

# Prevalence of Depressive Symptoms and Associated Psychosocial risk Factors among University Students: The Moderating and Mediating Effects of Resilience

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## Abstract

*Background:* Previous studies have indicated that university students constitute a higher risk population for mental health problems, especially for depression. Yet, there appears to be a lack of literature addressing a such issues in France. The present study aimed to estimate the prevalence rates of depression, its sociodemographic correlates in French university students (FUS), and to examine whether individual resilience resources moderated and mediated the relationship between perceived stress and depressive symptoms.

*Methods:* The data were collected through web-based questionnaires. The sample included 1435 FUS with a mean age of 20.5 ( $SD = 3.38$ ) years. Participants completed the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI-II), the Perceived Stress Scale, the Brief Resilience Scale, and a sociodemographic questionnaire. Descriptive, multiple logistic regression and mediation analyses were used.

*Results:* With respect to the BDI-II's cutoff scores, 20.3% and 22.8% were positive to moderate and severe depression, respectively (43.1%). Gender and education attainment appeared as moderate risk factors when accounting for cumulative effect of perceived stress and individual resilience. Resilience was found to buffer and mediate partially the perceived stress–depression relationship.

*Conclusion:* The prevalence of depression was higher in FUS, as similar to those reported in

previous studies. The amount of academic and daily stress explained this prevalence. University students with low resilience level were more at risk. Interventions with aim to improving resilience skills could help to mitigate the negative effects of stress and to promote mental health in this population.

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### **CRedit authorship contribution statement**

**Cyrille K. Kokou-Kpolou**: Project administration, Methodology, Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Writing- original draft. **Askar Jumageldinov**: Investigation, Visualization, Validation. **Sunyoung Park**: Methodology, Data curation, Formal analysis, Visualization. **Nicolas Nieuviarts**: Investigation, Data curation. **Pari-Gole Noorishad**: Visualization, Writing- review & editing. **Jude Mary Cénat**: Supervision, Conceptualization, Writing- review & editing, Validation.

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