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Mental Distress and Associated Factors among College Students in Kemisie District, Ethiopia

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Introduction: Mental health problems such as distress affect society in a non-differential fashion. In recent decades, mental distress is becoming a common health problem among students. In this regard, there is limited information about the problem available in Ethiopia. Therefore, this study aimed to determine the prevalence and associated factors of mental distress among college students in Kemisie district, Ethiopia.

Methods: An institution-based cross-sectional study was conducted among 408 students from February 11 to 14 2020. A stratified sampling technique was used to select the study participants. Data were collected using a structured self-administered questionnaire. Self-reporting questionnaire (referred to as the SRQ-20) is a standardized questionnaire having 20-item questions and was used as a tool for mental distress. Appropriate descriptive statistics was done. A binary logistic regression model was used to identify factors associated with mental distress. An adjusted odds ratio with a 95%confidence interval was computed to determine the level of significance. A p value < 0.05 was used to declare the statistical significance of the variables.

Results: Prevalence of mental distress among students was 17.6% (95% CI 13.8–21.4%). Not having close friends (AOR = 3.61; 95% CI 1.61–8.14), attend religious programs (AOR = 0.23; 95% CI 0.14–0.53), conflict with friend (AOR = 3.07; 95% CI 1.44–6.33), not having pocket money (AOR = 2.72; 95% CI 1.27–25.80), ever use of Chat (AOR = 5.06; 95% CI 2.12–11.80), current use of Chat (AOR = 3.12; 95% CI 1.04–9.82), decreased grade than = anticipated (AOR = 3.20; 95% CI 1.436–7.16), and low and moderate social support (AOR = 3.34; 95% CI 1.41–7.92) and (AOR = 1.47; 95% CI 1.08–5.68), respectively were statistically significantly associated factors of mental distress.

Conclusions: The overall prevalence of mental distress among students in Kemisie district, Ethiopia was high. In Ethiopia, along with the current economic crisis and the absence of social support, the problem could be increased. Therefore, the mental health needs of the college students require attention with special emphasis on not having close friends, never attending religious programs, conflict with friends, absence of pocket money, students who use Khat, and those who have low social support.

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