SUMMARY

The aim of the present research was to investigate the correlates of mental health among research students. For this purpose, the study was designed to assess the differences on mental health, depression, anxiety, stress, quality of life, self-esteem and social support among fellowship holder and non-fellowship holder research students in Panjab University Chandigarh. Further the research was aimed to study the gender differences on mental health, depression, anxiety, stress, quality of life, self-esteem and social support among research students.

The total sample consisted of 400 research students selected from various departments under all the faculties of Panjab University Chandigarh. The sample was equally divided into fellowship holder (n=200) and non-fellowship (n=200) groups. Equal number of males and females were also included in the total sample.

The GHQ-12 (Goldberg & Williams, 1988) was used to measure mental health, Beck Depression Inventory (Beck, 1996) to assess the symptoms of depression, Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (Hamilton, 1959) was used to measure symptoms of anxiety, perceived stress was studied using Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen & Williamson, 1988) to measure perceived stress, The Quality of Life Scale (Burckhardt & Anderson, 2013) was applied to measure quality of life, Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) was used to measure self-esteem. Social Support Questionnaire (Nehra & Kulhara, 1987) was used to assess social support in students.

Scoring of all the measured variables were done in accordance with norms given in the respective manuals. To fulfill the objective of the study raw scores were analyzed with descriptive statistics, t-test, analysis of variance, inter-correlation analysis and stepwise regression analysis. The analysis was done using the classifications based on fellowship and gender. All the results are shown in the form of tables and figures and further discussed and supported with previously conducted various researches in similar area.
t-test

The comparison of mean scores and t-ratios of fellowship holder and non-fellowship holder research students revealed that both the groups significantly differ on all the measured variables except social support viz. mental health, depression, anxiety, perceived stress, quality of life and self-esteem. Both the groups emerged to perceive Social Support equally.

Gender wise comparison indicated that both male and female research students scored similarly on depression, anxiety, perceived stress, quality of life and self-esteem. Female students were found to be suffering from poor mental health while male students perceived more social support.

Analysis of Variance

Results of analysis of variance were calculated for financial support and gender as independent variables. The two way analysis (2X2) was tabulated with two levels of financial support (fellowship holders and non-fellowship holders) and two levels of gender (male and female). The main effects and the interaction effects were assessed for all the dependent variables.

The tabulated analysis for the groups revealed that significant results emerged on the following variables: Mental Health, Perceived Stress, Quality of Life and Social Support. No significant results were found on depression, anxiety, and self-esteem.

Inter-Correlation and Step-wise Regression Analysis

Pearson’s Correlation analysis and Step-wise Regression analysis was applied to find out the significant correlates and predictors of mental health. Among fellowship holder group, mental health was found to be significantly related with depression, anxiety, perceived stress, quality of life, self-esteem and social support. All the measured variables significantly predicted mental health.

Majority of the hypotheses were upheld in the present investigation. Overall findings suggested a significant difference among fellowship holder and non-fellowship holder research students. In most of the cases, no significant gender
differences were observed. Significant correlations were found between mental health and the measured variables viz., depression, anxiety, perceived stress, quality of life, self-esteem and social support except for fellowship holders and male research students. Further, depression, anxiety, perceived stress, quality of life, self-esteem and social support emerged as significant predictors of mental health across various subgroups of the sample.

From the present study it is evident that financial difficulty is adversely affecting mental health of the research students. Therefore it is an essential factor which should be taken care by the individual and the institution so that the mental health of the research students may not deteriorate.