

HIGHLIGHT OF THIS ISSUE

The Hidden Burden: Menstrual Health, Hygiene, and Mental Health Outcomes in Nepal

Introduction:

Menstrual health in Nepal is shaped by stigma and limited resources, yet its impact on women's mental well-being has been little studied.

Key Message:

Improved menstrual health and hygiene reduced anxiety and depression, with empowerment and reduced taboos as key mediators. The study calls for policies linking menstrual and mental health.

Methodology:

A nationwide cross-sectional study of 6,480 women (NDHS 2022) used logistic regression and mediation analysis to examine links between menstrual health, hygiene, and mental health outcomes.



Making non-communicable diseases a national priority

NCD - RESEARCH ROUNDUP

VOLUME: VI | ISSUE: VIII

Online Access at: <https://nepalhealthfrontiers.org/ncd-watch-nepal>

Suggested Citation:

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents

Women empowerment and hypertension in Nepal: a nationally representative survey analysis	3
Depression and anxiety in family caregivers of cancer patient: a cross-sectional study in Nepal	3
Prevalence of hypertension and its associated factors among government employees in Doti district of Nepal	4
Depression, Quality of Life and Medication Use Among Patients With Chronic Pain: A Cross-Sectional Study.....	4
Written in Fate: Nepali Older Adults' Understanding of Suicide.....	4
Association between postpartum depression and chronic postsurgical pain after Cesarean delivery: a secondary analysis of a randomized trial	5
Help-seeking intentions towards suicidal ideation among undergraduate students of Nepal: A cross-sectional study	5
Prevalence and associated factors of overweight and obesity among reproductive-aged women (15-49 years) in Ratnanagar Municipality, Chitwan district, Nepal	6
Mental health status of children (14-17 years) in conflict with law residing in the correction homes in Bagmati Province, Nepal: a mixed method study	6
Quality of Life Among Hemodialysis Patients Attending Dialysis Centers in Pokhara Metropolitan, Nepal: A Cross-Sectional Study	7
The hidden burden: Understanding the causal link between menstrual health and hygiene and mental health outcomes in Nepal	7
Patterns of Alcohol Use and Daily Smoking Among Men Who Have Sex with Men in Nepal .	8
Prevalence of dental anxiety and its associated factors among patients visiting tertiary care dental hospital in Kathmandu, Nepal: a cross-sectional study.....	8
Spatial clustering and sociodemographic factors impacting obesity and hypertension in Nepal: Analysis of a national demographic and health survey, 2022.....	8
Psychological distress among parents with emigrant offspring: A mixed-methods study from Changunarayan Municipality, Nepal	9

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Optimizing a community-based intervention to improve help-seeking for depression care: study protocol for a randomized factorial trial	9
Quality of Life in Frontline Health Workers Working at Selected Government Hospital of Federal Level in Nepal: An Observational Study	10
Care burden among the caregivers of children with cancer attending tertiary hospital, Bharatpur	10
Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices towards Cervical Cancer and Screening amongst Female Healthcare Professionals at Birat Medical College Teaching Hospital	11
Knowledge, Attitude, and Preventive Practices on Cardiovascular Diseases among the selected Community People of Gorkha	11
Concealing, Connecting, and Confronting: A Reflexive Inquiry into Mental Health and Wellbeing Among Undergraduate Nursing Students.....	11
Prevalence of Gestational Diabetes Mellitus in Pregnant Women Attending a Tertiary Care Center in Kathmandu, Nepal.....	12
Clinical presentation and course of Type 1 diabetes: A Hospital based longitudinal study over a period of ten years	12
Clinic-demographic, Thyroid, and Lipid Biomarkers in Patients with and without Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus in a Paramilitary Hospital, Nepal	13
Prevalence of COPD among Patients on Bronchodilator Therapy Presenting to a Tertiary Care Center.....	13
Stress and Coping Strategies among the Caregivers of the Patients Admitted in Critical Care Units in Tertiary Hospital	14
Psychological Well-being of Old Adult Patients Admitted with Non-communicable Diseases in a University Hospital: A Cross-sectional Study	14
Psychological well-being of adolescents in Pokhara, Nepal: A comparison between migrated and non-migrated parents	14
Effect of peer-led health professional-supported intervention on cardiovascular disease risk reduction among industrial workers of Pokhara, Nepal: A quasi-experimental study.....	15

Roundup Summary

In August 2025, our search identified twenty published articles on non-communicable diseases and mental health in Nepal. The studies spanned key themes including substance abuse, COPD, heart health, and broader mental health challenges.

Women empowerment and hypertension in Nepal: a nationally representative survey analysis

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41271-025-00593-7>

Context: Nepal is currently experiencing an epidemiological transition with a shift in disease burden from communicable diseases to non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and previous studies reported that nearly one in four adults in Nepal have hypertension.

Methodology: This study investigates the roles of women empowerment on the prevalence, awareness, and treatment of hypertension among ever-married Nepalese women aged 15–49 years using 2016 Nepal Demographic and Health Survey data.

Key message: Awareness and treatment of hypertension among Nepalese women remain low, with only 35% aware of their condition and 14% receiving treatment. The study highlights the need for more targeted efforts to improve health awareness and healthcare access for women with low empowerment.

Depression and anxiety in family caregivers of cancer patient: a cross-sectional study in Nepal

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1097/MS9.0000000000003679>

Context: As cancer cases rise, caregivers play a vital role in patient care, but the ongoing demands of caregiving often take a toll on their mental health.

Methodology: This study enrolled 101 caregivers of cancer patients from a tertiary care hospital in Kathmandu in this study and obtained demographic information from the patients and their caregivers

Key message: More than half of the cancer caregivers in the study experienced anxiety, and nearly one-third reported symptoms of depression. Male caregivers, those closely related to the patient, and those caring for patients with poor performance scores were more likely to have severe anxiety and depression. The findings highlight the urgent need for mental health interventions that support both patients and their caregivers.

Prevalence of hypertension and its associated factors among government employees in Doti district of Nepal

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0330753>

Context: Hypertension, a major driver of heart disease worldwide, is hitting government workers especially hard as job stress, long hours, and sedentary routines fuel their risk.

Methodology: A cross-sectional study was carried out among 195 government employees in Dipayal Silgadhi Municipality of Doti district of Sudurpashchim province of Nepal. The data was collected through face-to-face interviews using Simple Random Sampling (SRS) technique

Key message: The study revealed the high prevalence of hypertension (36.4%) among government employees; significantly associated with risk factors like age group 30–50 years, work experience and alcohol consumption, indicating an alarming public health concern. These results highlight the pressing need for focused interventions to reduce the risk of hypertension and its related problems among government employees, such as lifestyle changes, workplace health programs, and routine health screenings.

Depression, Quality of Life and Medication Use Among Patients With Chronic Pain: A Cross-Sectional Study

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1155/prm/6610938>

Context: Chronic pain is one of the most common reasons for seeking medical care and is associated with depression and reduced quality of life.

Methodology: A cross-sectional study was conducted among patients visiting the outpatient departments of two tertiary care hospitals in Pokhara, Nepal.

Key message: Low back pain (24.9%) emerged as the most common condition among participants, often linked with reduced quality of life. Depression was frequent, with differences seen across gender, education, comorbidities, and how long participants had been in pain. Higher levels of depression, greater pain, and longer pain duration were all correlated to poorer quality of life.

Written in Fate: Nepali Older Adults' Understanding of Suicide

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/07317115.2025.2541765>

Context: Suicide rates are rising sharply in Nepal, especially in rural areas, but stigma and criminalization of attempted suicide, its rates is likely to be underreported.

Methodology: Focus groups were conducted to understand culturally appropriate ways to start conversations about suicide with Nepali older adults.

Key message: Cultural beliefs have shaped the perception of suicide among Nepali older adults. Their belief in fate can be a barrier to preventing suicide. However, their belief that suicide results in bad afterlife consequences can be exploited to potentially prevent it. Moreover, older adults thought that suicide prevention involves roles for family, community, and government.

Association between postpartum depression and chronic postsurgical pain after Cesarean delivery: a secondary analysis of a randomized trial

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12630-025-03006-1>

Context: Psychological factors, such as anxiety, depression, and catastrophizing, may increase the risk of chronic postsurgical pain (CPSP) following Cesarean delivery (CD)

Methodology: Secondary analysis was conducted of a previous randomized trial. In the original trial, 290 patients undergoing CD in Nepal were randomized to receive either 100 µg of intrathecal morphine or normal saline in addition to their spinal anesthesia with the goal to investigate the relationship between intrathecal morphine use and CPSP development.

Key message: Only 7% of the participants developed postpartum depression after cesarean delivery, and many continued to experience chronic pain months later. Depression was strongly linked to a higher likelihood of long-term pain. However, postpartum depression did not explain the connection between severe early pain and chronic pain.

Help-seeking intentions towards suicidal ideation among undergraduate students of Nepal: A cross-sectional study

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41271-025-00593-7>

Context: Suicidal ideation is a common and growing concern among students globally. Students who have academic pressure, social transitions, and personal relationship issues are likely to face distressing thoughts in their lifetime.

Methodology: A web-based cross-sectional study was conducted involving 422 undergraduate students. The general help-seeking questionnaire was used to determine help-seeking intentions.

Key message: This study found that 58.5% and 38.4% of the participants were extremely likely to seek help from traditional healers and parents, respectively. Fear of criticism (34.2%) and stigma (20.3%) were the most common barriers to seeking help for any mental problems. The study findings suggested informal sources were more favorable sources for help-seeking than professional sources among students.

Prevalence and associated factors of overweight and obesity among reproductive-aged women (15-49 years) in Ratnanagar Municipality, Chitwan district, Nepal

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0329850>

Context: Nepal is undergoing rapid urbanization, accompanied by significant changes in lifestyle, dietary practices, and behavioral patterns. This shift has contributed to a rising prevalence of overweight and obesity.

Methodology: A cross-sectional study was conducted in selected wards of Ratnanagar Municipality, Chitwan district. A multistage sampling method was followed for the selection of participants. Face-to-face interview was conducted using a structured questionnaire.

Key message: This study concludes a significant burden of overweight and obesity (51.6%) among reproductive-aged women, with socio-demographic, lifestyle, and behavioral factors playing a key role. Factors such as age, education, occupation, and physical activity were linked to overweight and obesity.

Mental health status of children (14-17 years) in conflict with law residing in the correction homes in Bagmati Province, Nepal: a mixed method study

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-025-07170-y>

Context: Children in conflict with the law are predisposed to mental health difficulties as they are already a vulnerable, misunderstood, and frequently stigmatized group.

Methodology: A cross-sectional study was conducted from December 2022 to March 2023 using a mixed method approach among children (14-17 years) in two correction homes of Bagmati Province.

Key message: More than half of the children (14-17 years) in conflict with the law were having all three types of common mental health problems. Mental health issues were linked to family conflict, broken

homes, abuse history, and isolation, supported by key informant interviews as well. These results highlight the urgent need for comprehensive and tailored intervention to address the mental health needs of the children in conflict with the law.

Quality of Life Among Hemodialysis Patients Attending Dialysis Centers in Pokhara Metropolitan, Nepal: A Cross-Sectional Study

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1002/hsr2.71132>

Context: Kidney failure significantly impacts patients' quality of life (QoL), posing a public health concern due to its effects on well-being, satisfaction, and the increased demand for social and healthcare services.

Methodology: A cross-sectional study was conducted in 2017 among 132 kidney failure patients attending dialysis centers in Pokhara. Data were collected through face-to-face interviews and observations using the Short Form-36 (SF-36) Health Survey and a structured checklist.

Key message: The majority of patients suffering from kidney failure had overall poor quality of life. Social support and wealth index played a significant role in the quality of life. Economic status and participation in social organizations were significantly associated with higher QoL. The findings suggest the need to enhance social support systems and promoting vocational rehabilitation could improve QoL for this population.

The hidden burden: Understanding the causal link between menstrual health and hygiene and mental health outcomes in Nepal

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2025.118505>

Context: Women's menstrual health and hygiene impact mental health outcomes.

Methodology: This study was conducted using data from 6480 women from the 2022 Nepal Demographic Health Survey.

Key message: Better menstrual health and hygiene practices significantly reduce anxiety and depression. Lower taboos, reproductive tract infections and empowerment mediate the menstrual health and hygiene and mental well-being. Supports policies improving menstrual health and hygiene access to boost women's mental health.

Patterns of Alcohol Use and Daily Smoking Among Men Who Have Sex with Men in Nepal

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10900-025-01456-8>

Context: Men who have sex with men (MSM) have an elevated risk of adverse health outcomes associated with alcohol use and smoking. Although substantial studies have been conducted globally, little is known about alcohol use and smoking among MSM in Nepal.

Methodology: A cross-sectional respondent-driven survey was conducted among MSM in Kathmandu, Nepal, between October and December 2022

Key message: Among 250 participants, 71.6% consumed alcohol in the past 12 months, and 42% smoked daily in the last 30 days. Men who have sex with men with lower income, single, or involvement in sex work were more likely to use alcohol. Smoking history, drug use, and past police detention were also tied to higher smoking rates.

Prevalence of dental anxiety and its associated factors among patients visiting tertiary care dental hospital in Kathmandu, Nepal: a cross-sectional study

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2025-103762>

Context: Dental anxiety, affecting 15.3% of adults globally, is more common in younger people and women. It often leads to avoiding dental visits, which worsens oral health.

Methodology: This study was conducted in the capital city of Nepal, Kathmandu, to explore the prevalence of dental anxiety along with associated factors among patients visiting a tertiary care dental hospital.

Key message: Slightly more than two-fifths of the participants experienced moderate dental anxiety, while a smaller yet significant proportion experienced severe anxiety. It was found to be associated with factors such as age, sex, dental history and reason for current dental visit.

Spatial clustering and sociodemographic factors impacting obesity and hypertension in Nepal: Analysis of a national demographic and health survey, 2022

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sste.2025.100743>

Context: Overweight/obesity and hypertension pose significant global health challenges.

Methodology: A comprehensive spatial-epidemiological analysis of 136,235 participants from the 2022 Nepal Demographic and Health Survey was done.

Key message: Overall, 42.5% of respondents were obese, and 38.5% had hypertension. Urban residents were more likely to be obese and have hypertension. High rates of both conditions were concentrated in central and eastern Nepal, while lower rates were seen in the western region. The findings suggest that social, demographic, and geographic factors all play a role in shaping obesity and hypertension patterns

Psychological distress among parents with emigrant offspring: A mixed-methods study from Changunarayan Municipality, Nepal

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0329071>

Context: The growing trend of international migration has significant socio-emotional implications for families left behind, particularly the left-behind parents.

Methodology: A mixed-methods cross-sectional study was conducted among 218 parents whose children had emigrated for at least six months.

Key message: The prevalence of psychological distress was 18.8%, with 8.3% experiencing mild distress, 5.0% moderate distress, and 5.5% severe distress. A significant proportion of parents with emigrant children experience psychological distress, influenced by health conditions, migrant employment status, and perceived social support.

Optimizing a community-based intervention to improve help-seeking for depression care: study protocol for a randomized factorial trial

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13063-025-09014-2>

Context: Depression is a common mental health issue that can be effectively managed in primary and community health care settings. However, there is a significant gap between the number of individuals in need of care and those who actually receive treatment, with the greatest gap in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

Methodology: The study will take place in two municipalities in eastern Nepal. Female Community Health Volunteers will be trained to identify individuals with depression using the Community Informant Detection Tool, a proven community-based strategy for proactive case detection, and subsequently \

implement the Gain Life intervention, which aims to promote help-seeking for depression care.

Key message: The findings from this study will guide decisions on whether to proceed with a fully randomized controlled trial or conduct an additional optimization study to finalize the intervention components.

Quality of Life in Frontline Health Workers Working at Selected Government Hospital of Federal Level in Nepal: An Observational Study

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31729/jnma.9187>

Context: Quality of life (QoL) is a crucial dimension of overall wellbeing, particularly for frontline health workers whose roles involve high responsibility and exposure to occupational stressors.

Methodology: A descriptive, cross-sectional study was conducted among 460 participants selected through systematic random sampling.

Key message: Out of 400 respondents, 189 (48.25%) of frontline health workers reported average or low quality of life. Depressive symptoms were present in 104 (26%) of respondents, 239 (59.75%) experienced high work-related stress, and 205 (51.25%) respondents reported low self-esteem. Workplace policies focusing on reasonable working hours, adequate staffing, and supportive environments are needed to promote well-being and job satisfaction.

Care burden among the caregivers of children with cancer attending tertiary hospital, Bharatpur

DOI: <https://www.jcmc.com.np/jcmc/index.php/jcmc/article/view/1739>

Context: Caring for the child with cancer is associated with tremendous physical, psychological, social, and financial pressure upon the family. Early detection of burden of care among caregivers is preeminent in promoting their quality of life.

Methodology: A cross-sectional study was carried out among caregivers of children attending B. P. Koirala Memorial Cancer Hospital, Bharatpur, Nepal.

Key message: Out of 110 caregivers, 61(55.5%) had a moderate level of care burden. Healthcare professionals should show concern towards reducing the burden among the caregivers and carry out educational programs that help them cope with their problems.

Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices towards Cervical Cancer and Screening amongst Female Healthcare Professionals at Birat Medical College Teaching Hospital

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62065/bjhs508>

Context: In Nepal, cervical cancer is the most common cancer amongst women. Screening of cervical cancer can be done easily on an outpatient basis by cytology-based Papanicolaou test.

Methodology: This was a cross-sectional study done in the department of Oncology from 1st November 2021 to 1st December 2021.

Key message: Most female healthcare workers at Birat Medical College showed good knowledge and attitude toward cervical cancer, but their practice of Pap smear screening remained poor.

Knowledge, Attitude, and Preventive Practices on Cardiovascular Diseases among the selected Community People of Gorkha

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41271-025-00593-7>

Context: Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is leading cause of mortality in Asian country and it is very essential to understand the current epidemiological characteristics of disease in developing countries like Nepal.

Methodology: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 407 adults selected from the community of Gorkha using probability and multi-stage cluster random sampling techniques from May to June 2024.

Key message: Majority of the respondents (77.15%) had good knowledge related to cardiovascular diseases (CVDs), and more than half (65.8%) had positive attitudes towards CVDs, 81.3% of the respondents demonstrated good practices towards CVDs. The level of knowledge was significantly associated with gender, level of education, income, and family history of CVDs. Gender, age, residence, education level, and family history of CVDs were significantly associated with attitudes. The level of practice was significantly associated with age, residence, level of education, and income

Concealing, Connecting, and Confronting: A Reflexive Inquiry into Mental Health and Wellbeing Among Undergraduate Nursing Students

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3390/nursrep15090312>

Context: In Nepal's crowded hospitals, where strict hierarchies and resource shortages collide, nursing students are entering clinical training under intense psychological strain.

Methodology: This study used a qualitative approach with reflexive thematic analysis to explore experiences. Fifteen nursing students in their second to fourth years at a major urban university in Nepal were recruited through digital flyers and in-class announcements linking to a secure sign-up form.

Key message: Psychological distress among Nepalese nursing students stems from systemic barriers, not personal failure. Reforms are needed to break rigid hierarchies, provide confidential support, and foster collaborative learning.

Prevalence of Gestational Diabetes Mellitus in Pregnant Women Attending a Tertiary Care Center in Kathmandu, Nepal

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3126/jdean.v9i2.82992>

Context: Gestational diabetes mellitus is one of the most common metabolic disorders in pregnancy. Early identification and treatment are crucial to prevent adverse maternal and neonatal outcomes.

Methodology: This is the hospital based cross sectional survey done among pregnant women attending Civil service hospital, Kathmandu, Nepal between January 2023 and 2024.

Key message: Out of 2,108 pregnant women screened, 6.6% were diagnosed with gestational diabetes. Many had a family or past history of diabetes, but overall awareness about gestational diabetes was low. The findings highlight the need for universal screening in Nepal, with lifestyle changes as the main treatment and medications like metformin or insulin used when needed.

Clinical presentation and course of Type 1 diabetes: A Hospital based longitudinal study over a period of ten years

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3126/jdean.v9i2.83001>

Context: Type 1 Diabetes Mellitus in children once considered a very rare disease is no rarer. Being chronic illness diabetes in early life increases the risk of morbidity thereby impairing physical, mental as well as social development.

Methodology: This is the hospital based longitudinal study done among children with Type 1 diabetes mellitus at Kanti Children's Hospital (KCH) over the period of ten years period (January 2013 to Dec 2023).

Key message: Among one hundred eighty-five children with T1DM enrolled in study 104 (56.2%) were male and 81 (43.8%) were female. Most common clinical presentation of T1DM were typical osmotic features like polyuria, polydipsia and complications like DKA. The most common age of presentation was 5 to 14 years.

Clinic-demographic, Thyroid, and Lipid Biomarkers in Patients with and without Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus in a Paramilitary Hospital, Nepal

DOI: <https://mjapfn.org.np/mjapfn/index.php/mjapfn/article/view/9>

Context: Diabetes disrupts the hypothalamic regulation of thyroid-releasing hormone and impacts the synthesis of triiodothyronine (T₃) and thyroxine (T₄), leading to disrupted lipid biomarker levels.

Methodology: This case-control study was conducted at the Tertiary Care Paramilitary Hospital between July 2023 and June 2024 T2DM patients and 211 controls.

Key message: T2DM affected less than one-tenth of hospital-visiting patients, primarily males and those aged 50–59. Dyslipidemia was common among T2DM patients, with dyslipidemia and hypothyroidism being most prevalent in overweight males and females, respectively. Regular testing of triglycerides, TSH, and T₄ in T2DM patients can help reduce morbidity.

Prevalence of COPD among Patients on Bronchodilator Therapy Presenting to a Tertiary Care Center

DOI: <https://nepjol.info/index.php/nrj/article/view/83190>

Context: Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is the most common non-communicable disease in Nepal and the third leading non-communicable disease globally.

Methodology: A single-center, prospective, cross-sectional study design was conducted that included all patients more than 40 years old on bronchodilator therapy for COPD coming to the Pulmo OPD of Kathmandu Medical College Teaching Hospital (KMCTH). COPD was diagnosed by GOLD COPD. Criteria of fixed post-bronchodilator FEV₁/FVC ratio <0.70.

Key message: A total of 6789 patients visited the pulmo OPD. 877 (12.92%) patients were treated for COPD at different centers. Out of 877 patients, only 371 cases (42.3%) were properly diagnosed with COPD followed by bronchodilator therapy, and 185 (21.09%) cases were mistakenly treated for COPD, i.e., overdiagnosis, as proven by spirometry later on. Among 692 COPD-confirmed patients, 380 (54.91%) were female and 312 (45.09%) were male.

Stress and Coping Strategies among the Caregivers of the Patients Admitted in Critical Care Units in Tertiary Hospital

DOI: <https://mjapfn.org/mjapfn/index.php/mjapfn/article/view/10>

Context: In recent years, more patients with severe illnesses are being admitted to intensive care, and their families are feeling the strain in various ways like emotionally, physically, and financially.

Methodology: A purposive phenomenological study involving eight caregivers from Intensive Care Unit and High Dependency Unit was conducted, using in-depth interview. Data was collected between August to September 2024.

Key message: The study found that family members experienced stress in their role as caregivers. People's perceptions of stress had a big impact on the caregiving duties they carry out. The findings showed that coping strategies were implied according to the stress perceived by the family members as caregivers.

Psychological Well-being of Old Adult Patients Admitted with Non-communicable Diseases in a University Hospital: A Cross-sectional Study

DOI: <https://mjsbh.org.np/mjsbh/index.php/mjsbh/article/view/617>

Context: Addressing mental health can lead to improved treatment outcomes, greater adherence to medical recommendations, and a more fulfilling life for older adult patients with non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

Methodology: Ryff, the 42-item Psychological Wellbeing (PWB) Scale was used to measure psychological wellbeing among 404 NCDs patients in a university hospital in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Key message: This study showed that 96.5% of older adult patients with NCDs were psychologically well. Sex and living location were significantly associated with psychological wellbeing.

Psychological well-being of adolescents in Pokhara, Nepal: A comparison between migrated and non-migrated parents

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmen.0000102>

Context: With the increasing trend of international migration in Nepal, however there is limited

research specifically examining the psychological well-being of left-behind adolescents in Nepal.

Methodology: This is a school-based, cross-sectional study conducted among 724 school-going adolescents (aged 12–17 years) in Pokhara Metropolitan City of Nepal. Psychological well-being of adolescents was assessed using the 25-item Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ).

Key message: The study found no significant difference in adolescents' psychological well-being between migrated and non-migrated parents. However, females, relatively advantaged ethnic groups, non-Hindus, and those studying in private schools had significantly higher difficulty scores. The study highlights the importance of social support, a safe family environment, and effective communication with migrated parents for the psychological well-being of left-behind adolescents in Nepal.

Effect of peer-led health professional-supported intervention on cardiovascular disease risk reduction among industrial workers of Pokhara, Nepal: A quasi-experimental study

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pgph.0004639>

Context: Worksite-based interventions are promising health promotion tools however; in Nepal there is lack of such type of structured programs targeting industrial workers.

Methodology: A quasi-experimental study was conducted for eight weeks involving 129 industrial workers in Pokhara, Nepal. The intervention group received a peer-led health professional-supported (PLHPS) intervention in reducing CVD risk factors.

Key message: The intervention group's participants reported considerably increased intakes of fruits and vegetables and changes in quitting tobacco. However, no significant differences were observed between the groups in terms of blood pressure, exercise, and weight. This study concluded that the eight-week intervention for industrial workers is effective in initiating dietary and tobacco cessation behaviors but needs further reconfirmation after six months.



We thank you all for joining our initiative to promote evidence-informed policymaking and promote public awareness of the non-communicable disease (NCDs) and related issues in Nepal- we are committed to staying up to date with the latest NCD research in Nepal.

This issue covers a summary of scientific publications on NCDs in Nepal for the month of August 2025.

Should you have colleagues who'd like to receive these updates via email (ncdwatchnepal@gmail.com)

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NCD Watch Nepal



Publications



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