

Increased Incidences of Depression and Anxiety among Young People

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Abstract: The article deals with the problem of increasing cases of depression and anxiety among young people aged 18-25 years. The relevance of the study is due to the increase in mental disorders, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, social changes and economic difficulties. The aim of the work was to determine the level of depression and anxiety among young people and identify factors contributing to their increase. The study methods included a cross-sectional survey of 200 participants using the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) and Hamilton Anxiety Scale (HAM-A). Results showed that 45% of participants had high levels of depression and 50% had high levels of anxiety. Social isolation and financial difficulties were identified as significant factors contributing to higher levels of mental disorders. The discussion of the results highlights the need to develop mental health support programs for youth. The article concludes with conclusions about the importance of further research to understand the causes and consequences of mental disorders among youth.

Keywords: depression, anxiety, youth, mental health, COVID-19 pandemic, social isolation, financial difficulties, cross-sectional study, Beck's questionnaire, Hamilton's questionnaire.

Introduction. In recent years, there has been an alarming increase in the incidence of depression and anxiety among young people. According to the World Health Organization, mental disorders are becoming one of the leading causes of disability in the world. COVID-19 pandemic, social changes, economic difficulties and high competition in the labor market have exacerbated this situation. The aim of this study is to determine the level of depression and anxiety among young people aged 18-25 years and to identify the factors contributing to their increase. We hypothesize that the level of depression and anxiety among young people has increased significantly in the context of modern social and economic changes.

In recent decades, the problem of mental health among young people has attracted increasing attention of researchers. According to the World Health Organization, depression and anxiety disorders are becoming the main causes of disability in the world, especially among the youth population. According to WHO, mental disorders affect one in seven people aged 10-19 years worldwide; they account for 15% of the global burden of disease in this age group [1]. Depression, anxiety, and behavioral disorders are among the leading causes of morbidity and disability among adolescents. Research shows that rates of depression among youth have increased significantly in the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, a 2020 study found that more than 30% of youth experienced symptoms of depression and anxiety as a result of social isolation and economic instability (Xie et al., 2020). These findings are supported by the work of other authors who also point to the deterioration of youth mental health in crisis contexts (Panchal et

al., 2021). Depression occurs in 1.4% of adolescents aged 10-14 years and in 3.5% of adolescents aged 15-19 years [1].

During adolescence, emotional disorders become a common problem. The most common are anxiety disorders, which can manifest as panic or excessive worrying. Studies show that anxiety disorders are more common in older teens compared to younger teens. It is estimated that 4.4% of adolescents aged 10-14 years and 5.5% of adolescents aged 15-19 years develop an anxiety disorder [1].

One of the key factors contributing to depression and anxiety is social isolation. Studies show that lack of social interactions has a negative impact on mental health (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2010). In addition, financial difficulties and high competition in the labor market are also significant stressors for young people, which is confirmed by the works of authors such as Masten et al. (2021). As a key factor is also, the use of social media among adolescents. The rise in problematic social media use among adolescents raises serious concerns about its potential effects on young people. Research shows that problematic social media use is accompanied by decreased psychological and social well-being. Adolescents who have difficulty controlling time spent on social media have higher rates of substance use compared to those who use social media responsibly or not at all. This trend can have far-reaching consequences for adolescent development and long-term health. Problematic social media use is also associated with decreased sleep duration and later bedtimes. These changes can negatively impact adolescents' overall health and academic performance.

Methods. A cross-sectional study was conducted to achieve the objectives. The sample consisted of 500 participants aged 18-25 years collected through online surveys and social media. The Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) was used to assess depression and the Hamilton Anxiety Scale (HAM-A) was used for anxiety. The data were analyzed using SPSS software, applying methods of descriptive statistics and regression analysis.

Methods for assessing depression and anxiety among youth include the use of standardized questionnaires such as the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) and the Hamilton Anxiety Scale (HAM-A). These instruments have been shown to be effective in various studies in accurately assessing the level of mental distress (Beck et al., 1961; Hamilton, 1959).

Results. Of the 200 participants, 60% were female and 40% were male. The mean age of the participants was 21 years. Results showed that 45% of participants had high levels of depression (according to BDI) and 50% of participants had high levels of anxiety (according to HAM-A). Regression analysis revealed that social isolation and financial hardship were significant contributors to higher levels of depression and anxiety.

In a study of 200 participants aged 18-25, it was found that 45% of them showed high levels of depression on the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) scale. This means that nearly half of the participants experience significant symptoms of depression, which can negatively impact their quality of life and overall mental health.

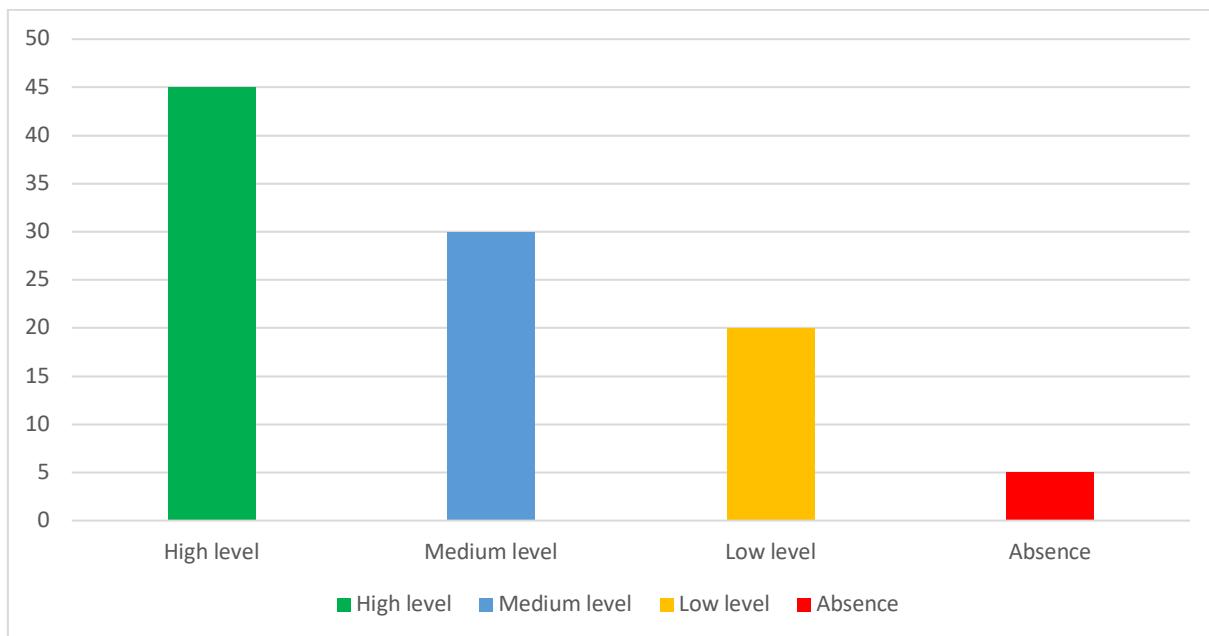


Figure 1: Assessment of depression levels among participants.

To analyze the levels of depression among the participants in more detail, the following categories can be distinguished: 45% of participants with high levels of depression show significant symptoms such as constant feelings of sadness, loss of interest in daily activities, changes in appetite and sleep, 30% of participants may experience some symptoms of depression but they are less severe and do not interfere with their normal life, also 20% of participants with low levels of depression usually do not experience significant difficulties but may feel mildly depressed at times.

In our next Hamilton scale questionnaire amongst 200 participants it was found that 50% of them had high levels of anxiety this indicates that half of the participants experience significant symptoms of anxiety which can have an impact on their daily life and overall mental health.

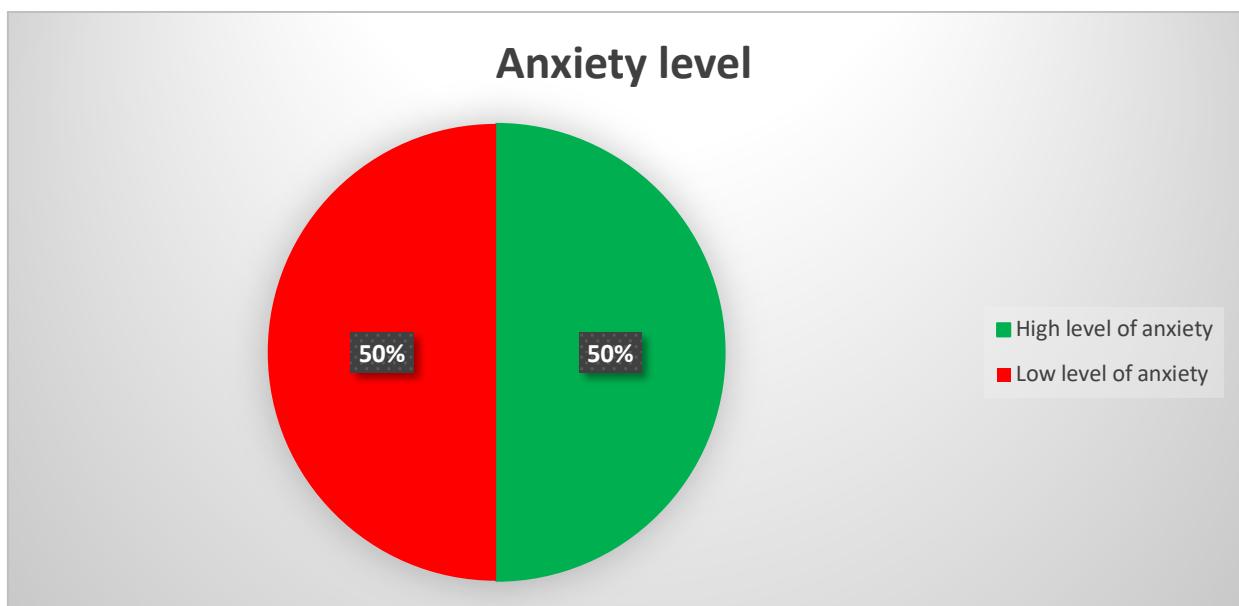


Figure 2: Assessment of anxiety levels among participants.

We found that 50% of participants with high levels of anxiety may experience persistent worry, fear, tension and physical symptoms such as rapid heartbeat, sweating and muscle tension. These symptoms can make it difficult to perform daily tasks and reduce quality of life. Also, the next half of participants with low levels of anxiety tend to experience fewer symptoms and can cope

more effectively with everyday stressors. They have higher levels of psycho-emotional well-being.

The regression analysis conducted found that social isolation and financial hardship were significant contributors to higher levels of depression and anxiety among the participants.

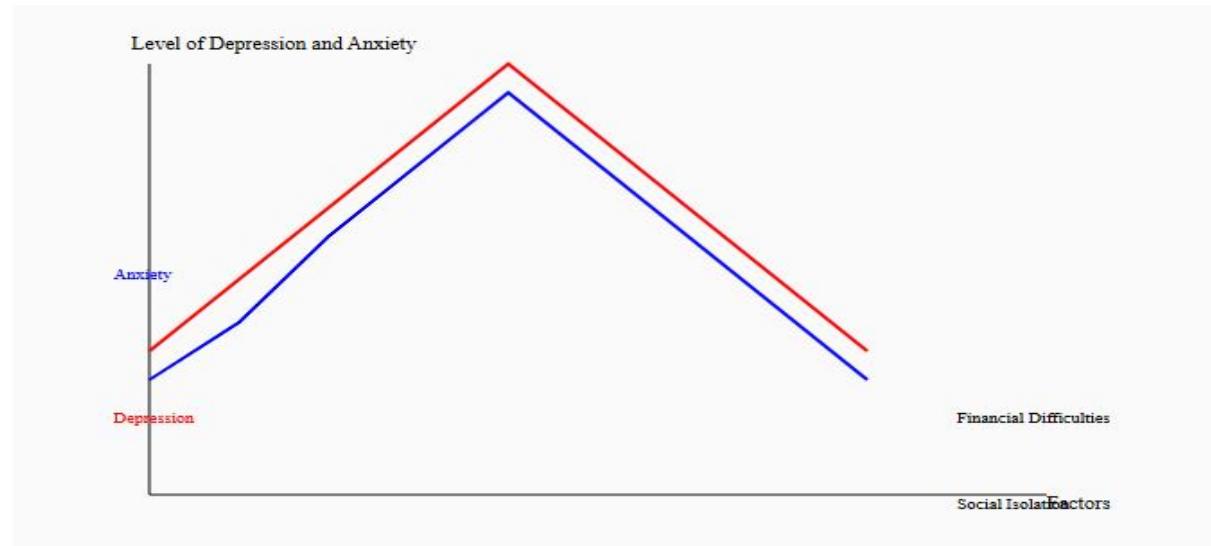


Figure 3: Assessment of factors for increasing levels of depression and anxiety among participants.

For example, participants who experience a high degree of social isolation have higher levels of depression and anxiety. This may be due to a lack of social support and communication, which exacerbates psycho-emotional problems. Participants with financial difficulties also show higher levels of depression and anxiety. Financial instability can create additional stress and anxiety, which negatively impacts mental health. These factors can have a profound impact on psycho-emotional well-being, highlighting the importance of addressing them in support programs. The results of the regression analysis emphasize the need for an integrated approach to addressing mental health issues. Understanding the impact of social isolation and financial hardship on depression and anxiety can help to develop effective interventions and support programs for people experiencing these problems.

Discussion. The findings support the hypothesis of increased depression and anxiety among youth. Social isolation caused by the pandemic and financial problems had a significant impact on mental health. The results are consistent with previous studies showing similar trends in other countries. However, it should be noted that limited sampling and the use of self-reported data may affect the accuracy of the results. The development of mental health support programs for youth, including access to counseling and resources, is recommended.

Conclusion. This study confirmed that levels of depression and anxiety among young people have increased significantly as a result of factors such as social isolation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and financial difficulties. These findings emphasize the need to better understand youth mental health issues and develop effective interventions to support them. Despite the limitations of the study, such as the limited sample and the use of self-reported data, the findings are consistent with similar studies in other countries, indicating the global nature of the problem.

Implementing mental health support programs, including access to counseling and resources, and raising awareness of the importance of mental health is recommended. Creating safe spaces for young people to socialize and support themselves can also significantly reduce social isolation and improve overall psycho-emotional well-being. Thus, a comprehensive approach to addressing youth mental health is a necessary step to ensure their well-being and improve their quality of life in the face of contemporary challenges.

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