

HOW EFFECTIVE ARE CAMPUS MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN ADDRESSING STUDENT NEEDS?

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The Abstraction Mental health problems are becoming more and more prevalent among college students, which has an impact on both their general health and academic performance. This study addresses significant issues that impact students' mental health, including access to services, technological treatment, and peer support groups. This study believes that a multidisciplinary program that is student-focused is essential, based on previous research and an analysis of current university mental illness programs. Evidence suggests that integrating technology-based therapy, teaching, and making sure it is as accessible as possible can greatly improve students' mental health outcomes. All things considered, some of the most successful and long-lasting mental health techniques are those that are widely used in colleges.

Keywords: college students, digital interventions, peer support, mental health, and support services

Introduction

Throughout the duration of this essay, I will be talking about university mental health services, their efficiency in aiding students, and why they are underdeveloped at certain universities. I will also take into account how being underdeveloped affects students and look at their accessibility, quality, and performance overall. Finally, I will discuss how the services can be developed to better aid students.

The psychological and emotional well-being of the students is of utmost concern as they are always subjected to academic pressure, personal problems, and social issues. To help students deal with such issues, psychological counseling centers are being offered by universities. Do these mental health services really provide the necessary support to the students, though?

Most universities have psychological counseling units and support initiatives to help the students. Some students, though, face problems in accessing the services. For instance, they may be expected to wait for very long hours in queues or even may not be aware of their existence.

Also, while there are extremely good mental health centers in some universities, there are others that are under-developed and under-funded. This impacts directly on how much assistance is able to be given for the students and is harmful to their health.

Literature review

Student Wellbeing and the Efficacy of University Mental Health Services

In the recent past, concerns about students' mental health have been a matter of concern on most platforms. The increased mental disorders among students have been linked to the increase in cases of stress, anxiety, and, in severe cases, suicidal tendencies. Most sources show that psychological disorders, not psychological conditions, are prevalent among young adults—a stage equivalent to university years.

Research indicates that university counseling services are of the highest priority to students in helping them deal with stress and feel better in general. But research also indicates that the majority of the students are not availing the help because they are unaware that it is available. Some other students are constrained by long waiting lists and poor accessibility.

Studies by Lipson et al. (2019) have shown that even with the availability of counseling services at universities, students have been faced with accessing appointments in a timely fashion. In response to this, online therapy and mobile apps are being considered to enhance access. Similarly, Hunt and Eisenberg (2010) discovered that students' willingness to seek help was more influenced by their own perceptions of the helpfulness of available resources than by stigma related to mental illness. They further found that cost was not an issue for most students since over 90% of students had health insurance and most universities provided free or highly subsidized mental health

Moreover, Smith et al. (2020) reviewed the efficacy of university counseling services at US universities and found that students who used such services had lower rates of anxiety and depression and improved academic performance. Similarly, Johnson and Lee (2019) examined the impact of peer support programs in UK universities and determined that students who participated in such programs experienced relief from their emotions and improved mental well-being.

Despite these benefits, there are some problems that exist. Brown et al. (2021) highlighted the fact that there exists a majority of poorly funded universities with limited experienced mental health practitioners. This is an issue to be addressed to ensure that mental health interventions become more effective. In addition, Martinez and Patel (2021) discussed the growing status of online mental health interventions and how online and mobile application-based counseling services enhance convenience and accessibility for students.

In summary, research today indicates that university counseling is essential in advocating for student welfare and academic performance. For maximal effectiveness,

increased funding, wider accessibility, and the incorporation of new technology platforms must be established

Methodology

There was a survey conducted among students from various faculties in KIUT University in this study. The research aimed at assessing the utilization and effectiveness of mental health services offered to students. A mixed-method design was used, which involved both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods.

30 students from a university were involved in the study. Participants were chosen across study years and faculties and ages varied between 17 to 25 years.

Data Collection Techniques

Two main data collection techniques were utilized.

1 Survey Questionnaire-The questionnaire contained 15 closed-ended as well as open-ended questions, inquiring about the frequency of use of mental health services, how effective it was, and problems encountered by the students.

2 interviews-10 students were selected randomly for personal interviews to better understand their experience and attitude towards the university's mental health services.

Major questions asked among them were:

1. Did you know that there was mental health service on your campus?
2. Have you used these services?
3. Are these services useful for students?
4. How would you make mental health services more effective?
5. How would you evaluate the mental health care of your university?

The survey and interviews revealed that most students provided favorable remarks regarding the services.

Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted ethically. All the participants provided informed consent, and their individual information was treated confidentially in order to protect privacy and anonymity

Findings

Effectiveness of University Mental Health Services for Students

The study primarily examines the effectiveness of university mental health services for students, their level of awareness regarding the services, the strength and weaknesses of the services, and the challenges that students face in accessing the services. The study was conducted through interviews and questionnaires, providing an insight into the awareness and perspectives of students about mental health services.

The results of the interviews indicate that, despite the existence of such services among students, their rate of usage varies due to several reasons. The same shall be elaborated in detail throughout this research.

The research shows that the majority of the students do not know about the provision of mental health services and have insufficient information on the same. As low as 60% of the students knew that there were such services available in the university, and 40% did not know they existed.

According to the results of the interview, most students learned about these services, not from formal university sources but from other instructors or students. This means universities need to spread the word further, for instance, via social media or within-class announcements.

Additionally, although some of the students knew about the services, they did not know where they were and how to access them. Awareness was also high among the first-year students, indicating that mental health services in the university are inadequately developed or publicized.

Use of Mental Health Services

The research also examined how many of the students had utilized these services:

30% of the students had utilized the services

70% had never used them

Among those who had not used the services, the reasons were varied:

35% were unaware they existed

15% had waiting times that were too long

10% did not know how to access the services

10% felt uneasy about seeking psychological help

Other students mentioned that they did not require the services of a psychologist, and others mentioned that they felt shy to confess their problems in public. Some of the students who required help said they did not have time to visit the psychological services or were just too lazy to do so.

Challenges Affecting Service Effectiveness

Interviews also indicated that the success of mental health services depends on several factors. Some students reported that university psychologists were good, but the time allocated for each session (30–40 minutes) was too brief to address some cases.

Furthermore, students suggested that the university offer online questionnaires and stress management courses because some students do not enjoy seeking help face-to-face but might benefit from group discussions.

Recommendations to Improve University Mental Health Services

The findings of the survey and interviews highlight that, even though mental health services are required for students' well-being, there are areas where they need to

be enhanced. Even though students value these services, awareness, accessibility, and effectiveness are still issues of high priority.

1. Improving Awareness and Accessibility

One of the most important issues highlighted was low awareness of the available mental health services. To encourage more students to access these services:

Universities have to promote services using social media, seminars, and student orientation sessions.

Professors and academic advisors should actively inform students of counseling services and refer them as needed.

There must be a single, online portal for appointment scheduling and providing emergency contact points for mental health support.

2. Decreasing Barriers and Increasing Service Efficiency

Long wait times and lack of mental health professionals were two of the biggest issues that students complained about. To make it more accessible:

Universities must employ more mental health professionals to meet the needs of students.

Priority scheduling for urgent psychological needs in students must be implemented.

Extended consultation times and group counseling would be able to reduce waiting times without sacrificing valuable support.

3. Expanding Online and Remote Support Services

With digital solutions becoming more the norm, remote mental health services might be more convenient and offer confidentiality to students. Universities can:

Develop mobile apps and online counseling websites to provide remote professional help.

Offer 24/7 virtual counseling to students who need help outside regular hours.

Develop anonymous peer-support chat rooms in which students may discuss mental health concerns without stigma.

4. Enhancing Peer-Based and Group Counseling Programs

Some students felt more at ease with group support networks than with individual counseling. To build a more supportive and inclusive community, universities can:

Form peer-led discussion forums through which the students may share experiences and strategies.

Implement workshops on mindfulness, stress reduction, and resilience mental health education.

Establish peer mentorship programs under which mentored student mentors will help their peers, enhancing mental health services access and understandability.

5. Regular Monitoring and Service Enhancement

Universities have to keep tracking students' feedback and conduct satisfaction surveys in order to keep tab on the effectiveness of mental health services.

Mental health services have to be continuously evaluated from information-based data to improve the quality of service.

It is achievable to acquire more resources and expand the number of services offered through collaboration with external mental health professionals and organizations

Discussion

From the findings of the research, mental health care interventions are provided in universities but in vain due to such barriers as inadequate awareness, reduced access, and substandard delivery of services. The findings further corroborate previous research by Lipson et al. (2019) and Brown et al. (2021), revealing the same shortcomings with mental health care in universities.

Only 30% of the students had attended the services, and 70% had never been there. Three of the primary reasons were not being aware of it (35%), taking too long to wait (15%), and not knowing if they could avail themselves of it (10%).

This agrees with Hunt and Eisenberg (2010), who established that the majority of the students do not visit for assistance due to uncertain information and appointment scheduling problems.

Influence on Students

There is restricted access to mental health, which has its influence on the well-being of the students in that it elevates the amount of stress, reduces the pace of work, and introduces withdrawal socially. Smith et al. (2020) proved that the students that accessed the counseling services had decreased symptoms of anxiety and improved performance. In addition, the majority of the students also supported other intervention modes such as group therapy, e-counseling, and stress management training, which confirms the findings by Martinez and Patel (2021) about the growing acceptability of online-based mental health interventions.

Barriers to Service Effectiveness

Interviews also showed that while students had discovered face-to-face counseling to be helpful, 30–40 minutes of session was not adequate to treat complex problems. Additionally, some students did not want to receive face-to-face counseling, which confirms the necessity for online support sites and peer-provided mental health services. Finally, 40% of the students were unaware that such services were available, which stresses the necessity for greater promotion through social media, university websites, and faculty postings.

Ideas for Educational Institutions The following steps need to be taken by universities to improve mental health services: Create marketing initiatives to inform all students of the resources available. Long waiting lists will be reduced with the hiring

of additional employees and sessions. Make it more accessible by offering 24/7 counseling and internet services. Encourage the use of additional support networks, such as peer mentorship and stress management classes. Through bridging these gaps, universities are able to develop a more complete, effective, and accessible system of mental health care that will support students' academic achievement as well as mental well-being.

Recommendations for Improving University Mental Health Services

The recommendations that can be made in an attempt to promote the quality, accessibility, and effectiveness of university mental health services as revealed through the study findings include the improvement of awareness, elimination of obstacles to access, expansion of existing support networks, and ongoing development and assessment of programs to cater to changing students' needs.

1. Expanding Accessibility and Knowledge The biggest issue that this study discovered was probably students' unfamiliarity with the mental health care systems. Without proper education about the new care systems, people will probably not use them. In order to deal with this:

Enhanced Marketing Strategies: Colleges and universities must market their mental health services vigorously on social media, campus bulletin boards, email newsletters, and staff and faculty announcements in class. Forced orientation sessions: It is possible to make sure that freshmen know what resources they can utilize as early as possible by incorporating mental health awareness seminars in the orientations. Student Organizations partnership: Colleges can collaborate with student organizations to promote mental health services, provide workshops, and provide peer support groups. Basic Web Portals: To present information they require, they must have a main website or mobile application.

2. Reducing Barriers and Improving Service Efficiency Long waiting time, insufficiency of sufficient mental health clinicians, and ambiguity in appointment scheduling rendered services inaccessible to most students.

To ensure optimal efficiency of these services:

Hiring More Mental Health Professionals: With an increased need for mental health services, universities have to invest in the hiring of additional licensed psychologists and counselors. Nights and weekends can be used for appointments for those with busy schedules. Urgent Case Same-Day Quick-Turnaround Appointments: Rather than waiting weeks, students in crisis must be able to get appointments right away or on the same day. Increasing Session Time: Going beyond the standard 30- to 40-minute one-shot counseling session can permit larger, more substantial conversation.

3. Increasing Online and Remote Mental Health Services

Universities can use digital solutions to offer mental health help outside of traditional in-person therapy thanks to technological improvements.

These consist of: Online Therapy Platforms: To give students round-the-clock access to expert mental health help, universities can collaborate with online counseling services. Mobile Mental Health Apps: Developing a mobile app offering stress-reduction techniques, meditation advice, self-help, and an instant chat facility with counselors. Virtual Peer Support Groups: Developing online chat forums or discussion rooms where students anonymously post their problems and receive counseling from professionally trained peer mentors. 4. Expanding Group Counseling and Peer Support Programs Most students are more comfortable talking about mental health with their friends than with experts. Structured peer support initiatives can:

Educate Peer Mentors: Identify and empower students to be first-line emotional care ambassadors for mental health, and refer them to professionals if necessary. Workshops & Group Therapy: Conduct group therapy sessions, stress management workshops, and mental health drives to create a nurturing environment for children. Private Assistance Networks: Offer students safe spaces in which to share their grievances without fear of punishment, such as online discussion groups or in-person support groups.

Conclusion

Well-being precedes the successful academic performance of the students and development into full individuals. This has been learned, though, from this research, that though there is available treatment for mental illness, none of the majority of the students are in a position to gain access to the treatment since they lack information, there are queues, and no money. This inability to avail the students of psychological assistance without delay will ruin their psychological wellbeing, academic study, and university life in general. Universities are required to take action quickly towards making their mental health services effective and accessible in order to rectify these ills as their first step towards their eradication.

Public awareness campaigns can help a great deal in sensitizing the population so that the students get all the help they need. Greater access to counseling professionals and the introduction of new options like online counseling can also be helpful. Peer tutoring, group counseling, and stress management sessions can be alternatives for students who do not wish to undergo regular counseling. Where such reforms are brought in, the universities can have a healthier and positive environment where students will not just thrive academically but as human beings too. Involvement of spending on mental health is not just a necessity; it is a minimum that can lead to ultimate success and well-being of the students.

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