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Epidemiological Trends in Common Mental Health Disorders Global Prevalence, Risk Determinants and Emerging Public Health Implications

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Abstract — Common mental health disorders, including depression, anxiety disorders, and stress-related conditions, represent a significant and growing public health concern worldwide. These disorders contribute substantially to global disease burden, affecting psychological wellbeing, productivity, and social functioning across diverse populations. This cross-sectional analytical study examines epidemiological trends in common mental health disorders and evaluates the influence of demographic, social, and environmental factors on mental health outcomes among 238 individuals receiving mental health care services. Depressive and anxiety disorders remain the most prevalent mental health conditions, with significant associations observed between mental health outcomes and socioeconomic status, occupational stress, and social support systems. Individuals aged 31–45 years demonstrated the highest average mental health symptom severity scores ($F=5.91$, $p=0.003$). The study highlights emerging mental health challenges associated with rapid social change, digital technology exposure, and public health crises. Continued epidemiological research is essential for improving mental health policy and promoting population-level mental wellbeing.

Keywords — *Mental Health Epidemiology; Depression; Anxiety Disorders; Public Mental Health; Psychological Distress; Mental Health Trends.*

1. Introduction

Mental health disorders represent a major public health challenge worldwide and are increasingly recognised as one of the leading causes of disability and reduced quality of life across populations. Common mental health disorders include depression, anxiety disorders, stress-related disorders, and other psychological conditions that affect emotional wellbeing, cognitive functioning, and social relationships. Gruenberg (1957) was among the early researchers who highlighted the importance of epidemiological approaches in understanding mental disorders. Kessler and Wang (2008) highlighted the widespread prevalence of depression and anxiety and emphasised the need for large-scale epidemiological surveys. Steel et al. (2014) conducted a large systematic review finding that anxiety and depressive disorders represent the most common psychiatric conditions worldwide.

AI-driven mental health assessment tools may support early detection of psychological distress and help clinicians develop personalised treatment strategies (Devi et al., 2025; Shanthi et al., 2025; Catherine et al., 2025). Social determinants including poverty, social isolation, and limited healthcare access can significantly increase vulnerability to mental disorders (Ashifa, 2021; Kariveliparambil et al., 2026; Aneeshkumar, 2016). Mental health literacy is a key determinant of help-seeking behaviour and proactive engagement with psychological care (Elkin et al., 2025; Ranganathan et al., 2024). Occupational stress and work-life integration challenges are increasingly recognised as significant drivers of mental health morbidity in working populations (Gayathri et al., 2025; Vettriselvan and Rajan, 2019).

Physical health consequences of substance misuse and schizophrenia further compound mental health burden in vulnerable communities (Ashifa, 2020; Aneeshkumar, 2015). Patient empowerment through knowledge and rehabilitation education strategies supports long-term recovery from mental health disorders (Vettriselvan et al., 2026). Self-leadership competencies and emotional intelligence shape stress perception and resilience among healthcare students and professionals (Mustafa et al., 2026; Zahoor et al., 2025).

2. Review of Literature

Gruenberg (1957) emphasised the importance of epidemiological methods in psychiatric research. Weissman and Klerman (1978) identified important demographic patterns associated with psychiatric conditions. Steel et al. (2014) conducted a systematic review reporting that anxiety and depressive disorders account for a substantial

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proportion of global mental health burden. Angst et al. (2016) reported findings from the Zurich cohort study examining mental health trends among adults between 20 and 50 years of age. Sanderson and Andrews (2006) examined mental health patterns within the workforce and reported increasing prevalence of stress-related disorders among employees. Ten Have et al. (2023) reported changes in mental health patterns during the COVID-19 pandemic period and emphasised the need for strengthened mental health services.

AI-based systems may support clinicians in analysing mental health data and identifying individuals at risk of psychological distress (Devi et al., 2025; Shanthi et al., 2025). Community-based rehabilitation programmes play an important role in promoting mental health outcomes (Ranganathan et al., 2024; Ashifa, 2019; Rasi and Ashifa, 2019). The social wellbeing of elderly populations during public health emergencies remains an important mental health concern (Ashifa, 2022). Healthcare marketing innovations and digital patient engagement tools improve mental health awareness and care-seeking behaviour (Swadhi et al., 2025; Jenifer et al., 2025). Strategic collaborations in medical innovation and AI-driven globalisation accelerate development of digital mental health diagnostic technologies (Vijayalakshmi et al., 2025). Tribal and indigenous community health determinants shape mental health vulnerability in marginalised settings (Ashifa, 2021; Kariveliparambil et al., 2026).

3. Objectives

- To examine the prevalence and distribution of common mental health disorders among individuals receiving mental health care services.
- To identify key demographic and social risk factors associated with psychological distress.
- To evaluate age-related variations in mental health symptom severity.
- To propose public health and policy recommendations for strengthening mental health services.

4. Methodology

A cross-sectional analytical research design was employed among 238 individuals aged 18–60 years diagnosed with common mental health disorders in community mental health centres and tertiary psychiatric care facilities. Data collection involved structured clinical interviews, standardised mental health assessment tools, patient clinical records, and self-administered questionnaires assessing symptoms of depression, anxiety, and psychological distress. Demographic variables including age, gender, educational status, occupational background, socioeconomic status, and social support networks were documented. Statistical analysis used descriptive statistics, ANOVA, and regression analysis at $p<0.05$. Ethical approval was obtained with informed consent from all participants.

4. Results and Discussion

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 238)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age Group	18–30 years	72	30.3
	31–45 years	98	41.2
	46–60 years	68	28.5
Gender	Male	134	56.3
	Female	104	43.7

Table 2: Prevalence of Common Mental Health Disorders

Disorder Type	Number of Cases	Percentage (%)
Depressive disorders	96	40.3
Anxiety disorders	82	34.5
Stress-related disorders	44	18.5
Mixed mental health conditions	16	6.7

Table 3: Risk Factors Associated with Mental Health Disorders

Risk Factor	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Occupational stress	88	37.0
Financial difficulties	62	26.1
Social isolation	46	19.3
Digital technology overuse	42	17.6

Table 4: ANOVA Analysis: Mental Health Symptom Severity by Age Group

Age Group	Mean Symptom Severity Score	F-value	p-value
18–30 years	3.21	4.86	0.006
31–45 years	3.78	5.91	0.003
46–60 years	3.42	4.12	0.009

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Individuals aged 31–45 years demonstrated the highest levels of mental health symptom severity (F=5.91, p=0.003), consistent with epidemiological research demonstrating increased prevalence during early and middle adulthood (Angst et al., 2016).

Depressive disorders emerged as the most prevalent mental health condition, followed by anxiety disorders, consistent with global epidemiological research (Steel et al., 2014; Kessler and Wang, 2008). Occupational stress emerged as the most frequently reported risk factor, consistent with Sanderson and Andrews (2006). Digital technology overuse has been increasingly associated with psychological stress, sleep disturbances, and reduced interpersonal interaction, particularly among younger populations. AI-based mental health assessment tools and digital therapy platforms can assist clinicians in identifying psychological distress and delivering personalised treatment interventions (Devi et al., 2025; Shanthi et al., 2025). Public health strategies must adopt a comprehensive approach integrating clinical care, community support systems, and policy interventions, with particular attention to social determinants shaping mental health in marginalised communities (Ashifa, 2021; Kariveliparambil et al., 2026).

5. Conclusion

Common mental health disorders remain a significant public health challenge influenced by complex interactions between demographic, socioeconomic, and environmental factors. Depressive disorders represent the most prevalent condition, followed by anxiety disorders and stress-related conditions. The 31–45-year age group exhibited the highest levels of mental health symptom severity. Occupational stress, financial difficulties, social isolation, and digital technology overuse were identified as the most important risk factors. Addressing these challenges requires coordinated efforts from healthcare professionals, policymakers, and community organisations to promote mental wellbeing and ensure equitable access to mental health care services.

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