

# **Self Esteem and Risky Behaviours in First Year Medical Students University of Zagreb in Croatia**

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## 1. Background and aim

### **Self-esteem**

- judgment of oneself as well as an attitude toward the self
- reflects subjective emotional evaluation of own worth
- encompasses beliefs and emotions (triumph, pride, shame and despair)
- allows people to face life with more confidence, benevolence and optimism, and reach self-actualization

Hewitt, John P. (2009). *Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology*. Oxford University Press. pp. 217–224.



## 1. Background and aim

Abraham Maslow about psychological health...

- is not possible unless essential core of the person is fundamentally accepted, loved and respected by others and by her or his self

A.H. Maslow. A Theory of Human Motivation. Originally Published in *Psychological Review* 1943;50:370-396.  
<http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Maslow/motivation.htm>

The aim of this study was to assess  
presence of risky behaviour in first year medical students  
regarding level of self-esteem.



## 2. Subjects and methods

- data of 262 first year medical students (70% females).
- collected by questionnaire about:
  - lifestyle (smoking, alcohol drinking, physical activity, eating habits)
  - reproductive health
  - mental health (answers with The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale)
- analyzed by descriptive statistics (the level of statistical significance of 5%)

Rosenberg, M. (1965). Society and the adolescent self-image. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press

### 3. Methods

Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale					
STATEMENT		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	125 (48,3%)	128 (49,4%)	6 (2,3%)	0
2.	All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	1 (0,4%)	22 (8,5%)	103 (39,8%)	133 (51,4%)
3.	I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	104 (40,05)	154 (59,2%)	2 (0,8%)	0
4.	I am able to do things as well as most other people.	138 (53,1%)	120 (46,2)	2 (0,8%)	0
5.	I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	1 (0,4%)	7 (2,7%)	95 (36,7%)	156 (60,2%)
6.	I certainly feel useless at times.	2 (0,8%)	41 (16,0%)	118 (46,1%)	95 (37,1%)
7.	I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	137 (52,7%)	117 (45,0%)	6 (2,3%)	0
8.	I wish I could have more respect for myself.	17 (6,5%)	94 (36,2%)	97 (37,3%)	52 (20,0%)
9.	At times I think I am no good at all.	0	1 (0,4%)	61 (21,3%)	198 (76,2%)
10.	I take a positive attitude toward myself	122 (46,9%)	129 (49,6%)	9 (3,5%)	0

Scores are calculated as follows:

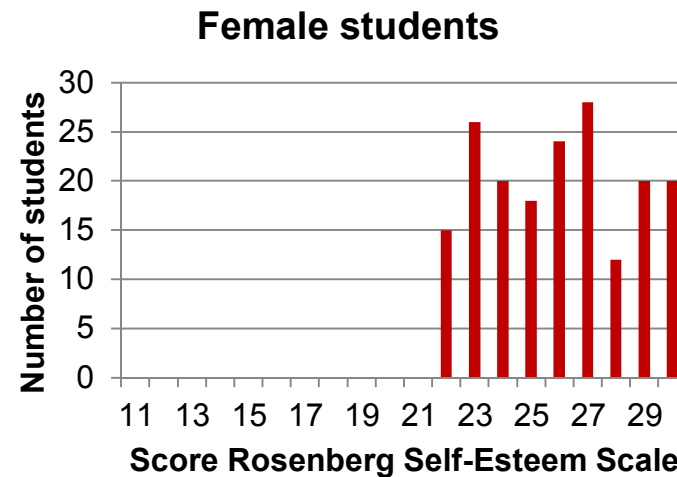
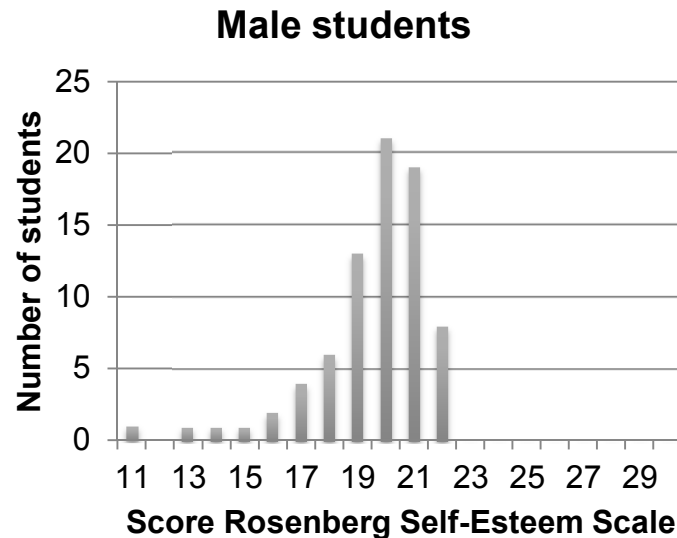
•for items 1,2,4,6,7 Strongly agree = 3, Agree = 2, Disagree = 1, Strongly disagree = 0

•for items 3, 5, 8, 9, and 10 (which are reversed in valence) Strongly agree = 0, Agree = 1, Disagree = 2, Strongly disagree = 3

**The scale ranges from 0-30. Scores between 15 and 25 are within normal range; scores below 15 suggest low self-esteem.**

<http://www.wwnorton.com/college/psych/psychsci/media/rosenberg.htm>

## 4. Results



Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale		
SCORES	male	female
	N	N
<15	3	0
15-25	74	79
>25	0	104
Total	77	183

The scale ranges from 0-30. Scores between 15 and 25 are within normal range; scores below 15 suggest low self-esteem.

- Very high self-esteem had only female students (N=104)
- Low self-esteem had only male students (N= 3)
- Normal range of self-esteem had 74 male and 79 female students

## 4. Results

Have you ever smoked?						
	< 15 Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale Score		15-25 Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale Score		>25 Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale Score	
	male	female	male	female	male	female
	N	N	N	N	N	N
No	2	0	41	56	0	73
Yes	1	0	33	22	0	31
Total	3	0	74	78	0	104

33. vs. 22,  $p = 0.04$

*Responded by smokers*

How many cigarettes do you smoke daily?						
	< 15 Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale Score		15-25 Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale Score		>25 Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale Score	
	male	female	male	female	male	female
	N	N	N	N	N	N
Sometimes	0	0	19	5	10	16
Every day	1	0	8	13	3	8
Total	1	0	27	18	13	24

8 vs. 13,  $P = 0.005$



## 4. Results

Alcohol consumption in past 30 days...						
	< 15 Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale Score		15-25 Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale Score		>25 Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale Score	
	male	female	male	female	male	female
	N	N	N	N	N	N
No	0	-	11	40	-	44
Yes	3	-	63	39	-	53
Total	3	-	74	79	-	104

63 vs. 39,  $P < 0.001$

## 4. Results

Sexual activity?						
	< 15 Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale Score		15-25 Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale Score		>25 Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale Score	
	male	female	male	female	male	female
	N	N	N	N	N	N
No	2	-	24	43	-	58
Yes	1	-	48	36	-	44
Total	3	-	72	79	-	102

48 vs. 36,  $p = 0.009$

*Responded by sexually active students*

Number of sexual partners in one year...						
	< 15 Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale Score		15-25 Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale Score		>25 Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale Score	
	male	female	male	female	male	female
	N	N	N	N	N	N
1	2	-	27	31	-	39
> 1	0	-	17	4	-	5
Total	2	-	44	35	-	44

17 vs. 4,  $P = 0.007$

## 5. Instead of Conclusion

- Very high self-esteem had only female students
- Low self-esteem had only male students
- There is difference in risky behaviour between sexes within same self-esteem level (male students with normal range self-esteem more frequently smoke, drink alcohol and are more sexually active and have more than one sexual partner)
- Screening of risky behaviour and mental health in student population should be provided within health services available for students and therefore promotion of healthy life style

