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ASSESSMENT OF RISK OF SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER
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Introduction. Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a type of depression that occurs at specific times of the year, commonly during the fall and winter when daylight hours are shorter. Students studying abroad, particularly in geographically and climatically different environments, may be at higher risk due to changes in daylight exposure and cultural adjustment. This study is relevant in understanding the impact of seasonal changes on emotional well-being, especially among international students who may face additional stressors related to adaptation to a new environment.

Aim: assess the risk factors and prevalence of Seasonal Affective Disorder among 30 male and 30 female second and third-year undergraduate students from Srilanka and India studying in Belarus.

Materials and methods. Questionnaire on demographics (age, gender, nationality), academic background, and lifestyle factors (sleep patterns, physical activity, social interactions) among 60 students (30 males, 30 females) aged between 18-25 years, enrolled in second and third-year programs at university in Belarus. Used the SAD Identification table elaborated at the University of Vienna, Literature reviews.

Results and their discussion. We used 3 tables with questionnaires and a result assessment table. Asked the students to answer about the symptoms if they had for at least 2 weeks within the autumn- winter period. First table consist sad, downcast mood, loss of interest in the out world and reduced performance as symptoms. Among the males, out of a total of 30, 30% (9) have no risk of SAD, 50% (15) fall within the risk group, and 20% (6) are classified in the strong risk category. In contrast, the total female group comprises 30 individuals, with 33.3% (10) having no risk, 40% (12) in the risk group, and 26.7% (8) at strong risk.

Second table consist as symptoms increased appetite, self doubt, feelings of guilt, pessimistic thoughts, sleep disturbances. In the male group of 30 individuals, only 3% (1) have no risk of SAD, while a significant 87% (26) are categorized as being in strong risk. Conversely, in the female group, 10% (3) have no risk of SAD, with none in the risk group and a notably high 90% (27) classified as being in strong risk. Overall, the data reveals that both males and females are predominantly in the strong risk category for SAD, with 86% of the total population exhibiting this profile.

And in third table we asked their sleep length, social activity, mood, general state, weight alteration, appetite variations, and change of performance to identify the degree of difference in SAD manifestations. Out of a total of 30 males, only 6.7% (2) were classified as having no risk of SAD, while a significant 60% (18) fall into the strong risk category. This indicates that the majority of males are at heightened risk for developing SAD. In comparison, among the 30 females analyzed, a mere 3.3% (1) exhibited no risk of SAD, while a staggering 86.7% (26) are categorized as being at strong risk. Thus, while both genders display high susceptibility to SAD, females show an even greater percentage at strong risk, suggesting a pressing need for awareness and preventive measures within both groups. Overall, the data indicate that the majority of both males (80%) and females (90%) are in at least a moderate risk group for SAD, underscoring the importance of addressing mental health concerns associated with seasonal changes.

Conclusions. The data reveals a high prevalence of Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) risk among both male and female students, with a significant majority falling into the strong risk category. Notably, while both genders exhibit susceptibility, females show a higher percentage classified as being at strong risk, underscoring the need for targeted awareness and preventive measures. This highlights the urgent importance of addressing mental health concerns related to seasonal changes to better support affected individuals.