

Title: Assessment of mental wellbeing of university students in Bangladesh using Goldberg's GHQ-12:
A cross-sectional study

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Abstract: **Background and Aims:** The mental well-being of university students is a primary public health concern worldwide, including in Bangladesh. The objective of this study was to determine the prevalence of the overall mental health status among Bangladeshi university students. The study used larger and more diverse sample compared to previous studies, and also explored factors associated with the mental health well-being of those students. **Methods:** Data were collected through an online questionnaire, utilizing the proportional allocation method, from students in various universities across Bangladesh. The sample included 2036 participants. The study applied Goldberg's General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12) using the GHQ2+ threshold (i.e., having more than two symptoms). A binary outcome variable was created with two levels: "good mental health" and "poor mental health," to assess the mental health status of the university students. The explanatory variables were age, gender, academic year, type of university, and sources of personal expenses. Exploratory data analysis, association tests, and binary logistic regression models were used to identify factors influencing the outcome variable. **Results:** A total of 55.9% of students (male: 52.6% and female: 62.8%) exhibited poor mental health status. Female students' mental health was found to be worse (odds ratio [OR]: 1.49, 95% confidence interval [CI]: 1.23–1.81) compared to that of males. Similarly, public university students displayed a worse mental health condition than their counterparts in private universities (OR: 1.29, 95% CI: 1.03–1.61). **Conclusion:** The overall mental health of university students in Bangladesh is concerning. There is a pressing need for effective mental health policies and interventions to bolster the mental well-being of university students, with a specific focus on students from public universities and females

Keywords: Bangladesh, depression, GHQ-12, mental health, mental wellbeing, university students

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