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## **PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AMONG NURSING STUDENTS OF A SELECTED UNIVERSITY, AJMAN, UAE.**

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### **Background:**

Present age is the age of competition. Scientific and technological advancement all over the globe has made man very conscious and sensitive about his studies, vocation, lifestyle and relations. The event of joining the college is one of the major and significant transitions in the life span of any individual.

### **Purpose:**

The aim of this study is to assess the psychological wellbeing among nursing students of a selected University, Ajman, UAE

### **Methodology:**

A quantitative approach with a cross-sectional survey design among 150 nursing students using stratified random sampling and computer randomization. A google survey was used to collect data using the Psychological Well-being Scale.

### **Findings:**

Findings revealed majority 147 (98.0%) were of the age group of 18-25 years, majority 112 (74.7%) were females, 22 (14.7%) of students had private jobs and 63% (42.0%) were from Ajman. The mean score of psychological wellbeing was  $88.7 \pm 12.2$ , highest scores were for personal growth  $16.4 \pm 3.2$  and least was for purpose in life  $13.6 \pm 3.5$ . There was a significant difference between psychological wellbeing and the domain - positive relations with others, 3<sup>rd</sup> years had the highest score of  $14.5 \pm 3.7$  and least scores were seen with 2<sup>nd</sup> years  $12.3 \pm 3.7$  which was significant  $p < 0.05$ . Students who were unemployed had higher psychological wellbeing scores  $89.7 \pm 12.8$  significant at  $p < 0.05$ . There was a significance for positive relations  $14.2 \pm 3.8$   $p < 0.05$  and personal growth  $14.2 \pm 3.8$ ,  $p < 0.001$  where unemployed had higher scores.

## **Conclusion:**

The present study findings have revealed that over all the students had good psychological wellbeing. Highest scores were seen for personal growth and self-acceptance. The least scores were seen for purpose in life and positive relations with others. Nurse educators must understand psychological wellbeing among nursing students, as they are vital as students' progress in academic years. Ensuring psychological wellbeing among nursing students is not only an educational concern but a professional and organizational necessity.

Keywords – psychological wellbeing, domains, nursing students,

## **Introduction**

Present age is the age of competition. Scientific and technological advancement all over the globe has made man very conscious and sensitive about his studies, vocation, lifestyle and relations. This immense progress has given rise to certain problems. One of the major problems of today's world is stress. The event of joining the college is one of the major and significant transitions in the life span of any individual. It defines one's future career and the path towards realization of his or her vocational goal. Academic work in learning environment poses great challenges both mentally, physically and psychologically on the learner. Mental well-being of the learner is very important for efficient learning and proper development of personality. Research findings showed that there is a significant negative relationship between stress and mental health which means that increase of stress lead to decrease of mental health and viceversa.<sup>1</sup> University education involves changes in a student's lifestyle and conditions, which could lead to stress. Stress is one of the main factors that can trigger discomfort in students and has been related to poorer psychological well-being; social support, self-efficacy, resilience, and mindfulness have a positive effect on mental health. Nursing students frequently suffer academic burnout, which is brought on by different situations experienced during the training process and that can concern his psychological well-being. Resilience is a personal resource that allows adverse situations to be handled in a successful way. Emotional exhaustion was the most relevant dimension of academic burnout when predicting psychological well-being in the analyzed sample.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to complying with strict academic standards, nursing students must acquire relevant knowledge and skills, and learn how to carry themselves in different and often stressful professional settings. These obligations could severely affect their mental health. Results of a study suggest that nursing education could act as a protective factor against mental health disorders. Although a heavy academic workload could lead to higher levels of stress, overall, it seems that mental health is better in more advanced courses than in initial academic years.<sup>3</sup>

According to the results obtained by McCarthy et al. in their study of academic stress, they identified these main stress factors: the academic environment, exams, activities and projects,

and, more specifically, meeting deadlines and the number of exams required. Additionally, students' concern about their performance in their exams, the large number of students in the classrooms, boring lectures, and feeling doubted by professors were all identified as sources of stress. The four main stressors in the last three years for this cohort of students, in descending order are nursing studies, finance, family and health. They coped by using both problem-focused and emotion-focused coping skills. There is a need to review the nursing curriculum and evaluate what impacts on students' stress levels, and also introduce strategies to reduce the stress levels of nursing students.<sup>4</sup>

Well-being is the experience of health, happiness, and prosperity. It includes having good mental health, high life satisfaction, a sense of meaning or purpose, and the ability to manage stress. The WHO advances a definition of well-being as a “state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease”. Organizations need to enhance support for nurses' well-being and investigate how it relates to patient safety and quality results. Paying attention to the health and well-being of employees in workplaces has been advocated in multiple occupations for numerous years. Nurses' health and well-being are affected by these stresses and demands of their work, and in turn, their well-being affects their work, including increasing the risk of medical errors and compromising patient safety and care.<sup>5</sup>

University students represent the future of families, communities, and countries. They also face the stresses of achieving success in their academic goals, and are expected to be competitive, adding to the demands and burdens and possibly leading to more stress. University is a period of responsibility for choices and lifestyle practices, where students are exposed to the challenges of young adulthood and also tackle the mental and social issues of students' life. Many students confront changes in living conditions, and (health promoting/damaging) adjustments to lifestyle and environment. Students also deal with issues around financial constraints and financial support, social interaction and loneliness. Many college students live far from home, escalating their susceptibility to initiating smoking and/or excessive alcohol consumption. Further, unhealthy behaviours could congregate together, generating a multiplier effect; 65% of young adult women full-time students at a USA university had  $\geq 2$  unhealthy behaviors.<sup>6</sup>

Psychological well-being is usually conceptualized as some combination of positive affective states such as happiness and functioning with optimal effectiveness in individual and social life. Psychological well-being problems have become increasingly common among college students nowadays, especially undergraduate students who are prone to psychological problems. Evidence suggests that the college students are vulnerable to mental health problems which have generated increased public concern. Despite the increasing awareness of mental health issues among university students, there is limited research on the psychological well-being of nursing students in the UAE. Understanding the factors affecting their well-being can help institutions implement effective interventions to support students' mental health.

### **Aim of the study**

A descriptive cross-sectional survey to assess the psychological wellbeing among nursing students of a selected University, Ajman, UAE

### **Objectives**

1. To assess the psychological well-being of nursing students
2. To determine the factors influencing psychological well-being of nursing students
3. To associate nursing students' psychological wellbeing with selected demographic variables

### **Hypothesis of the study**

H01: There will no significant association between nursing students' psychological wellbeing with selected demographic variables

### **Methods**

A quantitative approach with a cross-sectional survey design among was adopted to assess the psychological well-being among 150 nursing students at a selected university, Ajman, UAE, using stratified random sampling and computer randomization. A google survey was used to collect data using the Psychological Well-being Scale.

### **Results**

#### **Section A: Description of selected Demographic Variables**

**Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution selected demographic variables of the students (n=150)**

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES	f/%
<b>YEAR OF STUDY</b>	
1	42 (28.0%)
2	44 (29.3%)
3	44 (29.3%)
4	20 (13.3%)
<b>AGE IN YEARS</b>	
18-25	147 (98.0%)
26-33	2 (1.3%)
34-41	1 (0.7%)
<b>GENDER</b>	
MALE	38 (25.3%)

FEMALE	112 (74.7%)
<b>OCCUPATIONAL</b>	
PRIVATE	22 (14.7%)
MINISTRY JOB	2 (1.3%)
BUSINESS	5 (3.3%)
STUDENT	121 (80.67%)
<b>EMIRATE RESIDING IN</b>	
SHARJAH	38 (25.3%)
AJMAN	63 (42.0%)
DUBAI	40 (26.7%)
ABU DHABI	5 (3.3%)
UMM-ALQWAIN	2 (1.3%)
RAK	2 (1.3%)

Table 1 shows that 44(29.3%) were among year 2 & year 3, majority 147 (98.0%) were of the age group of 18-25 years, 112(74.7%) were females, 38(25.3%) were males, 121(80.67%) of students were unemployed, 22(14.7%) worked in private jobs and 63% (42.0%) were from Ajman

**Section B: Description of psychological wellbeing and its domains among nursing students.**

**Table 2: Frequency and percentage distribution of level of psychological wellbeing and its domains among nursing students**

<b>Psychological Wellbeing components</b>	<b>Mean ± SD</b> <b>n=150</b>
Autonomy	14.9 ± 3.0
Environmental Mastery	14.1 ± 2.9
Personal Growth	16.4 ± 3.2
Positive Relations with Others	13.7 ± 3.8
Purpose in Life	13.6 ± 3.5
Self-Acceptance	15.9 ± 3.3
PWB Total score	88.7 ± 12.2

Table 2 shows that a mean score of psychological wellbeing was  $88.7 \pm 12.2$ , highest scores were for personal growth  $16.4 \pm 3.2$  and least was for purpose in life  $13.6 \pm 3.5$ .

**Section C: Association of Psychological wellbeing with selected demographic variable among nursing students**

**Table 3a: Mean & p value of psychological wellbeing and gender**

Psychological Wellbeing components	Gender		p-value
	Male N=38	Female N=112	
Autonomy	14.7 ± 3.4	15.0 ± 2.8	0.576
Environmental Mastery	13.9 ± 2.7	14.1 ± 3.0	0.782
Personal Growth	15.8 ± 3.5	16.7 ± 3.0	0.133
Positive Relations with Others	13.1 ± 4.0	13.9 ± 3.7	0.249
Purpose in Life	13.9 ± 2.9	13.5 ± 3.7	0.551
Self-Acceptance	15.8 ± 3.6	16.0 ± 3.2	0.728
PWB Total score	87.2 ± 11.6	89.2 ± 12.4	0.382

Table 3a shows that there was no significant difference between psychological wellbeing and gender. The overall PWB score was higher among females (89.2 ± 12.4) but was not statistically significant

**Table 3b: Mean & p value of psychological wellbeing and year of study**

Psychological Wellbeing components	Year of study				P-value
	1 N=42	2 N=44	3 N=44	4 N=20	
Autonomy	14.6 ± 3.3	14.8 ± 2.8	15.6 ± 2.8	14.6 ± 3.1	0.36
Environmental Mastery	14.3 ± 3.1	13.9 ± 2.2	13.8 ± 3.2	14.4 ± 3.1	0.83
Personal Growth	17.0 ± 3.2	16.0 ± 2.7	16.9 ± 3.3	15.1 ± 3.6	0.090
Positive Relations with Others	14.4 ± 3.6	12.3 ± 3.7	14.5 ± 3.7	13.8 ± 4.0	0.033
Purpose in Life	14.3 ± 3.1	12.8 ± 3.4	14.2 ± 3.8	12.9 ± 3.7	0.098
Self-Acceptance	15.7 ± 3.2	15.5 ± 3.3	16.5 ± 3.2	16.2 ± 3.9	0.53
PWB Total score	90.3 ± 11.9	85.3 ± 9.7	91.4 ± 13.7	86.9 ± 13.1	0.077

Table 3b shows that there was a significant difference between psychological wellbeing and the domain - positive relations with others, 3<sup>rd</sup> years had the highest score of 14.5 ± 3.7 and least scores were seen with 2<sup>nd</sup> years 12.3 ± 3.7 which was significant p<0.05. Overall PWB scores were highest among 3<sup>rd</sup> years 91.4 ± 13.7, which was not significant

**Table 3c: Mean & p value of psychological wellbeing and employment status of the students**

Psychological Wellbeing components	Gender		p-value
	Student N=121	Employed N=29	
Autonomy	14.9 ± 3.1	15.0 ± 2.6	0.861
Environmental Mastery	13.9 ± 2.9	14.8 ± 2.7	0.148
Personal Growth	16.7 ± 3.1	15.1 ± 3.1	0.014
Positive Relations with Others	14.2 ± 3.8	11.6 ± 3.1	<0.001
Purpose in Life	13.9 ± 3.5	12.5 ± 3.5	0.058
Self-Acceptance	16.0 ± 3.5	15.5 ± 2.6	0.428
PWB Total score	89.7 ± 12.8	84.5 ± 8.5	0.037

Table 3c shows that there was a significant difference between psychological wellbeing and employment status, those students who were unemployed had higher psychological wellbeing scores  $89.7 \pm 12.8$  significant at  $p < 0.05$ . Under domains there was a significance for positive relations  $14.2 \pm 3.8$   $p < 0.05$  and personal growth  $14.2 \pm 3.8$ ,  $p < 0.001$  where unemployed had higher scores.

## Discussion

### Findings Related to Demographic Variables:

Present study Findings revealed majority 147 (98.0%) were of the age group of 18-25 years, majority 112 (74.7%) were females, 38 (25.3%) were males, 121 (80.67%) of students were unemployed, 22 (14.7%) worked in private jobs and 63% (42.0%) were from Ajman.

In a similar study in Spain & Chile - almost 85% of nursing students were between 18 and 24 years old.<sup>3</sup> A study in Tanzania the age group was 19 to 40 years and the mean age was 29 years.<sup>18</sup> In a study in Singapore among 8918 nursing students and the mean age ranged from 17.4 to 28.4 years. Among these studies, the proportion of female students ranged from 79.0% to 100.0%.<sup>12</sup>

### Findings Related to the Psychological Well-being of Nursing Students

The present study revealed that the mean score of psychological wellbeing was  $88.7 \pm 12.2$ , highest scores were for personal growth  $16.4 \pm 3.2$  and least was for purpose in life  $13.6 \pm 3.5$ . Overall the study revealed nursing students had good psychological wellbeing scores

A similar study in Spain & Chile revealed that the more advanced the course was, the lower the total GHQ-28 score, the mental health is better in more advanced courses than in initial academic years.<sup>3</sup>

A study in Maharashtra identified that most (62%) of the nurses had a high-level psychological wellbeing.<sup>1</sup>

### **Findings Related to the association of Psychological Well-being and selected demographic variables**

Overall PWB scores were highest among 3<sup>rd</sup> years  $91.4 \pm 13.7$ , which was not significant

There was a significant difference between psychological wellbeing and the domain - positive relations with others, 3<sup>rd</sup> years had the highest score of  $14.5 \pm 3.7$  and least scores were seen with 2<sup>nd</sup> years  $12.3 \pm 3.7$  which was significant  $p < 0.05$ .

There was no significant difference between psychological wellbeing and gender. The overall PWB score was higher among females ( $89.2 \pm 12.4$ ) but was not statistically significant.

Students who were unemployed had higher psychological wellbeing scores  $89.7 \pm 12.8$  significant at  $p < 0.05$ . There was a significance for positive relations  $14.2 \pm 3.8$   $p < 0.05$  and personal growth  $14.2 \pm 3.8$ ,  $p < 0.001$  where unemployed had higher scores.

A multicentric study in Spain & Chile revealed being a student in the last year of the degree indicates better psychological well-being when compared to students in their first year. Whereas the present study overall psychological wellbeing was highest among 3<sup>rd</sup> years.<sup>3</sup>

A similar study revealed that Gender seemed to impact the GHQ-28 score as well, with men being more likely to score lower than 23 (OR = 0.655,  $p = 0.022$ ).<sup>12</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The present study findings have revealed that over all the students had good psychological wellbeing. Highest scores were seen for personal growth and self-acceptance. The least scores were seen for purpose in life and positive relations with others. Nurse educators must understand psychological wellbeing among nursing students, psychological wellbeing and mental health are vital as students' progress in academic years. Nurse educators and Mentors can identify domains and enhance psychological wellbeing among nursing students through one to one interaction. Ensuring psychological wellbeing among nursing students is not only an educational concern but a professional and organizational necessity. Strengthening support systems within practice environments, enhancing educational strategies, fostering supportive administrative policies, and advancing research can collectively promote resilience, improve academic and clinical performance, and ensure the development of healthy, competent, and compassionate future nurses

### **Ethical Considerations**

The study proceeded after permission form Institutional Review Board, consent was obtained and confidentiality maintained.

### **Acknowledgement**

I acknowledge all nurses who participated in the study

### **Conflict of Interest**

There is no conflict of interest.

### **Contribution of Authors**

All authors have contributed to this research.

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