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Cross Sectional Study: Family Relationships and Self-Esteem and Its Association with Mental Well-Being among Medical Students in A Malaysian University

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Abstract

Background: Students mental health is a common concern as it is reflected on their academic performance and quality of life. Self-esteem and family relationships play important roles in mental health. Therefore, this study is aimed to measure the prevalence of mental well-being among medical students and its associated factors including self-esteem and family relationships. Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted among 227 undergraduate medical students from International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) Kuantan campus. Self-administered online questionnaires were given to the respondents. Self-esteem was assessed using the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale questionnaire. Family relationships was divided into 2 factors; Closeness with family which was measured by 3 items adopted from the Family Adaptation and Cohesion Evaluation Scale and the second factor of family congruence was measured by 7 items from Intergenerational Family Congruence Child Scale (IFC-CS). Mental well-being was assessed using The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale. Results: The mean level of mental well-being was 50.31 + 8.83 with 15% of our respondents having low mental well-being, 70.8% having moderate mental well-being and 14.2% having high mental well-being. Pearson’s correlation analysis showed that there is a significant relationship between mental well-being and closeness to family ($p<0.01$), family congruence ($p<0.01$) and self-esteem ($p<0.01$). This study found out that 38.9% of students had high self-esteem, 22.6% moderate self-esteem and 38.5% low self-esteem. No significant relationship was found between mental well-being and age, gender, year of study, main financial support, and marital status. Conclusion: Although most of the students have moderate mental well-being, however, mental health is still a vital issue. High self-esteem, family closeness and family congruence are positively correlated with high level of mental well-being among medical students. Measures need to be taken to come up with a dynamic plan to upgrade student’s self-esteem and mental well-being which in return will enhance students’ academic achievements. One of the limitations of this study is that the study design was cross sectional and so the variable’s causality and its outcome cannot be clearly assessed despite the effort to study the associations between the variables. Large scale research that involves larger and various target populations needs to be carried out to allow the evaluation of many other factors that affect well-being. © 2022 by the Author(s); licensee Mediterranean Journal of Clinical Psychology, Messina, Italy. This article is an open access article, licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 Unported License.

Author keywords

Family closeness; Malaysia; Mental well-being; Self-esteem; Students

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