

Non-communicable Diseases in Nepal-Research Roundup

May 2024



Publications

NCD Watch Nepal

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Roundup Summary

In May 2024, our search on non-communicable diseases and mental health related literature in Nepal yielded 14 published articles. Most of the studies covered the topics of different types of cancers followed by cardiovascular diseases and mental health..

Risk of Cardiac Arrhythmias Among Climbers on Mount Everest

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamacardio.2024.0364>

Context: Arterial hypoxemia, electrolyte imbalances, and periodic breathing increase the vulnerability to cardiac arrhythmia at altitude.

Methodology: This is a prospective cohort study involving healthy individuals at altitude (8849 m) on Mount Everest, Nepal. All study participants (n=41) underwent 12-lead electrocardiogram, transthoracic echocardiography, and exercise stress testing before and ambulatory rhythm recording both before and during the expedition.

Key message: In this study, more than 1 in 3 healthy individuals experienced cardiac arrhythmia during the climb of Mount Everest, thereby confirming the association between exposure to high altitude and incidence of cardiac arrhythmia.

An analysis of Nepal's Draft Mental Health Acts 2006-2017: competing values and power

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapol/czae023>

Context: In Nepal, mental health policy and legislation development has been slow, with a large gap between legislation development and implementation.

Methodology: This is a qualitative study. Key informant interviews were conducted in 2017 with 14 participants.

Key message: This analysis indicates that there were few favorable conditions to support the progression of this policy into law.

A qualitative study on the adaptation of community programmes for the promotion of early detection and health-seeking of perinatal depression in Nepal

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12905-024-03122-y>

Context: Despite the high burden of perinatal depression in Nepal, the detection rate is low.

Methodology: In-depth interviews were conducted with women identified with perinatal depression (n=36), and focus group discussions with health workers trained in community

mental health (n=13), female community health volunteers (FCHVs), cadre of Nepal government for the prevention and promotion of community maternal and child health (n=16), and psychosocial counselors (n=5).

Key message: This study led to the content development for the Community Informant Detection Tool (CIDT) and community sensitization manual. Myths of perinatal depression and the importance of the role of family were added to the community sensitization manual. This study concluded that both the CIDT and community sensitization manual are grounded in the local context and are simple, clear, and easy to understand.

Prevalence of depression and associated symptoms among patients attending primary healthcare facilities: a cross-sectional study in Nepal

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-024-05794-0>

Context: Depression is a significant global health issue, particularly in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

Methodology: This was a population-based cross-sectional health facility based survey conducted among a total of 1,897 adult patients aged 18–91 (63.1% women) attending ten primary healthcare facilities in Jhapa, a district in eastern Nepal. Depressive symptoms was assessed using the validated Nepali version of the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9).

Key message: One in seven (14.5%) individuals attending primary health care facilities met the threshold for depression based on a validated cut-off score (≥ 10) on the PHQ-9. The most commonly reported depressive symptoms were loss of energy and sleep difficulties, however, they are not the two hallmark criteria. Therefore, training health workers to first screen for hallmark criteria may increase the accuracy of identification of depressive symptoms.

Perceived social support and professional quality of life of health professionals during COVID-19 pandemic in Nepal: a cross-sectional study

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2024-085535>

Context: Social support perceived by health professionals plays an important role in psychological well-being and quality of life.

Methodology: A cross-sectional web-based study was conducted among 313 health professionals aged 18–60 years old in Nepal. Perceived social support was evaluated by the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) and professional quality of life using Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL).

Key message: The majority of participants (73.8%) had high social support. Considerable proportions of participants had moderate compassion satisfaction (57%), moderate Burnout (58.%) and moderate secondary traumatic stress (75%). Sex, marital status, profession, work-

shift, type of health institution and status of precautionary measures at the workplace were associated with the different dimensions of ProQOL.

Effect of an educational intervention package on knowledge, perception and behavioral intention for breast cancer screening among adolescent students of Kathmandu Metropolitan City

DOI: <https://jkahs.org.np/jkahs/index.php/jkahs/article/view/843>

Context: Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women worldwide and is the second most common in Nepal.

Methodology: A pretest - posttest control group study design was used. A total of 159 participants were enrolled in each group, selected from two randomly chosen public secondary schools in Kathmandu, Nepal. Educational intervention was given to the intervention group.

Key message: The educational intervention package showed a notable effect in increasing adolescent students' intention to get screened for breast cancer.

Perceived stress and its associated factors among pregnant women attending antenatal clinic in a tertiary level hospital

DOI: <https://www.jkahs.org.np/jkahs/index.php/jkahs/article/view/847>

Context: Stress has been found widely prevalent among women during the time of pregnancy.

Methodology: A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out among 264 pregnant women attending the Obstetrics/Gynaecology outpatient department of Nepal Medical College and Teaching Hospital. Pregnancy Stress Rating Scale (PSRS) was used to measure perceived stress levels among pregnant women.

Key message: In this study, 11.4% of pregnant women had high levels of stress. Ethnicity, education of respondents and respondents' husbands, status of pregnancy (pregnancy intention), and gender preference were associated with high levels of perceived stress. Early recognition of antenatal stress and its management is crucial.

Ethno-geographic distribution and histopathological classification of nasopharyngeal carcinoma in a single center in Nepal

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0304371>

Context: Nasopharyngeal carcinoma (NPC) shows geographic and ethnic variation with specific etiopathogenesis.

Methodology: A descriptive retrospective study to analyze NPC cases from different regions among patients visiting the hospital from 2016 to 2021 in Nepal.

Key message: Most cases of NPC occurred in patients from provinces in eastern Nepal (Koshi province), and of the Janajati ethnic community. The most common histological subtype was undifferentiated non-keratinizing carcinoma.

Disparities and determinants of testing for early detection of cervical cancer among Nepalese women: evidence from a population-based survey

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1158/1055-9965.EPI-24-0037>

Context: Cervical cancer (CC) presents a considerable challenge in South Asia, notably in Nepal, where screening remains limited.

Methodology: This study analyzed data from the 2019 Nepal Noncommunicable Disease Risk Factors survey (WHO-STEPwise approach to noncommunicable risk factor surveillance), involving 2,332 women aged 30-69 years.

Key message: Less than one in ten women in Nepal had a CC testing, primarily favoring higher educated and wealthier individuals. Targeted early detection and CC screening interventions are necessary to address these disparities and improve access and uptake.

A study of risk factors and clinico-pathological profile of patients with cervical cancer at BPKIHS: A descriptive cross-sectional study

Link: https://ascopubs.org/doi/abs/10.1200/JCO.2024.42.16_suppl.e17515

Context: Cervical cancer has the highest incidence and mortality rates among females in Nepal.

Methodology: This is a descriptive cross-sectional study conducted among seventy-nine patients with cervical cancer attending Department of Gynaecology, BPKIHS, Dharan, Nepal.

Key message: Illiteracy, poor hygiene, low socio-economic status, patient delays, inadequate screening, multiparity, and early age at marriage and childbirth are key factors to address in reducing cervical cancer.

Preferences of financial discussion among cancer care physicians and patients with cancer at a government cancer center in Nepal

Link: https://ascopubs.org/doi/abs/10.1200/JCO.2024.42.16_suppl.e23204

Context: Good physician-patient communication enhances treatment choices and improves quality of care.

Methodology: This is a survey conducted at Bhaktapur Cancer Hospital which assessed physicians' and patients' preferences, willingness, and satisfaction regarding financial communication before cancer treatment.

Key message: This study concludes that Optimal financial discussion between cancer care physicians and patients is lacking which may be the important contributory cause to financial distress for patients and their families leading to non compliance to treatment.

Burden of tobacco-related cancers in urban, semi-urban and rural setting of Nepal: Findings from population-based cancer registries 2019

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0300271>

Context: Nepal has high tobacco use and significant tobacco-related cancer burden.

Methodology: Data from nine districts analyzed tobacco-associated cancer incidence, mortality, and patterns in Nepal.

Key message: High prevalence of tobacco-related cancer; 35.3% in men and 17.3% in women, persists in Nepal despite the enforcement of tobacco control policies, which needs to be constantly monitored as well.

Prevalence of sleep disorders in patients with advanced cancer: A cross-sectional study

Link: https://journals.lww.com/annals-of-medicine-and-surgery/abstract/9900/prevalence_of_sleep_disorders_in_patients_with.1880.aspx

Context: Advanced cancer patients have high prevalence of sleep disorders, impacting outcomes and quality of life.

Methodology: This is a cross-sectional study where 357 patients with advanced solid malignancies were assessed for sleep quality using PSQI.

Key message: Over half of patients had poor sleep, adversely impacting prognosis and quality of life, requiring special management consideration.

Screening of Breast among Women: A Cross-Sectional Study in Nepal

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1155/2024/9969169>

Context: Breast cancer is the second most common cancer in Nepali women, stressing early detection through awareness, screening, and updated protocols.

Methodology: This is a cross sectional study surveying 100 women aged 18 years and more, using face-to-face interviews.

Key message: Of the total participants, 19% complained about the abnormal breasts which were significantly correlated with age at marriage, number of pregnancies, and use of contraception. Abnormal breast findings highlight the necessity for updated screening protocols, promoting early diagnosis and better treatment outcomes.



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 May 2024.

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

Individual summary of the round-up is also available on our social media outlets:

- ⇒ Twitter: <https://twitter.com/NCDWatchNepal>
- ⇒ Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/NCDWatchNepal>
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Please join us and share with relevant colleagues. As always, previous editions of the round-up are available in our archive here at

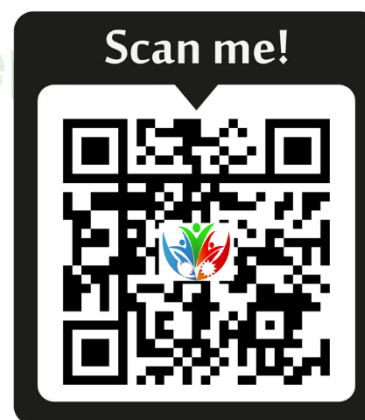
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Publications



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