



## Original Article

# Happiness among second year MBBS students and its correlates using Oxford Happiness Questionnaire

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## ABSTRACT

**Objectives:** Inner happiness and the ability to fully receive joy is the utmost necessity to be healthy, to mature in professional life and eventually serving the mankind. Medical students are less ecstatic compared to other students in university because of concrete inculcation and work conditions. The aim of the present study was to evaluate happiness among medical students & its correlates.

**Materials and methodology:** The study was conducted among 115 medical students of MBBS (2nd year) of Subharti Medical College, Meerut. The information was gathered by using the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire which was distributed among the MBBS second year students present during the study at Subharti Medical College, Meerut. Descriptive statistics and chi-square test were used for the analysis.

**Results:** The happiness distribution in regards to baseline characteristic showed that 60.8% of the selected medical students were in happy group. It was found that male students (51.4%) were happier than females (48.6%). It was seen that 85.7% of medical students who were happy, had never consumed drugs and this association was found to be statistically significant. It was observed that comparatively younger siblings were happier. Those who believed in higher power or universal consciousness were found to be more contented and happier.

**Conclusion:** Overall the medical students were found to be happy. To make a conducive environment for internal happiness, a belief in superpower was very helpful. All kind of drugs (alcohol and tobacco) should be discouraged as these may cause a temporary feeling of elation but not internal happiness.

## 1. Introduction

Being happy from inside is the utmost necessity to be healthy, to cultivate in professional life and ultimately helping the mankind. Medical students are more engaged in academics as compared to other students in the university because of concrete inculcation and work conditions. Happiness is a very important factor in human life. A happy person has always good feelings about himself and others. Because of this internal happiness, one discards desolation, accepts flaws, never forgets learning, is always honest with oneself and others, lives in the present time and is firm against troubles.<sup>1</sup> Happiness is an intellectual status of well-being described by constructive sentiments ranging from gratification to intense joy. It appears to be relatively stable over time and consistent across situations. Happiness has been envisaged to have both affective and cognitive components- the affective component called “hedonic level” is “the extent to which the various affects a

person experience are pleasant”, while the cognitive component called ‘contentment’ is ‘the degree to which an individual perceives his aspiration to be met’.<sup>2</sup> In psychology, happiness is recognized as “emotion”. Emotion is divided into ‘negative emotion’ and ‘positive emotion’ and it has important effect on the success of people. Happy people have optimistic attitude to the events. They are responsible and excellent citizens.<sup>3</sup> Psychologists believe that happiness has three main components- the relative existence of positive emotion, the lack of negative emotions and life satisfaction.<sup>4</sup> Medical field is one of the fields that due to the clinical period, the pressure of hospital work and stressful environment have considerable effects on happiness and job performance. Various studies have shown that age, gender, education, income, marital status and relation with other are effectual on positive emotions and happiness level.<sup>5</sup> The aim of the present study was to evaluate happiness among medical students using Oxford Happiness Questionnaire and its correlates.

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**Table 1**  
Happiness Distribution in regards to Baseline Characteristics.

Variables		Not happy n (%)	Somewhathappy n (%)	Happy n (%)	Total n (%)	X <sup>2</sup> -value	P-value
Sex	Female	6 (75.0)	16 (43.2)	34 (48.6)	56 (48.7)	2.65	0.265
	Male	2 (25.0)	21 (56.8)	36 (51.4)	59 (51.3)		
Birth order	1	2 (25.0)	19 (51.4)	31 (44.3)	52 (45.2)	2.9	0.372
	2	4 (50.0)	14 (37.8)	32 (45.7)	50 (43.5)		
	> 2	2 (25.0)	4 (10.8)	7 (10.0)	13 (11.3)		
Drug use	No	5 (62.5)	24 (64.9)	60 (85.7)	89 (77.4)	7.1	0.028*
	Yes	3 (37.5)	13 (35.1)	10 (14.3)	26 (22.6)		

\* *p* value significant (< 0.05).

**Table 2**  
Description of Happiness and its correlates.

Variables		Not happy n (%)	Somewhat happy n (%)	Happy n (%)	Total n (%)	X <sup>2</sup> value	P value
How do you keep healthy	None	2 (25.0)	2 (5.4)	1 (1.4)	5 (4.3)	9.73	0.008*
	Others-spiritual	6 (75.0)	35 (94.6)	69(98.6)	110(95.7)		
	Sports						
	Yoga						
	Gymnasium						
Higher Power	Don't believe	2 (25.0)	1 (2.7)	2 (2.9)	5 (4.3)	8.82	0.012*
	Believe	6 (75.0)	36 (97.3)	68 (97.1)	110(95.7)		
Believe in higher power in day to day life	Not important	2 (25.0)	2 (5.4)	2 (2.9)	6 (5.2)	7.12	0.028*
	Important	6 (75.0)	35 (94.6)	68 (97.1)	109(94.8)		

\* *p* value significant (< 0.05).

## 2. Material & methods

The study was carried out at Subharti Medical College, Meerut (U.P.) among 115 MBBS second year students using purposive sampling method. The students who were present at the time of data collection were involved in the study after obtaining their inform consent.

### 2.1. Instrument

Data collection was performed by using Oxford Happiness Questionnaire which is a 29 item measure of happiness that utilizes a six point rating scale of agreement ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 6 (strongly disagree). Reliability for this scale was found to be 0.91.

### 2.2. Statistical analysis

Data were entered in microsoft excel sheet and was analyzed using SPSS version 19.0 statistical software. Chi-square test was used to observe and quantify an association between the categorical outcome and different study variables. A *p*-value of less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

## 3. Result

The happiness distribution in regards to baseline characteristic showed that 60.8% of the selected medical students were in happy group which constitutes a happy population according to this scale (Table 1). The results of the study showed that males (51.4%) were happier than females (48.6%). It was seen that 85.7% of the students who were happy, had never consumed drugs and this association was found to be statistically significant (*p* < 0.05). It was observed that younger siblings (45.7%) were happier than elder ones (44.3%) (Table 2). It was also seen that 98.6% of happy people were involved in different types of physical activities, 94.6% of somewhat happy people were also occupied in physical activities while 75% of the students who were not happy had some involvement in any type of physical activity.

This difference was statistically significant (*p* < 0.05). The believe in higher power or universal consciousness was approximately similar in happy (97.1%) and somewhat happy students (97.3%) in comparison to not happy group (75%) and this association was also found to be statistically significant. The importance of day to day believe in higher power was seen significantly (*p* < 0.05) more in happy people (97.1%) in comparison to somewhat happy people (94.6%) and not happy (75%) people.

## 4. Discussion

The happiness distribution in present study showed that 60.8% of the selected medical students were in happy group which was higher than the study done by Moghadam M et al<sup>6</sup> among medical students of Taif University, Saudi Arabia (45.6%). In our study it was seen that males (51.4%) were more happy than female (48.6%) students. This result was in accordance to the finding of Alshehri et al<sup>7</sup> which showed females (56.77%) to be more unhappy than males (52.5%) although the difference was statistically insignificant. There was insignificant difference in happiness between the first and second birth order.

We have found a statistically significant (*p* 0.028) relationship of happiness with no drug dependence. Similar results were shown by Lesani A et al<sup>8</sup> who found that happiness score among noncigarette smokers was more than regular cigarette smokers although this was an insignificant association. Kang E et al<sup>9</sup> and Graham C<sup>10</sup> also reported the same result as of our study but it was again not a significant association in their respective studies.

The results of the present study showed that happiness was significantly related to physical activity which goes parallel to the findings of Eftekhar M<sup>11</sup> who also found that physically active and semiactive students displayed higher happiness levels compared with their inactive counterparts, and the difference was statistically significant. Similar results were also reported by Siadat SA et al,<sup>12</sup> Ghasempour A et al<sup>13</sup> and Shirvani ME et al<sup>14</sup> The result in our study was indicative of the fact that there were significant relationships between the students' happiness and believe in higher power. Sahraian A et al<sup>15</sup> in similar study

reported that higher score on religious belief was significantly linked to the level of happiness. Alimardani A et al<sup>16</sup> similarly documented positive and significant relationship between spiritual dimension and happiness among students. Cranney S<sup>17</sup> also highlighted that there was a highly significant association between religiosity and happiness.

## 5. Conclusion

From the present study it was concluded that the usage of drugs/tobacco/alcohol among the students is an indicator of reduced happiness hence all the students who are indulge in drugs should undergo a psychological assessment and intervention to improve their mental health. Positive association of physical activity with happiness indicates that there should be promotion of sports and cultural activities among students also every student should find at least one hobby of himself which can help him to be happy in stressful environment. Faith and belief in higher consciousness helps to accept tough situations and results hence students can be enlightened with spirituals bliss to attain higher level of happiness.

## Conflict of interest

The authors deny any conflict of interest.

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