



# A Comparative Study of Mental Health Status and Stress Level between Male and Female College Students of District Hathras UP

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## Abstract:

The major objective of present study was to compare the mental health status and stress level of college students. A total of 100 (50 male and 50 female) students were randomly selected from colleges of Hathras district U.P. Mithila Mental Health Status Inventory(MMHSI) and Dr. Rajendra singh's Stress Scale were administered to measure the mental health and stress level of college students. The results indicated that there were significant differences between mental health status and stress level of male and female college students.

**Keywords:** Mental Health, Stress and Male & Female College Students.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Mental health is a level of psychological well-being, or an absence of mental illness. It is the "psychological state of someone who is functioning at a satisfactory level of emotional and behavioral adjustment". From the perspective of positive psychology or holism, mental health may include an individual's ability to enjoy life, and create a balance between life activities and efforts to achieve psychological resilience. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), mental health includes "subjective well-being, perceived self-efficacy, autonomy, competence, inter-generational dependence, and self-actualization of one's intellectual and emotional potential, among others." The WHO further states that the well-being of an individual is encompassed in the realization of their abilities, coping with normal stresses of life, productive work and contribution to their community. Cultural differences, subjective assessments, and competing professional theories all affect how "mental health" is defined.

According to the U.K. surgeon general (1999), mental health is the successful performance of mental function, resulting in productive activities, fulfilling relationships with other people, and providing the ability to adapt to change and cope with adversity. The term *mental illness* refers collectively to all diagnosable mental disorders—health conditions characterized by alterations in thinking, mood, or behavior associated with distress or impaired functioning.

A person struggling with their mental health may experience this because of stress, loneliness, depression, anxiety, relationship problems, death of a loved one, thoughts, grief, addiction, ADHD, various mood disorders, or other mental illnesses of varying degrees, as well as learning disabilities. Therapists, psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, nurse practitioners or physicians can help manage mental illness with treatments such as therapy, counseling, or medication.

Mental health is concern with the process of adjustment of a person's potential in an expressed in a balanced way and motivation towards the goal. Mental health is a dynamic functioning of the whole organism. It brings a harmony of movement in the organism to achieve and end which is completeness or fulfillment. Hadfield considers that "In general terms we may say that mental health is the full harmonious functioning of the whole personality." (Hadfield: mental and psycho- neurosis).

Stress is a natural part of life. Stress is hard to define because it means different things to different people; however it's clear that most stress is a negative feeling rather than a positive feeling. Some stress can be positive. Research shows that a moderate level of stress makes us perform better. It also makes us more alert and can help us perform better in situations such as job interviews or public speaking. But stress is only healthy if it is short-lived. Excessive or prolonged stress can lead to illness and physical and emotional exhaustion.

Health problems can occur if the stress response goes on for too long or becomes chronic, such as when the source of stress is constant, or if the response continues after the danger has subsided. With chronic stress, those same life-saving responses in your body can suppress immune, digestive, sleep, and reproductive systems, which may cause them to stop working normally. Different people may feel stress in different ways. For example, some people experience mainly digestive symptoms, while others may have headaches, sleeplessness, sadness, anger or irritability. People under chronic stress are prone to more frequent and severe viral infections, such as the flu or common cold. Routine stress may be the hardest type of stress to notice at first. Because the source of stress tends to be more constant than in cases of acute or traumatic stress, the body gets no clear signal to return to normal functioning. Over time, continued strain on your body from routine stress may contribute to serious health problems, such as heart disease,

high blood pressure, diabetes, and other illnesses, as well as mental disorders like depression or anxiety. Stressful life events have been consistently linked to a number of mental health problems such as depression (Kessler; 1997), Psychosis (Bebbington, Bowen & Ramana, 1997), Substance abuse (Kilpatrick, et.al, 1997), as well as physical health issues (Craig & Brown, 1984; Niaura, & Goldstein, 1992) in the general population.

Review of literature reveals that there are contrasting findings about the mental health and stress level between male and female college students. Consequently, the present study is designed to compare the mental health and stress level between male and female college students.

**OBJECTIVES**

- To compare the mental health status of male and female college students.
- To compare the stress level of male and female college students.

**HYPOTHESES**

- There will not be significant difference between the mental health status of male and female college students.
- There will not be significant difference between the stress level of male and female college students.

**II. METHODOLOGY**

*Sample:* The present studies was conducted on 100 sample (50male & 50 female) college students belonging to 20-25 years of age group and were randomly selected from different colleges of Hathras district UP.

*Tools:* In this present study tools used are:

1- Mithila Mental Health Status Inventory (MMHSI): this scale is constructed and standardized by Dr. Anand Kumar (Department of Psychology, Kashi Vidyapith University Varanasi) & Giridhar. P Thakur (Department of Psychology, Kashi Vidyapith University, Varanasi).

2-Stress Scale: this scale is constructed and standardized by Dr. Rajendra singh (M.G.K.V.P.University, Varanasi).

*Procedure:* In the Present Study researcher personally approached the respondents and collected information about them. After that questionnaires were administered and scored as per manual of the scale.

*Statistical Techniques used* Mean, Standard deviation and ‘t’ test were the statistical techniques used for carrying out the analysis and interpretation of the data collected.

**III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

*Table : Values of Mean, Standard deviation & ‘t’ of stress level of college students  
\*.05 significance level*

Variable	N	M	SD	‘t’ value
Male	50	27.48	6.87	2.45*
Female	50	28.39	8.50	

An inspection of table reveals that mean score of stress level of female college students (M=28.39±8.50) is comparative higher than male college students (M=27.48±6.87). It is evident from table -2 that obtained ‘t’ value between male and female college students is 2.45 respectively. Stress level with reference to gender was also found to differ significantly at respectable level of significance.

These findings are similar to the study which was conducted by Brougham et al. (2009) to assess the stress, sex differences, and coping strategies of college students. These researchers also tested undergraduate students attending college in the United States. The results of this study revealed that female college students reported feeling larger amounts of stress than college men (Brougham et al., 2009). This is consistent with the article referenced by Brougham et al. (2009) in which Misra et al. (2000) revealed that college women are more stressed by pressures in relation to academi than men are. A similar study conducted by Misra and McKean (2000) also tested undergraduate American students and found results that were consistent with previous studies; female college students experience higher academic stress and anxiety than men do (Misra & McKean, 2000)

The finding might be interpreted on the ground that the male students more mentally healthy than female students. because they possess positive attitude towards life,they have more capable in expression of thoughts and feelings, they have more capable in determining of realistic life goals, they positively evaluate their self and life events, they are completely convinced of capabilities, potentials ,abilities and talents, and on the basis of that they determine life goals ,they have more capable in self decision making. The female students have exhibited less mental health and more feel of stress, because female students encode and negatively interpret the life events, suggesting greater cognitive vulnerability to depression (Hankin & Bromson, 2001). Some researches indicate that female also report greater levels of negative affect depression associated with interpersonal stress (Udolph and Hammen,1999), and greater emotional difficulties (Crick and Zahn-Waxler, 2003; Hankinet al, 2007; Quatman & Watson, 2001) than males.

**LIMITATIONS OF STUDY:** This study is limited to the samples of one district only i.e. Hathas UP. It was a cross sectional study, it can only discovered the association variable, without any causal relationship to be surveyed. .

**RECOMMONDATION:** It is suggested for the future studies that research can be conducted on larger sample. Longitudinal research design can be adopted for the future studies. An exploratory study can also be conducted between rural and urban residential areas. In future studies more detailed questionnaire to be used to assess and identify mental stress.

**IV. CONCLUSION**

Present study reveals that stress level of female college students (M=28.39±8.50) is comparative higher than male college students (M=27.48±6.87). It is evident from table -2 that obtained ‘t’ value between male and female college students is 2.45 respectively. Stress response is associated

with manifestations of various psychosomatic and psychiatric disorders. Hence, it is important to understand the underlying mechanisms that influence this association. Moreover, men and women tend to react differently with stress—both psychologically and biologically. These differences also need to be studied in order to have a better understanding in the gender difference observed for many disorders, which are likely to be contributed by the gender difference in stress reactivity and responses. Such an understanding would have a significant impact on our understanding about how adult health is set during early life and how adult disease could be prevented in men and women. Stress among university students has been a topic of interest for researchers and teachers for many years because it affects not only their academic performance but also their physiological and psychological health. Male and female students perceive and react to stressors differently due to their differences in appraising stressful situations.

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