



Prevalence of depressive symptoms & associated factors among young men living in Gauteng, South Africa.

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BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

- Mental health disorders are a **major contributor to the burden of disease globally.**
- In South Africa, neuro-psychiatric disorders are **the third largest contributor to the burden of disease after HIV/AIDS.**
- Mental disorders are still **under-reported in lower income countries like South Africa**, largely due to the lack of studies conducted on mental health.
- Currently, there is a **shortage of studies conducted on depressive symptoms among the general population**, including young men living in South Africa.

STUDY OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study were:

- To determine the prevalence of depressive symptoms among young men living in Gauteng, South Africa.
- To explore the factors associated with depressive symptoms among young men living in Gauteng, South Africa.

METHODOLOGY

Ethics approval: Obtained from Sefako Makgatho University Research Ethics Committee (SMUREC)

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from:

- Gauteng Provincial Department of Health,
- Johannesburg Health District research committee
- Management of each clinic

METHODOLOGY (Cont.)

Design: A cross-sectional quantitative survey

Sample size: n= 405

Sampling:

- Target group: Young men between the ages of **18-35 years residing in Soweto.**
- The participants were found at 3 public health facilities in Soweto, namely, Moroka clinic, Michael Maponya clinic and Zola clinic.
- **Simple random sampling** was used and the participants were chosen upon presentation to the outpatient department at the clinics.

METHODOLOGY (Cont.)

Data collection tools:

- The **Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9)** was used to screen for depressive symptoms .
- This tool is internationally validated and found to be accurate, even in the South African context.
- The PHQ-9 was administered by the researcher.
- Another questionnaire was used to capture **socio-demographic data of the participants** & was also administered by the researcher.

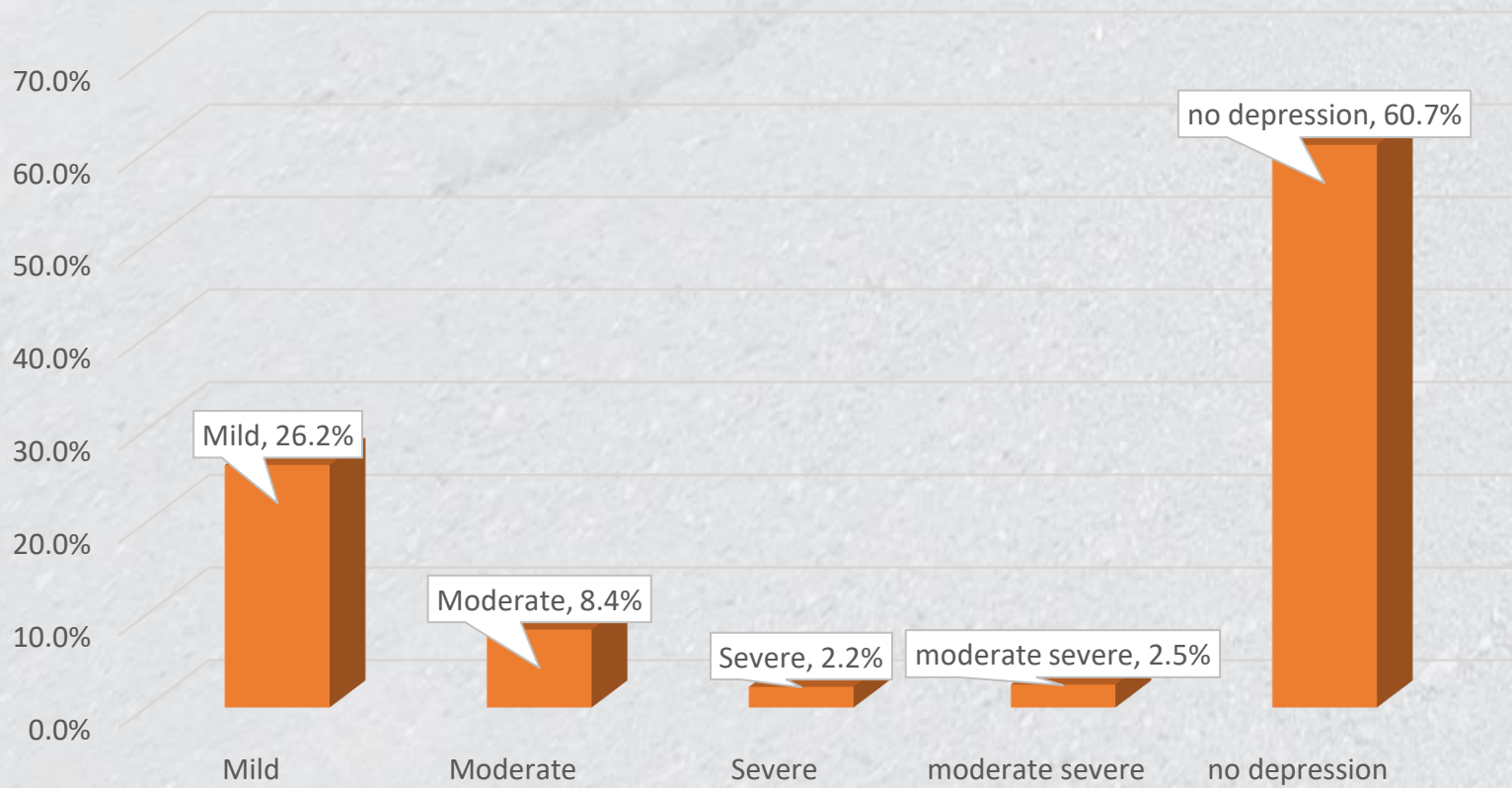
Data analysis: **STATA version 14** was used to analyze the data.

RESULTS

- The study found that **39.3% of the participants had depressive symptoms** with varying degrees of severity.
- The ages of the participants ranged from 18 to 35, with a **mean of 27.67** .
- A majority (85.19%) (n=345) of the participants were single, while 14.57% (n= 59) were married.
- The **unemployment rate was very high** among the young men at 63.95% (n= 259).
- The majority (81.48%) (n= 330) of the participants attended school up to high school, while 18.27% (n= 74) progressed to tertiary level.
- **Alcohol consumption amongst men was high** at 80.25% (n= 325).

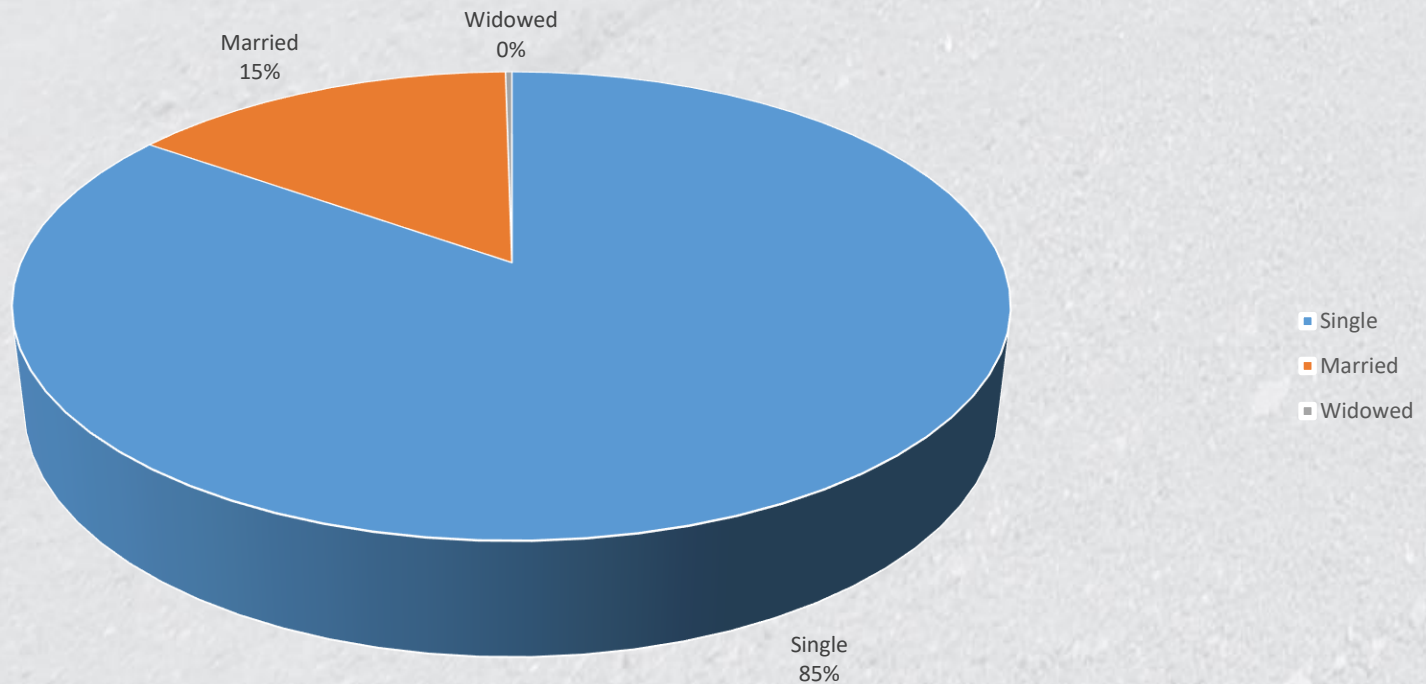
RESULTS

Bar chart illustrating the prevalence of depressive symptoms among young men .



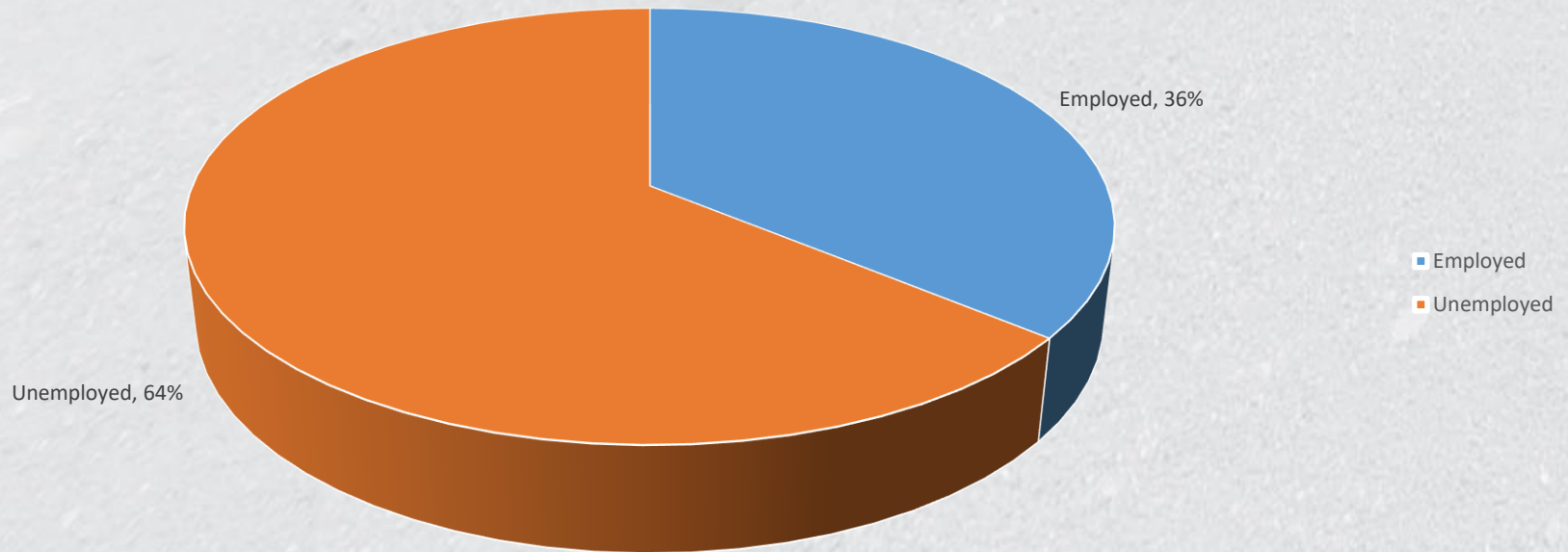
RESULTS: MARITAL STATUS

Pie chart illustrating the marital status of the participants



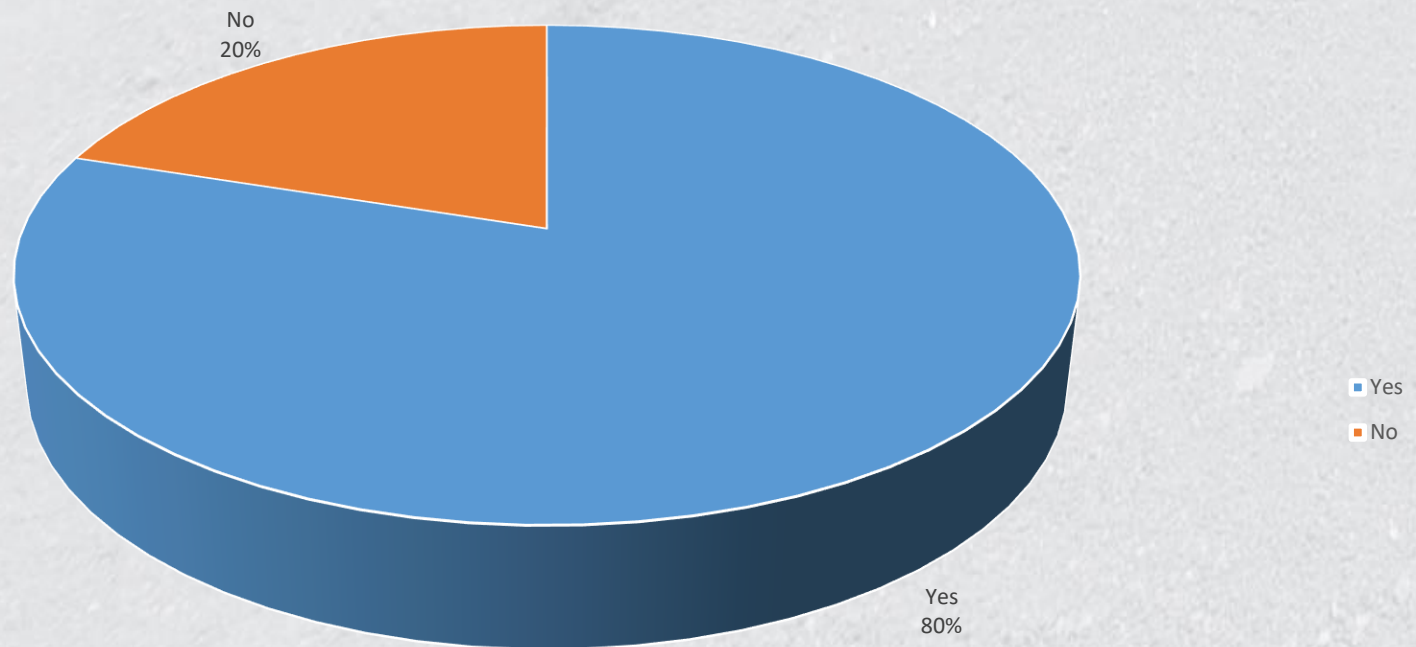
RESULTS: EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Pie chart illustrating employment status among the men.



RESULTS: ALCOHOL USE

Pie chart illustrating alcohol use among the participants



RESULTS: FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS

The Pearson chi-square test was used to determine the association between depression and age, marital status, employment status, alcohol use, level of education, presence of chronic illnesses and access to health facilities.

Using Pearson chi-square test of association *(p-value =0.05), factors significantly associated with depressive symptoms were:

- **Marital status (0.06)**
- **Employment status (0.0)**
- **Use of alcohol (0.05)**

Statistical significance using logistic regression for variables associated with depressive symptoms

On logistic regression:

- **Use of alcohol (0.11)****
- **Employment status (0.000) ***
- **Marital status (0.59) ****

*Significant at p-value of 0.05

**Significant at p-value 0.1

DISCUSSION

- There is a **high prevalence of depressive symptoms** among young men living in Gauteng, South Africa.
- **Unemployment** was identified as **the leading factor associated with depressive symptoms**.
Unemployed men are vulnerable to depression.
- **Alcohol use & marital status** were found to be strongly associated with depressive symptoms.
- **Unmarried men** were found to have higher levels of depressive symptoms.
- Using logistic regression, **only employment status was found to have statistical significance**.

CONCLUSION

- The association between depressive symptoms & unemployment highlights **the impact that socio-economic status has on mental health.**
- The high prevalence of depressive symptoms among young men also highlights the **dire need for routine screening for depression in the primary health care setting.**
- Unless routine screening is integrated into the primary health care setting, **people with depression will continue to be missed for diagnosis and treatment,** with dire social and health outcomes.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The COVID-19 pandemic has compromised the mental health of a lot of people and this may resulted in higher rates of depression and **the study could not differentiate between pre-COVID spread and levels of depression.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the study, the following interventions are recommended:

- All community health centres need to have a **functional mental health department**, one that is accessible to all, fully staffed with individuals who are competent and professional.
- Primary health care workers need to receive **on-going training on mental health disorders**, particularly male depression.
- **All men who present to primary health care facilities should be screened for depressive symptoms** using an easy tool such as the PHQ-9 questionnaire.

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- The staff at Zola clinic, Michael Maponya clinic and Moroka clinic in Soweto.



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