

# Mental Health Conditions and The Need for Mental Health Services of Students in Thai Higher Education Institutions

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## Abstract

The research objective is to study the mental health status and the level of mental health service needs among students in Thai higher education institutions. It also aims to examine the factors related to mental health status and the demand for mental health services among students in Thai higher education institutions. The study population consists of students in higher education institutions, totaling 385 individuals. It is a quantitative research study. The results show that the majority of students in higher education institutions have good mental health status with few symptoms. In terms of the demand for mental health services, promotion and prevention of mental health issues within educational institutions are facilitated through telephone counseling services. Moreover, treatment and mental health recovery services within educational institutions provide guidance, advice, treatment methods, and health care for students. Overall, the mental health status of students is generally positive, with symptom groups including physical symptoms, anxiety and insomnia symptoms, and social dysfunction symptoms. These symptom groups are statistically significant in relation to the demand for mental health services, treatment, and mental health recovery services within educational institutions. Additionally, the group experiencing anxiety and insomnia symptoms correlates significantly with satisfaction with learning. Therefore, the government should establish significant policies for both state and private higher education institutions, implementing effective measures to address the care of student groups at risk and provide methods for treatment and recovery to enhance student resilience. This will lead to clear guidelines in both state and private higher education institutions.

**Keywords:** Need Mental Health Services, Mental Health, Problems with Mental Health Status of Student

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# ภาวะสุขภาพจิตและความต้องการบริการด้านสุขภาพจิต ของนักศึกษาในสถาบันอุดมศึกษาไทย

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## บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยครั้งนี้ มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาภาวะสุขภาพจิต และระดับความต้องการบริการด้านสุขภาพจิตในสถานศึกษาของนักศึกษาในสถาบันอุดมศึกษาไทย และศึกษาปัจจัยที่มีความสัมพันธ์กับภาวะสุขภาพจิต และความต้องการบริการด้านสุขภาพจิตของนักศึกษาในสถาบันอุดมศึกษาไทย กลุ่มประชากรที่ศึกษา คือ นักศึกษาในสถาบันอุดมศึกษา จำนวน 385 คน เป็นงานวิจัยเชิงปริมาณ ผลการศึกษา พบว่า นักศึกษาในสถาบันอุดมศึกษามีภาวะสุขภาพจิต ส่วนใหญ่ไม่มีอาการ (ปกติดี) ความต้องการบริการด้านสุขภาพจิต ด้านส่งเสริมและการป้องกันสุขภาพจิตในสถานศึกษา จัดให้มีบริการรับปรึกษาปัญหาทางสุขภาพจิตทางโทรศัพท์ได้ ด้านการรักษาและฟื้นฟูสุขภาพจิตในสถานศึกษาจัดให้มีหน่วยบริการด้านสุขภาพจิตให้คำแนะนำ ชี้แนะ วิธีการรักษา ดูแลสุขภาพสำหรับนักศึกษา โดยภาพรวมอยู่ในระดับมาก ภาวะสุขภาพจิตของนักศึกษา มีกลุ่มอาการทางกาย กลุ่มอาการวิตกกังวลและการนอนไม่หลับ กลุ่มอาการบกร่องทางสังคม มีความสัมพันธ์กับความต้องการบริการด้านสุขภาพจิต ด้านการรักษาและฟื้นฟูสุขภาพจิตในสถานศึกษาให้มีหน่วยบริการด้านสุขภาพจิตให้คำแนะนำ ชี้แนะ วิธีการรักษา ดูแลสุขภาพสำหรับนักศึกษา และกลุ่มความวิตกกังวลและการนอนไม่หลับมีความสัมพันธ์อย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติกับความพึงพอใจในการเรียนรู้ ดังนั้น ภาครัฐควรกำหนดนโยบายที่สำคัญให้กับสถาบันอุดมศึกษาของรัฐ และสถาบันอุดมศึกษาของเอกชน มีมาตรการที่มีประสิทธิภาพตอบสนองต่อการดูแลกลุ่มนักศึกษาที่มีภาวะความเสี่ยงและมีวิธีการรักษา ฟื้นฟูสมรรถนะให้กับนักศึกษา เพื่อให้เกิดแนวทางในการปฏิบัติที่ชัดเจนในสถาบันอุดมศึกษาของรัฐและเอกชน

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## **Introduction**

In today's society, students in Thai higher education institutions often experience stress. Stress is the body's response to various internal and external factors, influenced by changing circumstances, economic conditions, and the current global situation. The mental well-being and happiness of Thai adolescents are increasingly becoming public health and societal concerns that demand attention. This is because stress levels among this age group are on the rise.

The issue of mental health is a frequently encountered and increasingly prevalent problem, given the significant changes in society over the past years, propelled by technological advancements (Jeffrey P. Prince, 2015). The provision of counseling and mental health services in colleges and universities in the United States paints a comprehensive picture of past and present trends in students' mental health concerns. The increasing number of students seeking counseling services and the heightened severity of their anxiety issues reflect the influence of these trends on university counseling services. It is noteworthy how societal communication patterns, cultural traditions, and values impact life in various aspects, including social, economic, cultural, communication, and educational dimensions.

Thai higher education institutions, which produce undergraduate, master's, and doctoral degree holders under the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research, and Innovation, expose students to stress from academic studies and societal issues. Different individuals cope differently, and some may face significant stress-related health consequences (Francesca Mongelli, Penelope Georgakopoulos, and Michele T. Pato, 2020) the need for counseling services among individuals not receiving mental health care and lacking privileges highlights disparities in mental health services. To address these gaps and promote effective service delivery, various adjustments are necessary in physical, mental, and social dimensions. This includes adjusting roles and responsibilities, increased personal and family responsibilities, especially in the context of the evolving COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has led to changes in teaching methods, technology adaptation, and lifestyle adjustments to align with the altered environment. Failure to adapt may adversely affect mental health, as individuals'

mental health statuses differ due to childhood experiences, upbringing, personality, learning experiences, and problem-solving abilities (Hyun, J. K., Quinn, B. C., Madon, T., & Lustig, S., 2006) Graduate students report significant emotional and stress-related issues, with a notable increase in the past year. The self-reported mental health needs are crucial (Alyssa M. Lederer, Mary T. Hoban, Sarah K. Lipson, Sasha Zhou, and Daniel Eisenberg, 2021). The substantial mental health challenges faced by students due to the COVID-19 pandemic impact both their health and academic success (Andrew Danowitz, Kacey Beddoes, 2020). Students encounter mental health issues and stress in life, affecting their access to education. A survey on the mental health status of students reveals a substantial risk of mental health problems, stress, anxiety, interpersonal problems, depressive symptoms, and thoughts of death. The manifestation of these mental health issues includes somatic symptoms, anxiety and insomnia, emotional disturbances, social dysfunction, and severe depression symptoms, all of which significantly impact students' mental well-being.

From research data provided by the World Health Organization, the current global situation reveals that 300 million people worldwide, particularly adolescents in the Southeast Asian region, are affected by depressive disorders. The suicide rate per 100,000 population in this region is ranked second globally, following European countries. Specifically, Thailand experiences an average of 6 suicides per 100,000 population. A study on the health behaviors of university students conducted by (the Social Research Institute of Chulalongkorn University, 2023) highlighted health issues. It found that 30% of students frequently feel sad, with 4.3% diagnosed with mental health disorders, including depression and bipolar disorder. Additionally, almost 40% experience frequent stress, with nearly 4% contemplating suicide persistently, and 12% engaging in self-harm. Within this group, 1.3% consistently engage in self-harming behaviors. Factors affecting academic performance indicate that stress is the most prevalent at 20%, followed by financial problems at 11.5%, feelings of anxiety at 10.7%, homesickness at 9.3%, sleep-related issues at 7.9%, and concentration problems at 7.7%. Another 5% face problems related to online social media and gaming.

This information on the health status of university students in Thailand aims to raise awareness at the national level and provide a basis for other universities to compare and implement appropriate policies. The continuous collection of students'

health behavior data aims to establish a proactive surveillance or preventive approach through the “**University-Level Health Assessment**” online questionnaire. Additionally, the implementation of a peer support mechanism (Health-me Buddy) is proposed to enhance each university’s efforts in caring for and monitoring the mental health issues of fellow students. This involves training and collaboration with experts in physical and psychological health, with internal university staff playing a vital role.

The mental health situation and the demand for mental health services among students in Thai higher education institutions are crucial pieces of information that significantly impact the clear and equitable operation of mental health services. Promoting and caring for individuals with good mental health is fundamental to their readiness for effective learning and living a happy life. Therefore, the researcher is interested in studying the mental health situation and the demand for mental health services among students in Thai higher education institutions. The research aims to explore how the mental health situation and the demand for mental health services among students in Thai higher education institutions are and what factors are related to the mental health situation and the demand for mental health services among students in Thai higher education institutions. The research questions guiding this study are: What is the current mental health situation of students in Thai higher education institutions, and what are their demands for mental health services? Additionally, what factors are correlated with the mental health situation and the demand for mental health services among students in Thai higher education institutions? The answers to these questions will contribute to the development of mental health services tailored to the mental health situation of students in educational settings.

### **Research Hypotheses:**

Based on the research questions, we propose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: The mental health status of students in Thai universities, as indicated by physical symptoms, anxiety symptoms, sleep disturbances, social impairment symptoms, and severe depressive symptoms, is positively related to their need for mental health services. In educational settings, there is a demand for telephone-based counseling services for mental health problems.

Hypothesis 2: The mental health status of students in Thai universities, as indicated by physical symptoms, anxiety symptoms, sleep disturbances, social impairment symptoms, and severe depressive symptoms, is positively related to their need for mental health services. In educational settings, there is a demand for mental health service units that provide guidance, advice, treatment methods, and healthcare for students.

Hypothesis 3: The mental health status of students in Thai universities, as indicated by anxiety symptoms and sleep disturbances, is positively related to their satisfaction with the teaching and learning process.

## **Research Objectives**

1. To investigate the mental health status and the level of demand for mental health services among students in Thai universities.
2. To study the factors associated with the mental health status and the need for mental health services among students in Thai universities.

## **Research Methodology**

### **1. Sample Size Calculation**

The population for this study included students from both public and private higher education institutions at all academic levels. We employed a convenience sampling method to determine the sample size when the exact population size was unknown. The Cochran formula (1977) was used in cases where the population size was not known but presumed to be large, with a desired confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%. The proportion of the population with the specific attribute of interest was assumed to be 0.5. The formula used for this study is as follows:

$$n = \frac{p(1-p)z^2}{d^2}$$

where  $n$  = sample size

$P$  = Proportion of population desired (0.5)

$Z$  = confidence set at the significance level

$Z$  = Statistical significance level 0.05 is equal to 1.96 (95% confidence).

$d$  = allowable error of 0.05 instead of the value

$$n = \frac{0.5(1 - 0.5)(1.96)^2}{(0.05)^2} = 384$$

From collecting data from a sample of students in public and private higher education institutions. Questionnaires were collected from 385 people, representing 100.0 percent of the sample.

## 2. Research Instruments

The research instruments used in this study take the form of questionnaires, which were developed by the research team based on a thorough examination of theoretical concepts, various documents, and relevant research findings. The questionnaire is divided into four sections:

Section 1: General Information of Respondents, including gender, age, academic year, type of educational institution, pre-existing medical conditions, sufficiency of study expenses, accommodation, and interpersonal relationships.

Section 2: The mental health status of students in the university.

Section 3: Students' demand for mental health services at the university, including the promotion and prevention of mental health within the educational environment, as well as the treatment and recovery of mental health issues within the educational setting.

Section 4: Other suggestions and open-ended questions.

### Verification of Accuracy and Reliability of Data Collection Tools

The researchers have conducted the development and quality assessment of the instruments as follows:

1. A preliminary questionnaire, reviewed by project advisors, was evaluated for consistency and suitability of individual questions with operational definitions (Item - Objective Congruence: IOC), along with suggestions for question refinement.

2. The revised questionnaire, incorporating feedback from project advisors, was then tested with a sample of students from the institution, not the target population. Data collected from this test were used to assess the quality of the instrument using Cronbach's alpha coefficient to measure reliability. The questionnaire items should ideally demonstrate a reliability coefficient of 0.70 or higher. Upon testing, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was found to be 0.938.

3. Following the test, adjustments were made to the questionnaire, and a finalized version was prepared for comprehensive data collection in the subsequent phase.

### **3. Data Collection Procedure**

- The research team reviewed the completeness of responses in the questionnaires and collected the data for subsequent statistical analysis. The total number of questionnaire responses collected was 385, accounting for 100.0 percent.

### **4. Data Analysis**

For data processing, established social science software was employed for statistical analysis, following these steps:

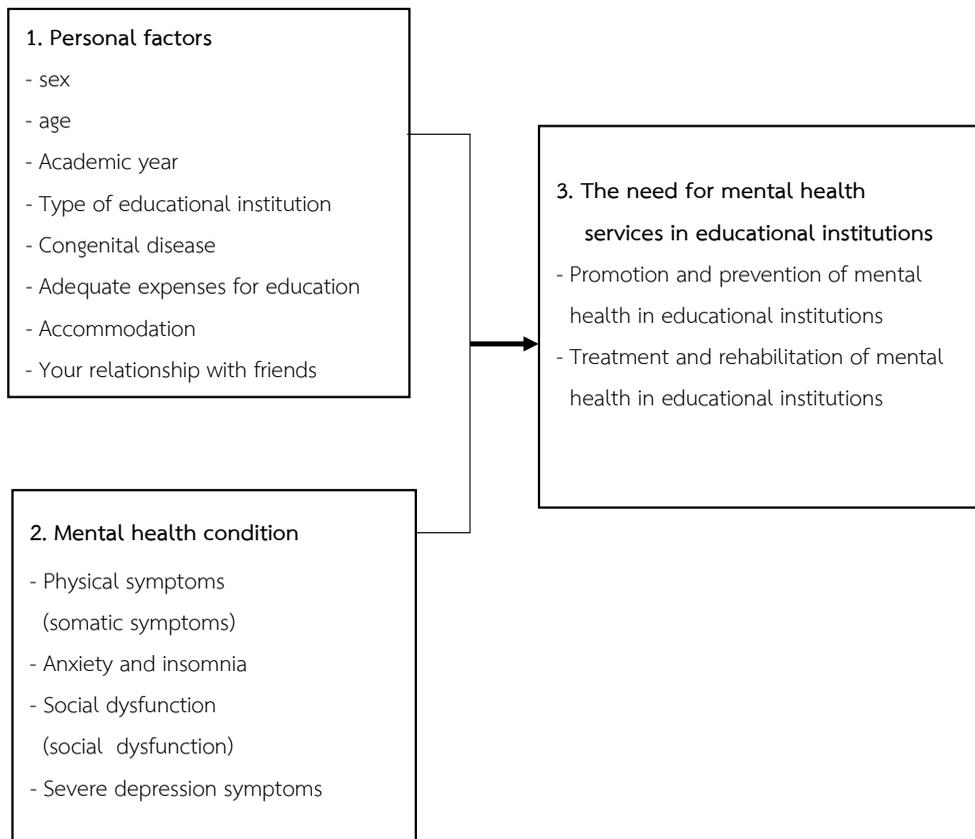
- Verification of the completeness and accuracy of questionnaires after data collection to ensure that the responses matched the specified requirements.
- Encoding the data into the data processing software, SPSS Version 22
- Data accuracy checks using computer software.
- Data processing according to the research study objectives.

In terms of data analysis, the research team employed a data analysis framework using the computer software SPSS. Descriptive statistics were computed, Frequency (N), percentages, means (Mean), standard deviations (S.D.), and comparative group variables using the Chi-squared test statistics. Further details are provided in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Measurements and analysis of study results

Number	Nature result	Study results	Reporting results	Statistics	Note
1		- Personal information - Mental health status of students in higher education institutions who answered the questionnaire	Report group variables with numbers and hundred spar	Number and percentage	
		Demand for mental health services of students in higher education institutions	continuous variable Report with average and standard deviation	Mean and standard deviation	
2	Main results	Factors related to mental health conditions and the need for mental health services among students in Thai higher education institutions	The difference between Average 95% confidence interval and p-value	Group variables: 2 groups were compared using Chi-squared test statistics.	P-value < 0.05 means there is statistical significance

## Conceptual framework



## Study Results

The research on the mental health status and mental health service needs of Thai university students is a quantitative research study. The research team presents the findings in four sections as follows:

### **Part 1 General information of survey respondents the study provides an overview of survey respondent demographics, categorized as follows:**

Gender: The majority of respondents were female, totaling 205 individuals (53.2%), followed by males at 136 individuals (35.3%). The number of respondents who did not specify their gender was 44 individuals (11.4%).

Age: The age distribution showed that the majority fell within the 20-22 age range, with 259 individuals (67.3%), followed by 22-24 years with 58 individuals (15.1%), less than 20 years with 34 individuals (8.8%), and over 24 years with 34 individuals (8.8%).

Academic Year (Undergraduate Level): Most respondents were in their third year of study, with 164 individuals (45.0%), followed by the fourth year with 119 individuals (30.9%), the second year with 48 individuals (12.5%), the first year with 34 individuals (8.8%), and the fifth year with 20 individuals (5.2%).

Educational Institution: All respondents belonged to state universities, totaling 385 individuals (100.0%).

Pre-existing Medical Conditions: The majority of respondents reported not having any pre-existing medical conditions, with 339 individuals (88.1%). A smaller portion reported having pre-existing medical conditions, with 46 individuals (11.9%).

Monthly Expenses for Education and Living: Most respondents reported monthly expenses of less than 5,000 Baht, totaling 166 individuals (43.1%), followed by 5,001-10,000 Baht with 134 individuals (34.8%), 10,001-15,000 Baht with 48 individuals (12.5%), and over 15,001 Baht with 37 individuals (9.6%).

Adequacy of Financial Resources for Education: The majority reported that their financial resources were insufficient for education, with 193 individuals (50.1%), while 192 individuals (49.9%) reported having sufficient resources. Current Accommodation: Most respondents currently resided in their own homes or private accommodations, totaling 325 individuals (84.4%), followed by university dormitories with 49 individuals (12.7%), and others with 11 individuals (2.9%).

Relationships with Peers: The majority reported having good relationships with peers, with 184 individuals (47.8%), followed by very good relationships with 162 individuals (42.1%), satisfactory relationships with 36 individuals (9.4%), and poor relationships with 3 individuals (0.8%).

Satisfaction with Teaching and Learning: The majority reported being very satisfied with teaching and learning, with 169 individuals (43.9%), followed by

moderately satisfied with 125 individuals (32.5%), highly satisfied with 49 individuals (12.7%), less satisfied with 39 individuals (10.1%), and very dissatisfied with 3 individuals (0.8%).

## Part 2 Mental health status of students in higher education institutions

Answer research question number 1: What are the mental health conditions and mental health service needs of students in Thai higher education institutions.

Answers research objective number 1 to study mental health conditions. and the level of need for mental health services in educational institutions. of students in Thai higher education institutions

Results of the study of general information of the respondents Number and percentage of students in higher education institutions They can be classified as follows:

**Table 2:** Number and percentage of the sample. Groups at risk for mental health problems classified according to mental health status according to symptom group (n=385)

Mental health conditions	No symptoms (normal)		Have symptoms (not normal)	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
somatic symptom group	367	95.3	18	4.7
anxiety and insomnia group	272	70.6	113	29.4
social dysfunction group	372	96.6	13	3.4
severe depression symptoms group	358	93.0	27	7.0

Classifying individuals based on somatic symptoms, it was observed that the majority showed no symptoms (normal), totaling 367 individuals (95.3%). Conversely, 18 individuals (4.7%) exhibited abnormal symptoms. Regarding anxiety and insomnia symptoms, the majority displayed no symptoms (normal), with 272 individuals (70.6%), while 113 individuals (29.4%) presented abnormal symptoms. Moving on to the group with symptoms of social dysfunction, the majority had no symptoms (normal),

comprising 372 individuals (96.6%), while 13 individuals (3.4%) showed abnormal symptoms. Lastly, within the severe depression symptoms group, the majority had no symptoms (normal), with 358 individuals (93.0%), while 27 individuals (7.0%) manifested abnormal symptoms.

### Part 3 Demand for mental health services of students in higher education institutions

**Table 3:** Level of need for mental health services Promotion and prevention of mental health in educational institutions of students in higher education institutions

Demand for mental health services	$\bar{x}$	SD	Very important
<b>Promotion and prevention of mental health in educational institutions</b>			
1. If you have a problem, you can easily access mental health services or see them at any time.	3.49	.971	very
2. People with mental health problems can access screening services from departments within the university.	3.58	.921	very
<b>3. Want to have mental health counseling services available over the phone.</b>	<b>4.02</b>	<b>.942</b>	<b>very</b>
4. Agencies responsible for collecting student mental health information on an ongoing basis	3.71	.988	very
5. The agency has developed a mental health care system for students in higher education institutions.	3.91	.897	very
<b>Overview of promotion and prevention of mental health in educational institutions</b>	<b>3.73</b>	<b>.740</b>	<b>very</b>

The demand for mental health services among the study’s sample group demonstrates a significant interest in promoting and preventing mental health issues within educational institutions, with an overall mean score of 3.73 (S.D. = 0.927). When examining specific items, the highest level of agreement within the sample group was related to the desire for telephonic counseling services for mental health problems, scoring an average of 4.02 (S.D. = 0.942). Following closely behind was the aspiration

for institutions to establish mental health care systems for university students, with a mean score of 3.91 (S.D. = 0.897). The continuous responsibility of collecting data on student mental health by relevant departments also received significant support, averaging at 3.71 (S.D. = 0.988). Individuals facing mental health challenges should have access to screening services provided by university departments, scoring an average of 3.58 (S.D. = 0.921). Conversely, the least favored option was the accessibility of mental health services at all times or with ease, with an average score of 3.49 (S.D. = 0.971), in descending order.

**Table 4:** Level of need for mental health services Treatment and rehabilitation of mental health of students in higher education institutions

Demand for mental health services	$\bar{x}$	SD	Very important
<b>Treatment and rehabilitation of mental health in educational institutions</b>			
1. The mental health service unit regularly surveys and follows up on patient groups to provide assistance to students.	3.70	.982	very
<b>2. The mental health service unit provides advice, recommendations, treatment methods, and health care for students.</b>	<b>3.85</b>	<b>.945</b>	<b>very</b>
3. Students who are considered to have mental health problems, the university will provide timely health care advice.	3.69	1.059	very
4. The university has a policy to organize activities to promote and restore good mental health to students.	3.67	1.069	very
5. The university has a policy that focuses on results for students to have good mental health. Prevent at-risk mental illnesses and continuously restore competencies for at-risk students.	3.65	1.097	very
<b>Overview of mental health treatment and rehabilitation in educational institutions</b>	<b>3.71</b>	<b>.960</b>	<b>very</b>
<b>Level of need for mental health services</b>	<b>3.73</b>	<b>.807</b>	<b>very</b>

The Demand for Mental Health Services: A Study of Sample Perceptions on the Treatment and Recovery of Mental Health within Educational Institutions The study sample expressed high overall perceptions ( $\bar{x} = 3.71$ , S.D. = .960) regarding the treatment and recovery of mental health within educational institutions. When examining specific issues, the study sample held the highest perceptions towards mental health service units providing advice, guidance, treatment methods, and care for students ( $\bar{x} = 3.85$ , S.D. = .945). Following closely, they rated mental health service units regularly monitoring and assisting students with mental health problems ( $\bar{x} = 3.70$ , S.D. = .982) and advising university students on timely mental health care ( $\bar{x} = 3.69$ , S.D. = 1.059) as highly important. The university's policies promoting the improvement of mental health for students ( $\bar{x} = 3.67$ , S.D. = 1.069) received slightly lower ratings. The aspect rated the lowest was the university's policies focused on achieving positive mental health outcomes, preventing mental health risks, and continuously enhancing students' capacities ( $\bar{x} = 3.65$ , S.D. = 1.097).

In summary, the overall demand for mental health services among Thai university students was found to be high ( $\bar{x} = 3.73$ , S.D. = .807) in institutions of higher education in Thailand.

#### **Part 4 Factors related to mental health conditions and the need for mental health services among students in Thai higher education institutions**

Answers to research question number 2: What factors are associated with mental health status? and the need for mental health services among students in Thai higher education institutions

Answers research objective number 2: Study factors related to mental health status and the need for mental health services among students in Thai higher education institutions

**Table 5:** Summary of research hypothesis testing results

<b>Hypothesis 1:</b> The mental health status of students in Thai universities, as indicated by physical symptoms, anxiety symptoms, sleep disturbances, social impairment symptoms, and severe depressive symptoms, is positively related to their need for mental health services. In educational settings, there is a demand for telephone-based counseling services for mental health problems.				
Mental health status of students in higher education institutions	The need for mental health services to provide counseling services for mental health problems by telephone.			
	$\chi^2$	df	p	Hypothesis
somatic symptoms	11.054	4	.026	relationship
anxiety and insomnia	47.189	4	.000	relationship
social dysfunction	6.404	4	.171	Not relationship
severe depression symptoms	7.062	4	.133	Not relationship
<b>Hypothesis 2:</b> The mental health status of students in Thai universities, as indicated by physical symptoms, anxiety symptoms, sleep disturbances, social impairment symptoms, and severe depressive symptoms, is positively related to their need for mental health services. In educational settings, there is a demand for mental health service units that provide guidance, advice, treatment methods, and healthcare for students.				
Mental health status of students in higher education institutions	The need for mental health services to have a mental health service unit to provide advice, guidance, methods of treatment, and health care for students.			
	$\chi^2$	df	p	Hypothesis
somatic symptoms	12.935	4	.012	relationship
anxiety and insomnia	34.525	4	.000	relationship
social dysfunction	16.753	4	.002	relationship
severe depression symptoms	4.714	4	.318	Not relationship
<b>Hypothesis 3:</b> The mental health status of students in Thai universities, as indicated by anxiety symptoms and sleep disturbances, is positively related to their satisfaction with the teaching and learning process.				
anxiety and insomnia	29.519	4	.000	relationship

## Summary and Discussion of Research Findings

In this study, which focused on the mental health of university students, individuals were categorized based on their physical health symptoms. The majority showed no symptoms (normal), totaling 367 individuals (95.3%). In contrast, 18 individuals (4.7%) exhibited abnormal symptoms.

When examining the subgroup characterized by anxiety and insomnia symptoms, the majority were symptom-free (normal), with 272 individuals (70.6%). Conversely, 113 individuals (29.4%) displayed abnormal symptoms.

Regarding the subgroup displaying symptoms of social impairment, most were symptom-free (normal), comprising 372 individuals (96.6%), while 13 individuals (3.4%) exhibited abnormal symptoms.

In the subgroup exhibiting severe depressive symptoms, the majority were symptom-free (normal), consisting of 358 individuals (93.0%), whereas 27 individuals (7.0%) exhibited abnormal symptoms.

This study aims to provide an in-depth analysis of the mental health service needs among university students in Thailand. The research findings reveal a substantial demand for mental health services among students in Thai higher education institutions. When considering both mental health promotion and prevention efforts within the academic context, there is a prominent consensus on the need for telephonic counseling services. Additionally, there is a strong emphasis on the necessity for on-campus mental health treatment and rehabilitation services. The most prominent finding highlights the urgent requirement for a mental health service unit that offers guidance, counseling, treatment options, and health maintenance for students.

In conclusion, this study sheds light on the mental health status of students in higher education institutions, emphasizing the prevalence of physical symptoms, anxiety, and insomnia among this demographic. It underscores the critical role of mental health service units within educational institutions, highlighting the need for accessible telephone counseling services. Additionally, it highlights the importance of promoting student well-being, as indicated by the positive relationship between

student satisfaction and mental health status. Overall, this study contributes valuable insights into the field of mental health among students in higher education institutions.

Based on feedback received from open-ended student inquiries at a Thai university, there is a focus on the need for mental health services within the institutional education system. This emphasis is aimed at ensuring that students have access to counseling and receive accurate self-care guidance. Stress management is a crucial aspect of self-care, as stress represents the body's response to external stimuli that can induce physiological changes, triggering the 'fight or flight' response to maintain equilibrium. Individual responses to these stimuli can vary significantly, depending on the person-environment relationship.

Institutional education institutions should offer assessment tools and channels through which students can access counseling services tailored to the specific context of each university. This may involve screening for conditions such as depression to facilitate students in seeking counseling, engaging in self-reflection, and evaluating their experiences, symptoms, thoughts, and emotions to determine their level of distress. In cases of elevated stress levels, students should have the option to schedule appointments with psychologists or university counselors who provide supportive services.

Students in Thai universities are at a significant risk of experiencing symptoms related to anxiety and insomnia. Abnormal symptoms were observed in 29.4% of the student population, indicating a substantial demand for mental health services. These findings are consistent with the research conducted by Sasiwimon Buranakarl and colleagues (2012), who assessed mental health conditions using the Thai GHQ-28 assessment tool. A considerable number of nursing students were found to be at risk for mental health issues, with a high need for on-campus mental health services.

This study emphasizes the importance of implementing mental health promotion and prevention strategies within educational institutions, with a particular focus on offering remote counseling services. These results align with the research conducted by Jeffrey P. Prince (2015) in the United States, which highlights historical

and current trends in student mental health anxiety, along with the increasing demand for counseling services and the severity of these concerns.

Furthermore, university students in Thailand express a need for on-campus treatment and mental health recovery services. It is crucial to establish on-campus mental health service units that provide guidance, recommendations, treatment options, and support for students experiencing symptoms of anxiety and insomnia. These services are closely related to students' satisfaction with their academic experiences, as evidenced by the research of Daniel Eisenberg, Ezra Golberstein, and Sarah E. Gollust (2007). Among students who screened positive for depression or anxiety, a significant proportion, ranging from 37% to 84%, did not receive any services, depending on the severity of their distress. Predictors of non-utilization included a lack of awareness of the need for services, unawareness of available services, concerns about the effectiveness of treatment, and financial constraints, which align with the findings of Hyun, J. K., Quinn, B. C., Madon, T., Lustig, S. (2015). These research trends underscore the growing importance of providing meaningful counseling services and indicate an increased interest in addressing the mental health needs of graduate students, with a specific emphasis on the role of financial confidence in students' well-being and the relationship between graduate students and their advisors.

Therefore, summarizing the key findings of this study, students at the university level were found to experience a higher level of anxiety and insomnia, at 29.4%, which is higher than the severely depressed group at 7.0% in the sample. There is a need for mental health services that provide telephone counseling to offer guidance, advice, treatment methods, and healthcare for students. The data indicate a significant correlation between anxiety, insomnia, and satisfaction with university teaching and learning among Thai students in both public and private institutions. The collaboration between the government and state universities, as well as private educational institutions, has resulted in policies emphasizing positive outcomes for students, promoting good mental health, preventing mental illnesses, addressing at-risk groups, and implementing continuous recovery methods for at-risk students.

## **Policy Recommendations**

1. The government should establish key policies for both state and private higher education institutions. These policies should include effective measures to cater to and support students at risk, along with clear guidelines for rehabilitation and capacity-building. These measures should be applicable to both state and private higher education institutions.

2. State and private higher education institutions should formulate institution-level policies that encompass measures and practices to ensure optimal access for target groups. Additionally, they should provide continuous mental health services, guidance, treatment, and ongoing healthcare for students.

## **Practical Recommendations**

1. **Counseling Services Establishment:** Educational institutions should establish dedicated counseling units for mental health to provide students with consultation and accurate self-care information. The aim is to enable students to effectively manage stress and to offer clear guidelines for students to receive advice, guidance, and healthcare tailored to their specific needs. Additionally, the university should implement programs that promote good mental health among students.

2. Educational institutions establish convenient and efficient channels for students to access mental health counseling services, including providing counseling support for mental health issues through telephone services or electronic media. This proactive approach aims to promptly address and resolve students' health-related concerns, ensuring that students can access university service units in a timely manner.

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