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Peer Review Report for "Prevalence of Depression in Iranian College Students: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis"

Author(s): Zahra Jaafari, Akram Farhadi, Faramarz Amin Lari, Fatemeh Sadat Mousavi, Hadis Moltafet, Elaheh Dashti, Maryam Marzban

Review Timeline:

Submit Date: 17 Feb 2020
Revised Date: 7 Aug 2020
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Revision (0)

Here, you can see the **Reviewers**, **Associate Editors** and **EICs'** comments from the beginning to the end of the revision process.

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision** (0) — 29 May 2020

Dear AE,
This paper discusses "Prevalence and risk factors of Depression in Iranian College Students: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis" I recommend that this paper be accepted after minor revision. The statistical analysis in this paper is suitable for experimental studies. In the methodology section, 89 studies were entered. But in the results section, 91 articles were included. be corrected.
Thanks.

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision** (0) — 5 Jun 2020

Dear AE,
Comments for the authors:
title:
- The risk factors of depression did not investigated in this review
Introduction section:
- The literature review about the risk factors of depression is very weak.
- The authors failed to mention the gap of the current knowledge and the rational for

performing the study.
methods section:
- Why did the authors exclude unpublished studies?
- Why did the authors preferred studies using GHQ and BDI? None of them are diagnostic or even screening questionnaires for depressive disorders.
- The only risk factor that was investigated in the study was gender.
conclusion section:
- Some statements about the preventive strategies are beyond the findings of the current study.
Thanks.

M. Salmanian: Reviewer | **Revision (0)** 1 Jul 2020

Dear AE,
With thanks for this valuable manuscript, please the authors consider the following comments:
1) It seems that the manuscript is essentially on the prevalence. So, it is better to omit the risk factors in the manuscript.
2) Since The Newcastle-Ottawa Scale (NOS) is suitable to assess the case-control and cohort studies, would you please justify why you did not use the STROBE checklist to assess the quality assessment of the cross-sectional studies?
3) While Sarokhani et al. (2013) performed the same systematic review of the literature between 1995 and 2012, It is needed to provide more justification to do the present review and replicate the review of the studies between 1995 and 2012.
Thanks.

REFEREE: Associate Editor | **Revision (0)** 10 Jul 2020

Dear EIC,
Many thanks for submitting" Prevalence and risk factors of Depression in Iranian College Students: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis ". I received comments from reviewers who have expertized on the manuscript. Although the reviewers found strengths in your paper, they also identified some concerns and believed that the paper needs some revisions. Thus, I conclude the manuscript has the potential of consideration for publication after satisfactorily addressing reviewers' concerns. Therefore, I invite you to reply to the reviewers' comments and resubmit your revised manuscript for further review. Also, please revise the references according to the journal instruction. If you choose to revise your submission please upload your revised manuscript and an annotated list addressing the reviewers' comments and highlighting where changes have been made to the paper.
Best regards

Mehran Zarghami: EIC | **Revision (0)** 17 Jul 2020

Dear Author,
Your paper has been evaluated by external peer reviewers. Please do your revisions according to the reviewers' comments. I appreciate you to do the revisions as soon as possible by using the track changes mode in MS Word and using colored text.

After revision authors are obliged to upload reviewers' comments word file in which they have replied to all comments one by one.

Besides, please pay attention to the word count limitation:

Word count limits are declared in this link: http://kowsarpub.com/en/index.php/services/for-authors/895-word-count

We look forward to receiving your revised manuscript. Thank you for sending your work to the Iranian Journal of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences.

Thanks.

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (1)

Reply to Reviewers

Ideally, the reviewing process can significantly improve the submitted manuscripts by allowing the authors to take into account the advice of reviewers. Author(s) must reply to all reviewers' comments in a separate Word file, point by point. A "**Reply to Reviewers**" document is submitted along with revised manuscript during submission of revised files, summarizing the changes that the authors made in response to the reviewers' comments. The responses to reviewers' comments specifies how the authors addressed each comment the reviewers made.

You can read the authors' responses to the reviewers' comments in the next page.

Dear Editor-in-Chief

Thank you for your email enclosing the reviewers' comments. We have carefully reviewed the comments and have revised the manuscript accordingly. Our responses are given in a point-by-point manner below. Changes to the manuscript are shown in track change.

Reviewer 1:

This paper discusses "Prevalence and risk factors of Depression in Iranian College Students: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis" I recommend that this paper be accepted after minor revision. The statistical analysis in this paper is suitable for experimental studies. In the methodology section, 89 studies were entered. But in the results section 91 articles were included. be corrected.

Thanks for your comments, based on your suggestion we corrected the 91 to 89. This mistake happened because we considered the results of "Khoshkhati N et al, and Jahani Hashemi H et al". The two articles were considered for separate studies, due to the different nature of information they provide. However, to prevent further misunderstanding, we changed it to 89. For the second point "The statistical analysis in this paper is suitable for experimental studies", I will be appreciating if the reviewers clarified which methods they would propose for this study. We will consider the reviewer's comments once we understand how to change our results.

Reviewer 2:
With thanks for your valuable manuscript, please consider the following comments:

1) It seems that the manuscript is essentially on the prevalence. So, it is better to omit the risk factors in the manuscript.

Thanks for your comments; we will correct the manuscript based on the reviewer's suggestion. We try to discussed more the factors which we collected in our study. we change the scope of this article from risk factors related to the depression to the prevalence of depression.

2) Since The Newcastle-Ottawa Scale (NOS) is suitable to assess the case-control and cohort

studies, would you please justify why you did not use the STROBE checklist to assess the quality assessment of the cross-sectional studies?

Methodological quality (risk of bias) assessment is an important step before study initiation usage. Therefore, based on the reviewer comment, judging study type accurately is the first priority, and the choice of proper tools is also important. We try to use an adapted Newcastel-Ottawa Scale (NOS), which has been used as an appraisal tool for cross-sectional studies (Moskalewicz and Oremus 2020). It should be noted that the STROBE is not a quality assessment tool, but a checklist of items that should be addressed in reports of observational studies. This means that the STROBE reporting recommendations are frequently used inappropriately in systematic reviews and meta-analyses as an instrument to assess the methodological quality of observational studies, whereas NOS is used for assessing the quality of included studies(Da Costa, Cevallos et al. 2011).

3) While Sarokhani et al. (2013) performed the same systematic review of the literature between 1995 and 2012, It is needed to provide more justification to do the present review and replicate the review of the studies between 1995 and 2012.

In this study, they included only 35 studies with a sample size of 9743; however, after six years at least fifty more articles had been published. Therefore, it seems reasonable to do a new meta-analysis. We found that the prevalence of depression was reported about 33% in Sarokhani' study while in our study the prevalence of depression showed a significant increase, with 48.0% of university students suffering from the depression disorder. Therefore, comparing the results seems useful. In addition, one shortcoming with that report is that some factors related to depression have not been considered, nor has the way evaluation of depressive disorder as an important factor may effect measurement of this phenomenon.

Reviewer 3:
title:
the risk factors of depression did not investigated in this review

We try to correct the manuscript according to the reviewer' comment.

Introduction section:
Literature review about the risk factors of depression is very weak.

We added some text to the introduction.

The authors failed to mention the gap of the current knowledge and the rational for performing the study.

We added some text to the introduction.

methods section:

Why did the authors exclude unpublished studies?

We try to access all articles, but some research studies are old theses, and we cannot access the full text of the research we mentioned. Some examples are "the comparison between depression status among different grade of medical students in Jundishapour Ahwaz between 2004 to 2005", "comparison the depression status among dormitory, and other students in Jundishapour Medical university in 2006", "investigating the severity of depression among the last years of medical students" " The relationship between depression, physical activity, and lifestyle among students: the pathway analyses", "the relationship between stress, anxiety, depression among dental students in Kerman University of medical science in 2014-2015", "Relationship between Physical Activity and Exercise with Depression in Ahwaz Jundishapur Medical Students in 2016".

Why did the authors preferred studies using GHQ and BDI? None of them are diagnostic or even screening questionnaires for depressive disorders.

We use the GHQ or BDI because most articles use these instruments. Other questioners had limited use. These include Znug's Self- Rating Depression Scale (Zung) (used in 3 articles), Depression anxiety stress scales(DASS-42) (1 article), University Student Depression Inventory (USDI) (1 article), Ahwaz Depression Inventory (ADI) (1 article), Mood and Anxiety Symptom questionnaire (2articles), Symptom Checklist-25 (SCL-25) (1 article), Tehran Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (TMPS) (1 article), The Cognition Checklist, Middlesex Hospital questionnaire (3 articles), Hopkins Symptom Checklist (1 article), and Hamilton questionnaire 2 (articles). Therefore, we decided to exclude them and performed our analyses using these two instruments. Besides, the beck depression inventory, and General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) is commonly used in population studies as measures of depression (Aalto, Elovainio et al. 2012, Park, Jaekal, et al. 2020). We believe we should do our study based on these data.

the only risk factor that was investigated in the study was gender.

We try to add more about age and marital status as the other important risk factors because of limitation of risk factors investigated in published articles; therefore, we cannot investigate other factors. However, we change the scope of this article as risk factors related to the

depression to the prevalence of depression.
conclusion section:
some statements about the preventive strategies are beyond the findings of the current study.

We revised the conclusion based on the reviewer' comment.

We hope our revision receives your approval. We would like to thank the referee for helpful comments and suggestions on the manuscript.

Sincerely yours

On behalf of research team

Da Costa, B. R., et al. (2011). "Uses and misuses of the STROBE statement: bibliographic study." BMJ open **1**(1).

Moskalewicz, A. and M. Oremus (2020). "No clear choice between Newcastle–Ottawa Scale and Appraisal Tool for Cross-Sectional Studies to assess methodological quality in cross-sectional studies of health-related quality of life and breast cancer." Journal of Clinical Epidemiology **120**: 94-103.

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Revision (1)

Here, you can see the **Reviewers**, **Associate Editors** and **EICs'** comments from the beginning to the end of the revision process.

M. Salmanian: Reviewer | **Revision (1)** 26 Aug 2020

Dear AE,
I accept the manuscript to publish in the Iranian Journal of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences.
Thanks.

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision (1)** 6 Nov 2020

Dear AE,
Corrections made are acceptable.
Thanks.

REFEREE: Reviewer | **Revision (1)** 4 Dec 2020

Dear AE,
With thanks for this valuable manuscript, I recommend that this paper be accepted after minor revision.
- Results section: Check some percentages for subgroup analysis based on intensity.
The total percentage of prevalence of depression (mild, moderate, and severe) in students were to be 48%. What happened to the other 52%?
Thanks.

REFEREE: Associate Editor | **Revision (1)** 1 Jan 2021

Dear EIC,
Many thanks for revising the manuscript. I received comments from reviewers who believed that necessary revisions have been done. Therefore, I think the manuscript could be published in the Iranian journal of psychiatry and behavioral sciences.
sincerely yours

Mehran Zarghami: EIC | **Revision (1)** 2 Jan 2021

Dear Author,
We have completed our review of your manuscript and are pleased to inform you that it is considered for publication in the IJPBS. Note that the publication of your article will only be

finalized upon your cooperation with the editorial processing.

Thank you for your fine contribution. On behalf of the Editors of IJPBS, we look forward to your continued contributions to the Journal.

Thanks.