

ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND: Depression is one of the major mental problems in the students' population and it is continuously increasing. The catecholamine hypothesis postulated that depression results from functional deficiency of noradrenaline in the brain. In this study, the relationship between depression and twenty four hours urinary noradrenaline was analysed among medical students of KIU-Western Campus. **METHOD:** A cluster sampling approach was used to select University students in KIU. A 21-Item Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) was used to screen for depressive status among participants. BDI scores of 11 and above were categorized as depression while BDI scores of 10 and below were categorized as normal. At the same time, the 24-hour urine samples of participants were assayed for noradrenaline levels using colorimetric technique. **RESULT:** Out of 135 students who participated in the study (65 males and 70 females), 27(22.3%) of the participants had a BDI score of 11 and above while 94(77.7%) had a BDI of 10 and below. Noradrenaline levels of the 27 (22.3%) depressed participants were matched for age, sex along with other socio-demographic characteristics of participants whose BDI scores were within the normal range. Outcome from independent t-test showed there is no significant difference ($P > 0.05$) in the mean 24 - hours urinary noradrenaline levels between the two groups (depressed and non-depressed) but there was a slight increase in mean 24- hours urinary noradrenaline levels among depressed than normal participants. **CONCLUSION:** There is a mild prevalence of depression among Kampala International University -Western Campus Students especially among the married. The slight increase in mean 24 –hours urinary noradrenaline levels in depressed participants' suggests that noradrenaline could be a biomarker for depression.