

## MENTAL HEALTH IN ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG ADULTS: RISING BURDEN OF DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY

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**Abstract.** Mental health disorders among adolescents and young adults have escalated in recent years, with depression and anxiety disorders becoming particularly prevalent. The interplay of social pressures, digital exposure, and socio-economic stressors has been implicated in this increase. The article reviews epidemiological trends, highlights key risk factors, and explores interventions aimed at mitigating this global public health concern.

**Keywords.** Mental health; Adolescents; Young adults; Depression; Anxiety; Epidemiology; Intervention.

**Introduction.** Depression and anxiety have been identified as leading causes of disease burden among young people aged 10–24 years. The prevalence has been documented to be rising in both high- and low-income settings. Public awareness and healthcare infrastructure have been recognised as insufficient in meeting the growing demand.

Global estimates suggest that approximately 10–20 per cent of young individuals experience mental health disorders, with depression and anxiety accounting for the majority of cases. The incidence of depressive episodes and anxiety disorders has doubled in the past decade in certain regions. Disorders have consistently been associated with functional impairment, school absenteeism, and risk of suicidal ideation.

Multiple risk factors have been implicated, including familial predisposition, exposure to social media, academic pressures, and socio-economic instability. The ubiquity of online platforms has been associated with increased feelings of inadequacy and social comparison. Additionally, adverse childhood experiences and trauma have been shown to predispose individuals to anxiety and depressive disorders.

Early screening programmes have been adopted in schools and primary care settings. Cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) has been recognised as an effective psychological intervention, with internet-based CBT showing promise in accessibility. Pharmacological treatments, typically selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), have been utilised in severe cases, although concerns have been raised regarding side effects and long-term impact.

Community-based peer support and resilience-building workshops have been introduced, with preliminary results indicating reduced symptomatology and enhanced coping skills. Digital mental health applications have received increased attention;

evidence of efficacy remains limited. National mental health strategies have been enacted in certain countries, but implementation gaps persist.

**Conclusion.** The rising burden of depression and anxiety among young people warrants urgent action. Population-level awareness campaigns, combined with evidence-based screening and therapeutic interventions, have been advocated. Research into scalable, culturally adapted digital tools and long-term outcomes is required to reduce the mental health burden in adolescence and early adulthood.

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