



Prevalence of Common Mental Disorders among Patients Visiting A Tertiary Hospital: A Cross-Sectional Study

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ABSTRACT

Background

Mental disorder has emerged as pressing global health concern. It is necessary to find the way forward to deal with it in hospital setting. This study helps to find common mental disorders among patients visiting out-patient services. The objectives of this study were to measure prevalence of common mental disorders among adults 18 and above in patient visiting psychiatry out-patients service and to assess the comorbid physical illness.

Methods

An analytic cross-sectional quantitative study was carried out in Department of Psychiatry, after approval from Institute Research Committee from June 30th to November 30th 2025. ICD-11 was used to diagnose mental disorders. A total of 315 patients of 18 years and above were enrolled after informed written consent. Exclusion criteria were patients aged less than 18 years, delirious states, severe dementia and aggressive patient requiring emergency care. Physical illness was recorded as diagnosed by respective departments.

Results

A total of 315 patients were enrolled in this study. Among them 131 (41.5%) had anxiety spectrum disorder, depressive disorder was found among 70 (22.2%), followed by bodily distress disorder and bipolar disorder 33 (10.5%) and 32 (10.2%) respectively. Comorbid physical illness was hypertension 45 (14.3%), hypothyroidism 17 (5.8%), and Type-2 diabetes mellitus 12 (3.8%). Female was significant with mental disorder with p value <0.001.

Conclusions

The most common mental disorder among adults was found to be anxiety disorder followed by depressive disorder and most common comorbid physical illness was hypertension.

Keywords: Common mental disorder; ICD-11; Psychiatry out-patient; Prevalence; Nepal.

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INTRODUCTION

Mental health disorders have emerged as a pressing global health concern, with approximately one in four individuals experiencing a mental illness at some point in their lives.¹ Common mental disorders (CMDs) includes depression, anxiety, and somatic symptom disorders. They are particularly prevalent and contribute significantly to disability and reduced quality of life.² In Nepal, the burden of mental disorders has been steadily increasing. A study from the Global Burden of Disease Study 2019 estimated that approximately 3.9 million people in Nepal were living with mental disorders in 2019, with major depressive disorders and anxiety disorders being the most prevalent.³

Tertiary care centers, which provide specialized medical services, play a crucial role in the identification and management of CMDs.⁴ Studies conducted in Nepalese tertiary care settings have revealed that depression, anxiety disorders, and somatoform disorders are among the most common psychiatric diagnoses.⁵ However, there remains a paucity of comprehensive data on the prevalence of CMDs among patients attending these centers. It is essential for effective resource allocation, training of healthcare professionals, and the development of targeted mental health interventions.

This study aimed to assess the prevalence of common mental disorders among patients visiting a tertiary care center in COMS-TH, Nepal.

METHODS

Study Area

The study was conducted at College of Medical Sciences-Teaching Hospital.

Study Design

A hospital-based analytic cross-sectional descriptive study was conducted to assess the prevalence and pattern of common mental disorders and associated comorbidities among the study participants.

Sample Size and Sampling

A total of 315 participants were enrolled in this study using the prevalence of common mental disorder to be 27.2% i.e. 0.272⁶ with 95% confidence interval

and convenient sampling technique was used for data collection. Patients meeting the inclusion criteria during the study period were consecutively recruited after obtaining informed consent. Exclusion criteria was patient less than 18 years, delirious states and aggressive patient requiring emergency care, The participants who didn't give the complete information were not included in the study.

Data Collection

Data were collected from 30th June -30th November 2025, among patients attending the outpatient of the psychiatry using a structured proforma that included sociodemographic details, psychiatric diagnoses using ICD- 11 diagnostic descriptions and clinical requirements for mental, behavioural and neurodevelopmental disorder was used to diagnose mental disorder, comorbid physical comorbidities were recorded as done by other departments respectively. Psychiatric diagnoses were made by qualified clinicians based on standard diagnostic criteria. Relevant clinical and demographic information was obtained through patient interviews.

Data Analysis

The obtained data were entered in excel and analyzed in SPSS according to research objective. Descriptive statistics and Chi square test were used to test association between dependent and independent variables. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

RESULTS

Out of 315 patients, 43.9% were from age group 18-40, 39.0% were from age group 41-59 and 17.1% were more than 60 years. Among gender distribution females were 59.0%, 41.0% were male, 31.4% had primary level of education and 78.4% were married, 37.5% were housewife and 18.1% were unemployed (Table 1).

Table 1: Socio-demographics characteristics (n=315).

Charactristics	Frequency n (%)
Age group (years)	
18-40	138 (43.9)

41-59	123 (39.0)
>60	54 (17.1)
Sex	
Female	186 (59.0)
Male	129 (41.0)
Education	
Illiterate	6 (1.9)
Primary	99 (31.4)
Secondary	38 (12.1)
Higher secondary	38 (12.1)
Intermediate	62 (19.7)
Graduate	56 (17.8)
Postgraduate	16 (5.0)
Marital status	
Single	43 (13.6)
Married	247 (78.4)
Widow	22 (7.0)
Separated	3 (1.0)
Occupation	
House wife	118 (37.5)
Farmer	48 (15.2)
Business	22 (7.0)
Labour	13 (4.1)
Unemployed	57 (18.1)
Service	57 (18.1)

Maximum number of respondents were from age group 18-40, who were suffering from anxiety disorder (19.0%) followed by depressive disorder (11.4%), bipolar disorder (3.2%), alcohol dependence syndrome (3.8%) (Table 2).

Table 2: Distribution of mental disorder as per age-group (n=315).

Mental Disorder	Age group (year)		
	18-40	41-59	>60
Anxiety disorder	60 (19.0)	51 (16.2)	20 (6.3)
Depressive disorder	36 (11.4)	24 (7.6)	10 (3.2)
Bodily distress disorder	10 (3.1)	17 (5.5)	6 (1.9)
Bipolar disorder	16 (5.2)	10 (3.1)	6 (1.9)
Psychotic disorder	4 (1.3)	9 (2.8)	6 (1.9)
Conversion disorder	4 (1.3)	3 (1)	2 (0.6)
Alcohol dependence syndrome	5 (1.6)	7 (2.2)	0
Dementia	0	1 (0.3)	3 (1)
Epilepsy	2 (0.7)	1 (0.3)	1 (0.3)
Borderline personality disorder	1 (0.3)	0	0

Among 315 patients, anxiety disorder was most common with 41.5%, followed by depressive disorder 22.2% and third common being bodily distress disorder (10.5%) and bipolar disorder (10.2%) (Table 3).

Table 3: Mental disorder based on ICD-11 criteria (n=315).

Mental disorder	Frequency n (%)
Anxiety disorder (6B00-6B0Z)	131 (41.5)
Depressive Disorder (unipolar) (6A70-6A7Z)	70 (22.2)
Bodily distress disorder (6C20-6C2Z)	33 (10.5)
Bipolar disorder (6A60-6A6Z)	32 (10.2)
Psychotic disorder (6A20-6A2Z)	19 (6.0)
Alcohol dependence (6C40)	12 (3.8)
Conversion disorder (6B60)	9 (2.9)
Dementia (6D80)	4 (1.3)
Epilepsy (8A60)	4 (1.3)
Severe Personality disorder, borderline pattern (6D11.5)	1 (0.3)

Among the enrolled patients 231 (73.3) had comorbid physical illness. Common associated physical illness was hypertension 45 (14.3%), followed by hypothyroidism 17 (5.8), and third being type-ii diabetes mellitus 12 (3.8) (Table 4).

Table 4: Associated physical illness (n=231).

Associated physical illness	Frequency n (%)
Hypertension	45 (14.3)
Hypothyroidism	17 (5.8)
Type-ii Diabetes mellitus	12 (3.8)
Stroke	5 (1.60)
Chronic kidney disease	3 (1.0)
Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	2 (0.6)

Among 315 patients 74 female were suffering from anxiety disorder, followed by 49 female suffering from depressive disorder, 28 females were suffering from bodily distress disorder, and 8 from conversion disorder. It was found to be significant with p-value <0.001.

Table 5: Association of common mental disorder with gender (n=159).

Common mental disorder	Frequency among female (%)	Frequency among male (%)	P-value
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Anxiety disorder	74 (56.5)	57 (43.5)	<0.001
Depressive disorder	49 (70.0)	21 (30.0)	
Bodily distress disorder	28 (84.8)	5 (15.2)	
Conversion disorder	8 (88.8)	1 (11.2)	

DISCUSSION

In this study, the majority of participants belonged to the 18-40 years age group, followed by 41-59 years, with fewer elderly patients. This suggests that young and middle-aged adults are more likely to seek psychiatric outpatient services, possibly due to higher stress levels, occupational pressures, and greater awareness of mental health issues.⁷ These findings are similar to study done in a tertiary center in U.P India⁵ and study conducted in Noble medical college by *Koirala et al.*,⁸

The predominance of female participants is consistent with findings from similar studies conducted in tertiary care settings in Nepal and India, and may reflect both higher prevalence of certain disorders such as anxiety and depression among females, as well as better health-seeking behavior.⁹

Most participants were married, had primary-level education, and were engaged in household work, indicating that social and educational factors may play a role in mental health outcomes. The higher proportion of housewives and unemployed individuals may be linked to psychosocial stressors, financial dependency, and limited social support, which can contribute to the development of mental disorders.¹⁰ The findings of this study show that anxiety disorders were the most prevalent (41.5%), followed by depressive disorders (22.2%), bodily distress disorder, and bipolar disorder. This pattern is consistent with previous studies conducted in similar settings, where anxiety and depressive disorders were the leading causes of psychiatric morbidity.⁸ A study conducted in Ethiopia by *Engidaw et al.*, reported a comparable high prevalence of anxiety disorders.⁶ Similarly, research from eastern Nepal found anxiety disorders to be the most common,

followed by mood disorders.¹¹ The high prevalence of anxiety disorders may be explained by increasing psychosocial stress, urbanization, and changing lifestyle patterns.^{12, 13}

A significant association between gender and certain mental disorders was observed, with females more commonly affected by anxiety, depressive, bodily distress, and conversion disorders ($p < 0.001$). This finding is in line with existing literature, which suggests that females are more vulnerable to internalizing disorders due to biological, psychological, and sociocultural factors.¹⁴

Regarding comorbid physical illnesses, hypertension was the most common, followed by hypothyroidism and type 2 diabetes mellitus. This finding highlights the close relationship between mental and physical health. Previous studies have shown that chronic medical conditions are frequently associated with mental disorders, and this bidirectional relationship can worsen overall health outcomes.¹⁵

Overall, the findings emphasize the high burden of common mental disorders in outpatient settings and the need for early detection, appropriate management, and holistic care. Strengthening mental health services, improving awareness, and integrating mental health screening into routine clinical practice can help reduce the overall burden of disease.

Limitations

The use of a convenience sampling technique may have introduced selection bias, thereby limiting the generalizability of the findings. As the study was conducted in a single tertiary care center, the results may not reflect the true prevalence of common mental disorders in the general population. The cross-sectional design of the study restricts the ability to establish causal relationships between mental disorders and associated factors, including comorbid physical illnesses. Additionally, diagnoses were made using ICD-11 clinical criteria without structured diagnostic interviews, which may lead to some degree of diagnostic variability.

Conclusions

This study found that common mental disorders are highly prevalent among adults attending psychiatric outpatient services, with anxiety disorders being the most frequent, followed by depressive disorders. A considerable number of patients also had comorbid physical illnesses, particularly hypertension. Female patients were more commonly affected by certain mental disorders, showing a significant association with gender. These findings highlight the importance of early identification and routine screening for mental disorders in outpatient settings, as well as the need for an integrated approach that addresses both mental and physical health in tertiary care hospitals.

Ethics approval

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Institutional Review Committee (IRC) of COMSTH with approval number (Ref. No.: COMSTH-IRC/2025-040). The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to enrolment, and confidentiality of participant information was strictly maintained throughout the

study

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Conflict of interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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Availability of data and materials

The datasets used and/or analyzed during the current study will be available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Author contributions

Conceptualization: Ritesh Raut

Data curation: Ritesh Raut

Formal analysis: Ritesh Raut

Investigation: Ritesh Raut

Methodology: Ritesh Raut

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