

Navigating the Depths: Exploring Mental Health Issues Among Youth

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Abstract:

This review addresses the escalating mental health challenge in India, emphasizing its impact on youth, including children and young adults. Factors contributing to rising suicidal rates among young adults are explored, encompassing academic pressure, social isolation, and the influence of social media. The study examines various influencers of mental health, including environmental aspects, stigma, adverse childhood experiences, academic pressure, and substance abuse.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated mental health issues, with increased prevalence of post-traumatic stress and suicidal thoughts. The review also delves into the multifaceted nature of mental health among college students, emphasizing the need for effective support systems and positive habits. A proposed solution involves utilizing machine learning for early detection of mental health issues in young adults, contributing to the discourse on mental health in academic settings

Keywords: Mental Health Challenge, India, Youth, Children, Young Adults, Suicidal Rates

Introduction:

In the vast mosaic of India's societal canvas, a looming challenge demands our collective attention — the escalating mental health crisis that casts a pervasive shadow of anxiety, depression, and ADHD across the nation. As we delve into this exploration, it becomes clear that this is not merely an academic endeavor but a moral imperative, a call to action for all stakeholders invested in the well-being of our youth. In this unfolding narrative, Amit Srivastava, an Assistant Professor at the Department of Computer Application, joins hands to confront the stark realities of mental health issues gripping the younger generation.[2][3]

In my view, the urgency of this exploration extends beyond academic discourse; it is a societal reckoning. The narratives we unravel here are not just statistics; they are the silent struggles of individuals, the untold stories behind rising suicidal rates and the collateral damage inflicted by societal pressures. As we navigate this tumultuous terrain, it is incumbent upon us to not only dissect the

contributing factors but to ask ourselves: What societal role do we play in shaping the mental health landscape of our youth?

Mental health crisis:

In India, a significant portion of the population, approximately 10.6%, grapples with mental health challenges. Alarming, a substantial percentage ranging from 76% to 85% of those requiring assistance or services for their mental health conditions do not receive the essential support [4]. This lack of support can lead to severe consequences, including suicide and other critical mental health concerns. According to data provided by the World Health Organization (WHO), mental health issues contribute to a substantial Disability-Adjusted Life Year (DALY) burden, amounting to 2443 per 100,000 people in India [5]. Moreover, there is an estimated risk of the country experiencing a considerable economic loss, projecting at 1.03 trillion USD between 2012 and 2030 due to the challenges posed by mental health issues [6].

Suicidal Rate:

The rising suicidal rates among young adults reflect complex interplays of psychological, social, and environmental factors. Recent studies underscore an alarming increase in suicidal ideation and attempts within this age group, emphasizing the urgent need for targeted interventions and improved mental health support. Stressors contributing to these trends include heightened academic pressure, increased social isolation, challenges in identity exploration, and the pervasive influence of social media on self-perception. The transitional phase from adolescence to adulthood proves to be a vulnerable period, with difficulties encountered during this critical juncture significantly impacting mental well-being.

Recent data underscores a troubling rise in the prevalence of suicidal thoughts and attempts among young adults, necessitating a nuanced understanding of specific triggers and risk factors associated with suicidal tendencies in this demographic. Economic uncertainties, educational stressors, and societal expectations contribute significantly to the mental health challenges faced by young adults. Addressing the escalating rates of suicide in this population requires comprehensive strategies, including initiatives focused on mental health awareness, accessible counseling services, and robust community support systems. Notably, adolescence represents the reported age group for 35% of all suicides in India, with a striking 67% of suicides reported in 2019 occurring among individuals aged 15 to 45. Within India's overall count of 1.39 lakh suicides, a staggering 93,061 young people tragically took their own lives [7].

Factors Influencing Mental Health:

1. Environmental Factors:

Climate change repercussions on mental health are intricate, interconnected with environmental, social, and economic determinants. Adversely impacted aspects encompass air and water quality, food security, income, livelihoods, and ecological changes. Elevated temperatures, prolonged droughts, and climate-induced shortages of food and water can contribute to respiratory issues, decreased mobility, heightened poverty, and mental health challenges.

2. Loneliness and Isolation:

Loneliness and isolation can detrimentally affect mental health. Prolonged experiences may signal underlying mental health issues, linked to factors such as loss or relocation of loved ones, living alone, social difficulties, and mental health conditions.

3. Stigma and Discrimination:

Mental health professionals encounter stigma and prejudice, impacting their social inclusion, housing, relationships, and employment. Over 90% of individuals with mental health issues report a cycle of disease linked to societal misconceptions and biased media portrayals.

4. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs):

Adverse childhood experiences elevate the risk of long-term health issues, mental illness, and substance abuse in adulthood. These potentially traumatic events during childhood include maltreatment, exposure to violence, and family members attempting or dying by suicide.

5. Academic and Peer Pressure:

The pressure to excel academically, peer pressure, and instances of bullying contribute to stress, anxiety, and depression among young adults. Unsupportive parents or those exerting excessive academic pressure add to the difficulties of forming meaningful connections.

6. Substance Abuse:

Substance abuse, encompassing alcoholism and drug addiction, negatively affects the mental health of young individuals. Cyberbullying poses a substantial risk to mental health, leading to outcomes such as psychosomatic symptoms, depression, and even suicide attempts.

COVID Effect on Mental Health:

In India, from January 3, 2020, to 2:00 p.m. CEST on July 26, 2023, the World Health Organization (WHO) has reported a total of 4,49,95,332 confirmed cases of COVID-19, resulting in 5,31,915 deaths [24]. Furthermore, as of June 26, 2023, a total of 2,20,67,37,729 vaccine doses have been administered. Following the COVID-19 outbreak, a significant number of individuals have reported experiencing post-traumatic stress [25]. There has been an alarming increase in the prevalence of suicidal thoughts and behaviors, including among healthcare professionals [26]. The measures put in place during the coronavirus pandemic, such as lockdowns and isolation, have exacerbated mental health issues [27]. According to a scientific note published by the World Health Organization (WHO), the global prevalence of anxiety and depression has risen by 25% during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Analysis of College Students' Mental Health:

The mental well-being of college and university students is a critical aspect during this formative period of their lives, marked by rapid development of ideals. The evolving physiological and psychological stages, coupled with societal changes, inevitably give rise to various mental challenges. Understanding the overall mental health landscape among students is essential for providing effective support and ensuring the delivery of high-quality education.

Concerning mental health, it's important to note that there isn't a singular benchmark, as mental health encompasses diverse aspects. Drawing from various studies, psychologists identify seven factors integral to mental health: normal cognitive function, emotional stability, sound will, behavior coordination, interpersonal adaptability, moderate reaction, and age-appropriate psychological

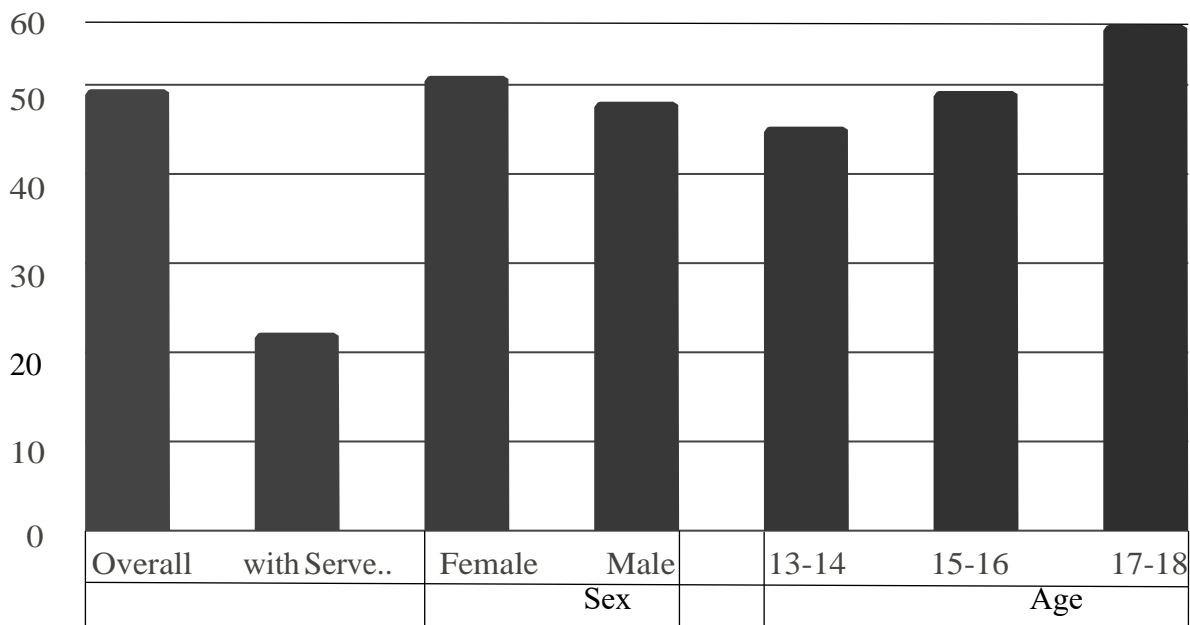
Study Example:

The bar chart presents data on the lifetime prevalence of any mental disorder among adolescents from 2001 to 2004, sourced from the Adolescent Supplement of the National Comorbidity Survey (NCS-A). The chart comprises seven bars, with one axis displaying the classifications and the other axis indicating the percentage. The chart's interactive display, ranging from 0 to 60, has concluded.

Lifetime Prevalence of Any Mental Disorder Among

Adolescents(2001-2004)

Data from the National Comorbidity Survey Adolescent Supplement (NCS-A)



Conclusion:

As society grapples with an unprecedented surge in mental health challenges among its youth, it accentuates a profound concern that reverberates across the societal fabric. The silent battles waged within the minds of the younger generation demand not only acknowledgment but a concerted effort towards fostering resilience and well-being. Our exploration has unearthed the intricate interplay of factors shaping mental health, from the crucible of academic pressure to the relentless onslaught of societal expectations. The rising tide of suicidal rates among young adults signals a clarion call for targeted interventions, robust support systems, and a seismic shift in societal attitudes.

In conclusion, our collective responsibility as advocates for societal well-being is to propel this discourse forward, weaving a tapestry of awareness, empathy, and actionable strategies. The journey does not end with the final pages of this review; instead, it propels us towards a future where mental health is not only understood but nurtured, creating a resilient and compassionate society for generations to come.

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