

Lifestyle Risk and Protective Factors Associated with Depression in Young Adults:

Results from a Large Cross-Sectional Study in the General Population

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INTRODUCTION

Depression

- ✓ = The **most common mental disorder** in the world: 11% of adults suffer from depression.^[2]
- ✓ Adults aged under 30 years are the most at risk to develop depressive symptoms.^[2]
- ✓ Depression **impacts everyday life**, in all life domains (e.g., work, social & family lives, hobbies).^[2]

Lifestyle

- ✓ Includes day to day behaviors and functions of individuals (e.g., occupation, leisure activities, sleep patterns, dietary choices, and exercise).^[3]
- ✓ Plays an important role in the **prevention, development, progression, and treatment of depression**.^[2]

Investigation of the relationships between depressive symptoms and lifestyle in young adults to identify risk and protective factors.

GOAL

METHODS

- **Self-administered questionnaires** (online completion):
 - (1) Socio-demographic information,
 - (2) Center for Epidemiology Studies Depression Inventory (CES-D),
 - (3) Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire - Short Form (FFMQ-SF),
 - (4) Connectedness to Nature Scale (CNS),
 - (5) 10-item Assessment of Eating Habits,
 - (6) Self-assessment of physical activity,
 - (7) Spiegel's Sleep Questionnaire, and
 - (8) Brief Resilience Scale (BRS).
- **N= 155** (40 male, 115 female) French-speaking young adults aged **18 to 29** (Average age: **25.6 ± 2.7**)

RESULTS

	Depression
Mindfulness (Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ))	-0.59 ***
FFMQ_Observing inner events	-0.07
FFMQ_Describe experience	-0.26 **
FFMQ_Non-Reactivity	-0.43 ***
FFMQ_Acting mindfully	-0.49 ***
FFMQ_Acting mindfully	-0.57 ***
The Connectedness to Nature Scale (CNS)	-0.03
Healthy Diet (Evaluation of eating habits)	-0.27 ***
Physical Activity (Self-assessment test)	-0.21 **
Sleep Quality	-0.27 ***
Ability to bounce back or recover from stress (Brief resilience scale)	-0.55 ***

Table 1: Correlation Between Depression (CES-D) and Lifestyle Factors
Note: * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Lifestyle-related risk factors for depression

- Decreased **physical activity** --> increased depressive symptoms
- Unhealthy diet** --> increased depressive symptoms

Lifestyle-related protective factors for depression

- Better **mindfulness skills** --> reduced depressive symptoms
- Better **connection to nature** --> reduction of depression symptoms

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DISCUSSION

- ✓ In line with the existing literature, we evidenced negative correlations between depression and:
 - Mindfulness ^[4]
 - Nature connectedness ^[5]
 - Healthy diet ^[6]
 - Physical activity ^[7]
 - Sleep quality ^[8]
 - Resilience ^[9]

Higher engagement in healthy lifestyle behaviors correlates with lower depressive symptoms ^[10].

Focusing on lifestyle modification might present two benefits: 1. Prevention and 2. Treatment of depression ^[11].

Due to the high risks of morbidity and mortality linked to MDD and other mental disorders ^[12], this approach may provide dual benefits by treating MDD symptoms and potentially reducing associated physical health issues—a significant challenge for those with mental illness ^[6].