion section with a deeper analysis of the study's findings and their broader implications. This will also help readers contextualize the results within the larger field of mental health research and its practical applications.

Conclusions

Your conclusion section concisely summarizes the key findings of your study. To further strengthen the conclusion and ensure its impact, you might consider the following points:

Reiteration of Significance: Briefly reiterate the significance of your study's findings. Emphasize why these findings are important in the context of mental health research and the target population of high school students.

Public Health Implications: Discuss the broader public health implications of your findings. How can these findings

inform mental health policies, programs, and interventions specifically aimed at high school students?

Recommendations for Action: Offer specific recommendations for action based on your findings. What practical steps can be taken to address the identified risk factors and improve mental health outcomes among high school students?

Addressing Disparities: If your findings indicate disparities or specific groups at higher risk, discuss how interventions and policies can be tailored to address these disparities and provide equitable mental health support.

Long-Term Impact: Reflect on the potential long-term impact of addressing common mental illness in high school students. How might addressing mental health issues at this stage of life positively affect their future well-being?

Future Research Directions: Highlight areas where further research is needed to deepen the understanding of specific risk factors or to explore the effectiveness of interventions.

Wrap-Up: Conclude with a concise and impactful statement that wraps up the implications of your study and encourages a broader view of mental health support in educational settings.

More references to read and may be usefull:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/36632814/>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/35739519/>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/32698788/>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9896727/>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10049682/>