

## A STUDY ON MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

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### ABSTRACT

Understanding mental health is a building block of any approach taken to tackle the global challenges, but it is hampered by stigma, misinformation, and funding. This study explores mental health awareness levels, attitudes, the effectiveness of awareness programs, and the state of mental health awareness across various sectors. Using a mixed-methods approach, data was collected from participants of various demographic groups to determine knowledge gaps and barriers to receiving mental health care. Although current campaigns already increased knowledge in certain aspects, a long way lay ahead until inclusivity and accessibility is certain. Such a study also serves as a reminder of the importance of targeted interventions, greater education about mental health issues. Increased advocacy efforts to ensure mental health is seen as a critical component of overall health. This study further aid to strategies that can help individuals and communities prioritize mental health by creating a safe space of understanding for everyone. The topic of mental health awareness has emerged as a topic of global discussion as the world is acknowledging that mental well-being is a key component of individual and collective success. Although advances have been made, many of these barriers continue to limit access to support and treatment for the disorder, including stigma, poor education, and scarcity of professionals. This manuscript aims to investigate the levels of mental health awareness, the influencers of awareness, its effects on an individual's willingness to seek out help and support others. The goal is to find the areas in which these concepts remain unknown and to gather pertinent information that can be used to contribute to the design of productive and inclusive interventions.

**Key Words-** Mental Health, global challenges, awareness level, attitudes, accessibility

### I. INTRODUCTION

Mental health is as important a part of overall well-being as physical health, but it has tended, historically and perhaps currently, to be stigmatized, compressed, and overlooked. Due to the intense impact something can have on people lives, families and communities, mental health education is in the foreground all over the world recently. Mental health conditions constitute a significant component of the global burden of disease and disorders such as depression and anxiety affect tens of millions around the world (World Health Organisation). But there is still a huge gap in understanding, recognizing and addressing mental health issues [1-4].

The awareness of mental health refers to educating about mental health condition, stigma reduction and awareness of seeking help. Realising this makes early intervention even more important, with the right support helping to improve outcomes and quality of life for people with a disability. Awareness of Endometriosis varies depending on demographics, cultures, and regions, with factors such as education, socioeconomic status, and cultural beliefs affecting the level of awareness in different groups [5-7].

This study examines the importance of mental health awareness, emphasizing its contribution to comprehension, stigma reduction, and proactive mental health management. This study is designed to assess the current level of awareness about mental health, detect challenges, and find solutions for them. Filling such gaps will help build a more aware and compassionate society, where mental health is considered an important part of human health [8-11].

### II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature review summarizes the current state of research on mental health awareness, including its prevalence, challenges, and the effectiveness of awareness campaigns.

**The Importance of Raising Awareness about Mental Health:** The studies highlight the importance of mental health awareness to prevent, diagnose and treat these illnesses. WHO (2021) states that raising awareness about the mental health crisis is crucial because around 1 in 8 people globally experience mental health issues [1, 12-15]. The weep of the inadequacy of awareness leads to a delay in treatment and bad outcomes according to the study, demonstrating the crucial need for vigorous education efforts [16-17].

**Stigma and Its Impact:** Stigma continues to be a major hurdle in awareness and treatment of mental illness. The societal stigma, along with the internalized stigma, prevents them from visiting. Discrimination and stigmas prevail even in supportive environments and can affect the likelihood of disclosure. Fighting stigma, therefore, is a common theme in mental health awareness literature [18-20].

**Levels of Awareness by Demographics:** There are several studies that highlight the differences in mental health awareness among age groups, gender, socio-economic status and cultures. A high-risk group for developing mental health disorders identify gaps in mental health literacy among adolescents. Cultural Differences explain that cultural beliefs impact attitude formation towards mental illness, generally collectivist societies have a perception of mental ill health being associated with shame for the family [21-23].

**The Impact of Awareness Campaigns:** It has successfully decreased stigma and engaged in dialogue around mental health [24].

**Evidence Based Programs:** Multiple studies have confirmed that school-based mental health first aid courses improve mental health literacy and promote a student’s willingness to seek help. Social media campaigns note the increasing presence of social media in the normalization of mental health discussions, particularly for younger segments of the population [25].

**Access and Resources:** Awareness campaigns are often not followed up with resources or knowledge of affordable or local care available [26].

**Misinformation:** Well-intentioned but poorly designed campaigns can reinforce stereotypes or inadequately represent the breadth of mental health conditions. Enhancing mental health awareness is a multi-faceted approach; research suggests the need for strategies that not only promote mental health literacy, but also encourage advocacy and combat stigma. While current studies do show increased awareness, they also present lingering challenges requiring targeted, evidence-based solutions. This review lays the groundwork for future research and action to promote mental health awareness on a worldwide scale [27].

### III. OBSERVATIONS

**Table 1:** Demographic Information of Participants

Variable	Category	Count	Percentage (%)
Age Group	18-25	120	30%
	26-35	100	25%
	36-45	80	20%
	46+	100	25%
Gender	Male	150	37.5%
	Female	200	50%
	Other/Prefer not to say	50	12.5%
Education Level	High School	80	20%
	Undergraduate	150	37.5%
	Postgraduate	170	42.5%

**Table 2:** Awareness of Mental Health Disorders

Mental Health Disorder	Heard of It (%)	Understand Symptoms (%)
Depression	90%	75%
Anxiety Disorders	85%	70%
Bipolar Disorder	60%	40%
Schizophrenia	50%	30%
PTSD	70%	55%

**Table 3: Sources of Mental Health Information**

Source of Information	Percentage (%)
Social Media	45%
News & Articles	25%
School/Education	15%
Friends/Family	10%
Healthcare Professionals	5%

**Table 4: Willingness to Seek Professional Help**

Scenario	Yes (%)	No (%)	Unsure (%)
Experiencing Anxiety/Depression	70%	15%	15%
Severe Mood Swings	60%	20%	20%
Hallucinations/Delusions	50%	25%	25%
Suicidal Thoughts	80%	10%	10%

**Table 5: Perceived Stigma around Mental Health**

Statement	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
Mental illness is a sign of personal weakness	35%	25%	40%
I would be comfortable talking about my mental health	55%	20%	25%
Seeking therapy is only for severe cases	50%	30%	20%
People with mental illness face discrimination	70%	20%	10%

**Table 6: Workplace and Mental Health Support**

Workplace Policy	Available (%)	Not Available (%)	Not Sure (%)
Employee mental health programs	40%	45%	15%
Access to counseling services	35%	50%	15%
Paid mental health leave	30%	55%	15%
Open discussions on mental health	25%	60%	15%

**Table 7: Impact of Mental Health on Daily Life**

Area of Life Affected	Strong Impact (%)	Some Impact (%)	No Impact (%)
Work/Studies	60%	30%	10%
Relationships	50%	35%	15%
Physical Health	55%	30%	15%
Sleep Patterns	70%	20%	10%

**Table 8: Coping Mechanisms for Mental Health Issues**

Coping Mechanism	Frequently Used (%)	Sometimes Used (%)	Rarely/Never Used (%)
Exercise & Physical Activity	50%	30%	20%
Meditation & Mindfulness	40%	35%	25%
Talking to Friends/Family	60%	25%	15%
Therapy/Counselling	30%	30%	40%
Substance Use (alcohol/drugs)	20%	25%	55%

**Table 9: Mental Health Education in Schools**

Education Level	Received Mental Health Education (%)	Did Not Receive (%)	Not Sure (%)
Primary School	20%	70%	10%

Education Level	Received Mental Health Education (%)	Did Not Receive (%)	Not Sure (%)
High School	40%	50%	10%
College/University	55%	35%	10%

**Table 10:** Barriers to Seeking Mental Health Treatment

Barrier	Percentage (%)
Cost of therapy	50%
Lack of awareness	40%
Fear of stigma	45%
Limited access to professionals	35%
Cultural/religious beliefs	30%
Preference for self-management	25%

#### IV. DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis evaluates the above ten tables. These represent the main elements on mental health, which range from awareness to attitudes to accessibility.

In table 1 Demographic information of 400 participants are given. It shows a large part of the sample consists of people aged 18-35. In terms of gender distribution, there are more females than male and others. In education criteria, post graduates are more than others. Table 2 shows about the understanding of mental well-being disorders. As per the study of this table the most widespread disorders are Depression and Anxiety, which are known in 90% and 85% of cases, respectively. Nearly as interesting, there are low recognition disorders, such as Bipolar Disorder (60%) and Schizophrenia (50%). One step further down, understanding symptoms is not even so prevalent as just having heard of the disorders. Sources of mental health information are showing in table 3. Social media is the leading source of information (45%), followed by news articles and formal education. Just 5% depend on healthcare professionals for their information. In table 4, willingness to seek professional help is given. As per this table the willingness to seek help is greatest for suicidal thoughts (80%) and depression/anxiety (70%). Hesitance is more common for illnesses such as hallucinations (50%), perhaps because of stigma. Perceived stigma around mental health is expressing in table 5. As per this table 70% say there is discrimination against people with mental illness. Only 55%, afterwards, they feel comfortable discussing mental health, which is a step in the right direction. 35% still views mental illness as a sign of weakness. Workplace mental health support data is showing in table 6. As per this data 40% said mental health programs are offered in their workplace. 50% said there were no counselling services. 60% said discussing mental health openly is discouraged. Table 7 is showing impact of mental health on daily life. This data is expressing for instance, the largest is sleep (70%) and work/studies (60%). Physical health (55%) is quite a portion of this as well. Coping Mechanisms for mental health issues are representing in table 8. This table data is showing about the most common coping mechanisms are talking to friends (60%) and exercise (50%). Only 30% reported that they had used therapy, and 20% reported substance use. Mental health education data is discussing in table 9. As per the data just 20% were trained at the primary school level. Notably, mental health education is mandated for high school (40%) and college (55%) at varying rates. Table 10, is showing about the barriers to seeking mental health help. This data is showing, 50% cost of therapy as a significant barrier. 45% are afraid of social stigma, and 40% do not know of available services. Apprehension (35%) and cultural beliefs (30%) also stop people from seeking assistance.

#### Barriers to Mental Health Awareness and Care

Despite this growing awareness, however, there are still some obstacles to people seeking to understand more about mentally healthy behaviours, discuss these concerns, and seek help. Below are the key barriers:

##### 1) Stigma and Cultural Beliefs

**Fear of Being Labeled:** There is a fear of being judged or labelled as "weak" or "crazy" which results in many to avoid talking about mental health.

**Stigmatization:** In certain societies, mental health is often not discussed openly, which discourages people from getting help.

**Workplace Stigma** — Employees fear discrimination or losing their job if they disclose a mental health issue.

##### 2) Insufficient Education and Awareness

**Inadequate Mental Health Awareness:** A lot of people are unable to identify symptoms of mental disorders or know when to reach out for help.

Myth #3: Mental Health is Largely a Marketing Issue Misinformation: This is hard to believe, but social media and cultural misconceptions are still spreading false information about psychological principles.  
Lack of early education: Information about mental health is rarely included in school curricula.

### 3) Financial Constraints

High Cost of Therapy: Many individuals may not be able to afford Professional Therapy or Psychiatric services.  
Limited Coverage in Insurance: Mental health services are frequently not insured or have limited coverage.  
Cost of Medication: Medication is to some extent expensive.

### 4) Accessibility Issues

Demand for Mental Health Professionals: A great need for therapists, psychiatrists, and counselors but insufficient number practicing in different areas.  
Long Wait Times: Patients often face weeks or months of waiting to get an appointment.  
Rural & Remote Areas: Limited health care infrastructure makes it challenging for rural populations to access mental health care.

### 5) Insufficient Workplace and Community Support

Inadequate Workplace Policies: There are few mental health days or counseling services at companies.  
Social Isolation: People who lack friends and family support may find it more challenging to ask for help.  
Reluctance To Talk About Problems: A lot of individuals find it difficult to talk about their feelings owing to social obligations.

### 6) Fear of Side Effects or Dependency on Medication

Worries About Treatment: People fear becoming addicted to antidepressants or other medications.  
Side-effects: Many medications have unwanted side effects and patients stop taking them.

### 7) Digital Barriers

Misinformation on Social Media: Social media is a double-edged sword when it comes to mental health as false information can:(III) discourage people from seeking out professional help.

2- Over-reliance on Self Diagnosis: Instead of relying on professionals, many are now going to the internet for self-diagnosis.

Privacy Concerns: Privacy fears about data being leaked stop some from using online therapy services.

#### Suggestions

- 1) Awareness Gaps: While severe mental disorders such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder are far less visible, the low mentions from the campaigns suggest some room for improvement.
- 2) Reliance on social media: Mental health awareness thrives on social media. People are still a dream for sharing, or working together on, content that is accurate, responsive, and workable on these platforms.
- 3) Barriers Persist: Although that is progress, stigma is still a major hurdle. Iconic campaigns require a combination of personal narratives and peer-based advocacy in order to destigmatize reaching out for help.
- 4) Effectiveness of interventions: Interventions show improvements such as knowledge gain, stigma reduction and help-seeking behaviour; the movement is the right one, but there must also be systematic action.
- 5) Need for Inclusivity: More targeted resources should be directed towards underrepresented populations including those with lower education or socio-economics status, as they are less likely to benefit from existing awareness campaigns.
- 6) Enhancing Mental Health Awareness & Education: It is suggested that the institute should build the infrastructure for improved mental health education at all levels.
- 7) Stigma reduction: It is not mandatory that everyone has to have a therapist and people literally anyone need to talk about mental health, instead of turning the other way.
- 8) Expand Access: Expand access with more online therapy options and rural mental health initiatives.
- 9) Affordable Mental Health Services: Like insurance with better coverage and subsidized care.
- 10) Use of Reliable Information Sources: More healthcare professionals should be engaged in awareness programs. Foster Open Communication within families, communities, and workplaces.

### Implication

The study reflects a younger and more diverse demographic, echoing the increasing global attention to mental health challenges that younger generations are having. Even as the basic awareness of psychological conditions is quite high, the deep knowledge of how they present is still desperately lacking, showing a need for more psychological education. The proliferation of misinformation creates high risk for misinformation, but due in part to most people relying more on social media than traditional forms of news one idea is campaign led by leading experts. Stigmatization and the lack

of awareness/shame may make people reluctant to seek proper intervention efforts namely in psychiatry for acute disorders. Although discussions are becoming more open, misconceptions about mental health continue especially around perceived weakness. There's not enough support in the workplace, and many people still can't talk about mental health at work. As mental health impacts overall health, it is important to include mental health support with physical health initiatives. Healthy coping strategies are more popular, but the low use of therapy may indicate problems with accessibility or stigma. Early exposure to information about mental health is missing, putting a dent in awareness and attitudes later in life. Mental health support needs to be affordable and accessible, with efforts to reduce stigma continuing.

## V. CONCLUSION

From the above analysis, it is concluded that current mental health awareness and its associated successes or challenges require more precise, universal and data-driven campaigns designed to educate and mitigate. Its key findings were all sorts of common like, the awareness of common conditions such as depression and anxiety is relatively high compared to less common or more stigmatised conditions such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. In the face of this challenge, more generally, social media has become an important conduit for the flow of information, though dependence on these platforms highlights the need for high-quality, evidence-driven content. While awareness accidents have improved these issues, the stigma, lack of awareness and treatment cost is still the barrier to seek help. The data also indicates that targeted interventions can massively improve knowledge, decrease stigma and promote help-seeking behaviour. These efforts need to be expanded and sustained, however, especially for underrepresented groups and systemic issues like affordability and access to mental health care. Though separate initiatives have been taken so far, there is an impelling need to align holistic, inclusive and multi-pronged approaches wherever possible towards mental health awareness. With our collective efforts of government, healthcare system, education institutions and media, mental can become a critically overarching aspect of wellbeing. After focussing on the above barriers, suggestions and implications regarding mental health awareness, it will provide a roadmap for improvement.

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