
Self-reported academic performance in relation to health behaviours among Bahria University students

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Rehman, et al, conducted a cross-sectional study among students enrolled in Bahria University, Karachi, from January 2012 till December 2013.1 The authors aimed to investigate an interaction between a student’s academic performance (AP) with respect to socio-demographic characteristics, health behaviour and reported mental health. A key feature of this study was the evaluation of depression among study respondents using the Centre for Epidemiological Studies Depression (CES-D) scale. The authors identified key depressive symptoms associated with a lower AP. We applaud the authors for investigating this critical topic, however we feel certain modifications in study design and analysis would improve the validity of their results.

CES-D symptom scores were expressed as discrete categories, and subsequent analysis was conducted using Chi-squared test.1 The CES-D scale, developed by Radloff, et al, is designed to be computed as a numerical score, to estimate the degree of depressive symptomatology in a respondent.2 An incorrect application of this scale therefore predisposes to questionable interpretation of results, when expressed in a Chi-squared table.1 It would have been more appropriate for the authors to compute a numerical score and apply a pre-validated cut-off score for depressive and non-depressive patients, as has been done in similar studies.3,4 Subsequent analysis may have been performed using parametric or non-parametric tests of independence, as appropriate.

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References