A systematic review of studies of depression prevalence in university students

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Abstract:

Background: Depression is a common health problem, ranking third after cardiac and respiratory diseases as a major cause of disability. There is evidence to suggest that university students are at higher risk of depression, despite being a socially advantaged population, but the reported rates have shown wide variability across settings. Purpose: To explore the prevalence of depression in university students. Method: PubMed, PsycINFO, BioMed Central and Medline were searched to identify studies published between 1990 and 2010 reporting on depression prevalence among university students. Searches used a combination of the terms depression, depressive symptoms, depressive disorders, prevalence, university students, college students, undergraduate students, adolescents and/or young adults. Studies were evaluated with a quality rating. Results: Twenty-four articles were identified that met the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Reported prevalence rates ranged from 10% to 85% with a weighted mean prevalence of 30.6%. Conclusions: The results suggest that university students experience rates of depression that are substantially higher than those found in the general population. Study quality has not improved since 1990

Keywords:

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