FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH HIGHER LEVELS OF DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS AMONG INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN THE PHILIPPINES

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Abstract. Over the years, the number of international university students has been increasing in the Philippines. Depression tends to be common among this demographic sector, because of the varying challenges and expectations associated with studying abroad. Depression can be prevented if its symptoms, particularly those at higher levels, are identified and addressed early and effectively. This survey examined the social and demographic factors that are significantly associated with higher levels of depressive symptoms. One hundred twenty-six international university students were interviewed using the University Students Depression Inventory. Of the 13 factors analyzed, 3 were found with statistically significant associations with more intense levels of depressive symptoms. These factors were: level of satisfaction with one’s financial condition, level of closeness with parents, and level of closeness with peers. In identifying international students with greater risk for depression, characteristics related to their financial condition and primary group relationships can be considered. There is a need to carry out more studies to confirm this initial evidence. The findings can help guide further discourse, research and program to benefit international students with higher levels of depressive symptoms.

Keywords: associated factors, depressive symptoms, international university students, mood disorder, Philippines