



Morbidity Status and Treatment-seeking Behavior among Youth in India

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Introduction

Young people are precious human resources in every country. WHO defines youth as those aged 15-24 years. The National Youth Policy initially (in 2003) defined the youth as in the age group 13-35. However, National Youth Policy, 2014 modified it and defined 'youth' as persons aged 15-29 years. In the present study, we have adopted 15-35 years as a youth. Generally, the youth population is considered healthy, and a high proportion of the youth is free of any morbidities. However, in the case of India, even a tiny proportion can translate to a huge count. Youth in the age group 15-35 are so busy in day-to-day activities that they ignore their health. Young people are much more open-minded about sensitive issues than the previous generations. However, they often ignore or find it difficult to ask for help fearing confidentiality and embarrassment in disclosing their health issues. Youth in India constitutes one-fifth of India's total population. Given such age demographics, it becomes necessary to address the health needs of the youth in order to meet the global health goals.

Objectives

The specific objectives of this study are :

- To study the prevalence of diabetes, asthma, thyroid disorder, heart disease, and cancer among youth aged 15-35 years in India.
- To understand the treatment-seeking behaviour and its determinants among youth aged 15-35 years in India

Data & Methodology

The study uses data from a cross-sectional survey (NFHS-4) conducted in India during 2015-16. The National Family Health Survey (NFHS) is a large-scale, multi-round survey conducted in a representative sample of households throughout India.

Variables Used

❖ Outcome Variable –

1. Proportion of youth having diabetes, asthma, thyroid disorder, heart disease, and cancer.
2. Proportion of youth seeking treatment for their morbidities.

❖ Predictor Variables –

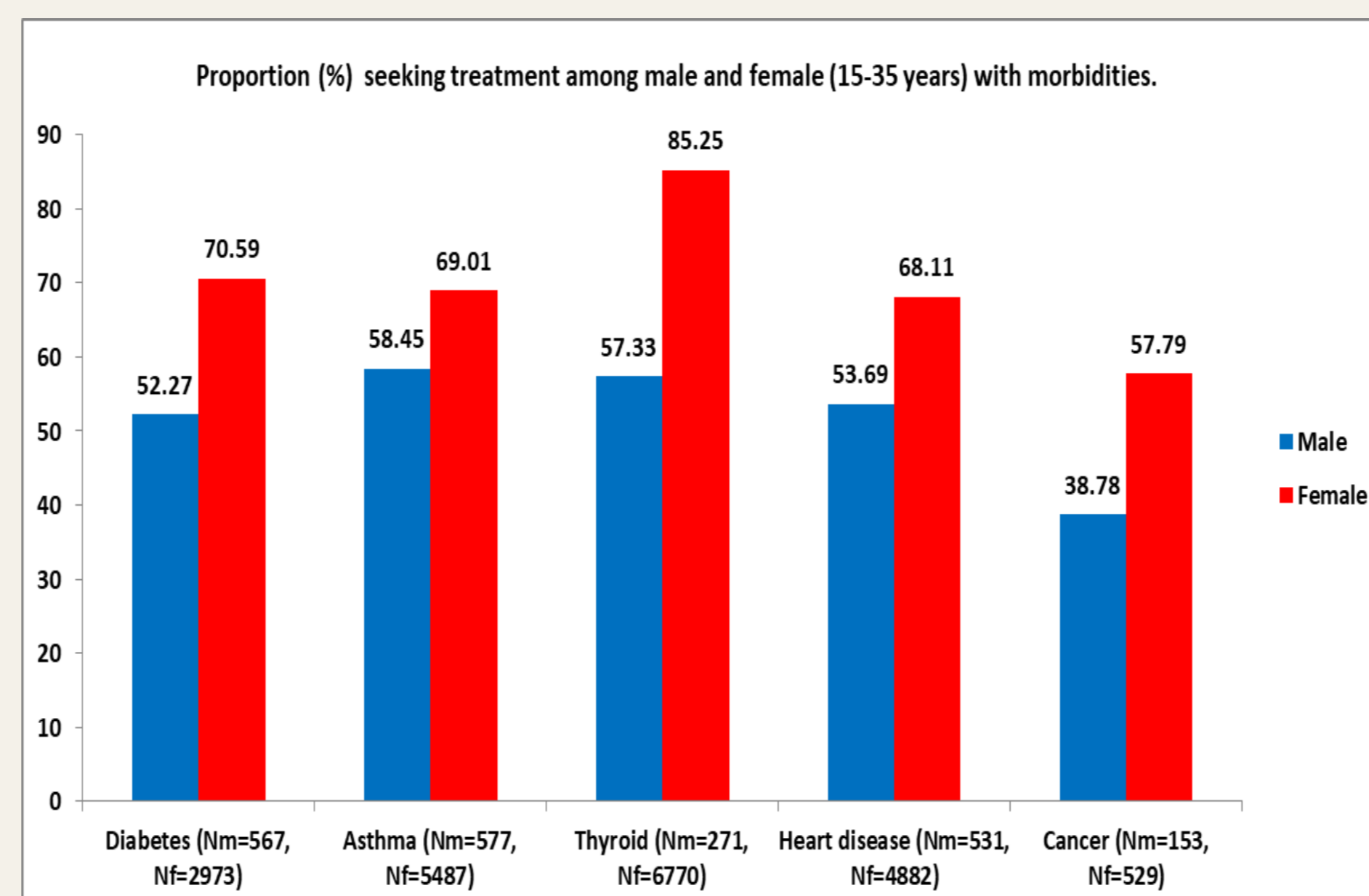
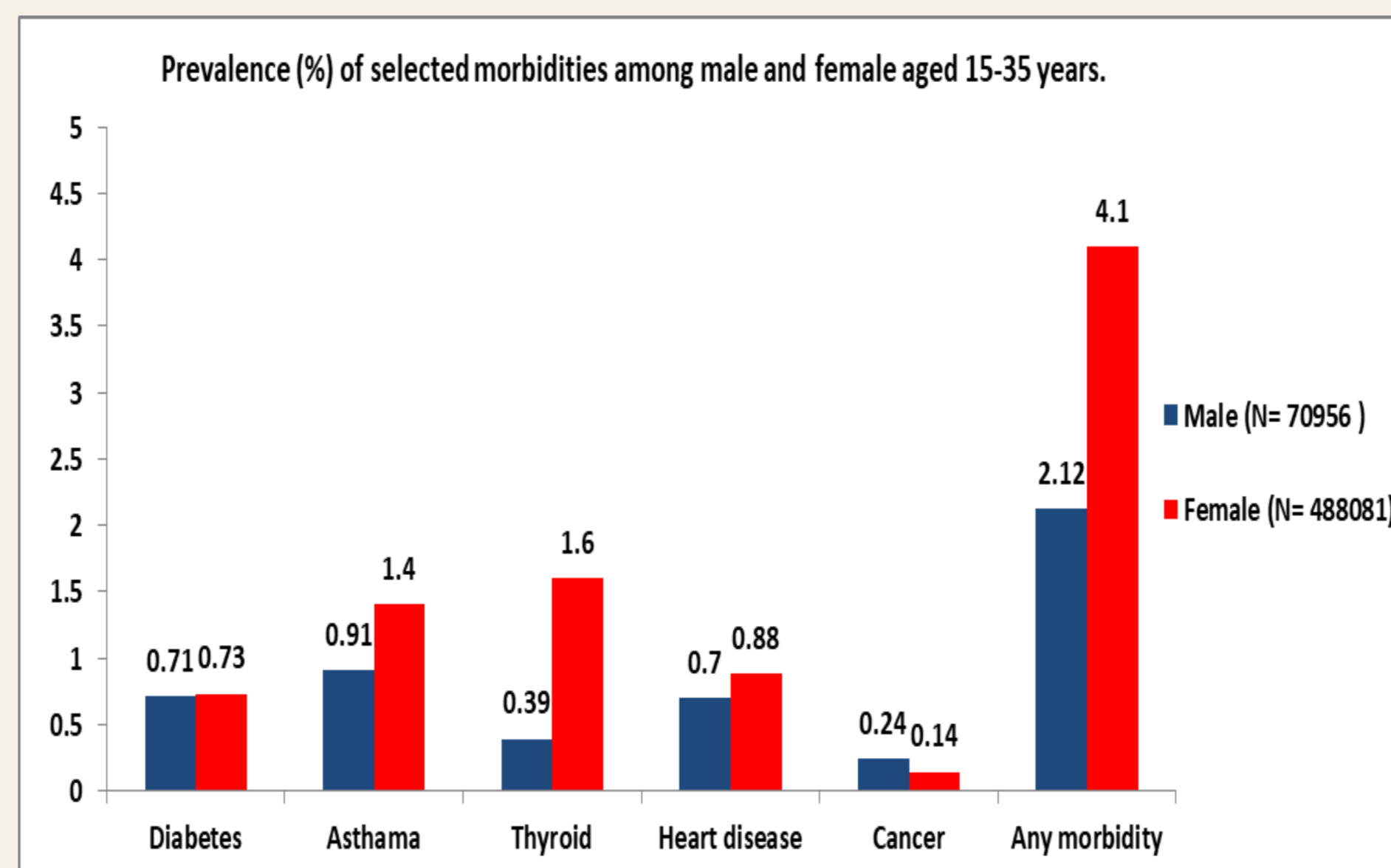
Education level, place of residence, wealth index, regions, religion, caste, current marital status, Health insurance etc.

Statistical Analysis

- ❑ Cross-tabs are used to present the socio-demographic and economic differentials among prevalence of morbidities and treatment-seeking behavior among the youth.
- ❑ Pearson chi-square test was used to understand the association between the predictor variables and the outcome variable.
- ❑ Binomial logistic regression was used to calculate the odds ratio for outcome variable.

Results

- 2.1% of males and 4.1% of females aged 15-35 years had at least one of the selected morbidities
- Only 52.3% of males and 70.6% of females aged 15-35 years seek treatment for diabetes. Also, 54% of males and 68% of females aged 15-35 years seek treatment for heart disease.
- Only 26% of males visited a health facility in the last three months compared with 32% of females.
- 47% of males aged 15-35 years visited public health facilities, while 56% of females aged 15-35 years visited public health facilities.



Proportion of people seeking treatment by selected characteristics among youth (15-35 years) with morbidities.

	Male		Female	
	N (%)	Sample (N)	N (%)	Sample (N)
Residence				
Urban	247(59.5)	411	4948(79.3)	6,310
Rural	718(59.8)	1,166	7991(69.2)	11,687
Education				
No Schooling	94(59.6)	166	2241(65.6)	3,394
1-4 years	44(51.8)	78	621(67.6)	947
5-9 years	343(59.9)	574	4200(70.7)	6,119
10-11 years	165(54.2)	283	2170(74.9)	2,931
12+ years	319(63.5)	476	3707(82.4)	4,606
Religion				
Hindu	647(59)	1,091	8545(72.6)	11,946
Muslim	213(68.5)	300	2562(75.8)	3,445
Others	105(47.7)	186	1832(77.6)	2,606
Social group				
ST	178(46)	318	1874(64.4)	2,963
SC	161(51)	295	2132(70.4)	3,019
OBC	323(61.6)	522	4673(73.5)	6,412
Other	303(70.3)	442	4260(77.6)	5,603
Wealth				
Poorest	163(56.6)	305	1465(60.4)	2,493
Poorer	206(53.7)	349	2178(64.8)	3,450
Middle	180(53.3)	317	2676(70.6)	3,779
Richer	228(66.7)	338	3128(76.9)	4,107
Richest	188(67.1)	268	3492(84.9)	4,168
Region				
North	269(69.9)	367	2880(78)	3,714
Central	163(59.3)	265	2541(67.6)	3,722
East	212(65.5)	340	2256(72.6)	3,190
Northeast	116(58.1)	201	1955(64)	2,996
West	66(60.5)	118	661(71.3)	940
South	139(51.5)	286	2646(77.2)	3,435
Marital status				
Never Married	414(53.7)	733	2968(70.2)	4,293
Married	539(64.4)	825	9608(74.6)	13,189
W/D/S	12(79.9)	19	363(65.9)	515
Health insurance				
No	750(61.1)	1,208	10299(72.6)	14,482
Yes	215(56.5)	369	2640(76.4)	3,515

Odds ratio for factors influencing the treatment seeking behaviour of youth (15-35 years) with morbidities.

	Male		Female	
	O.R. (95% C.I.)	P-value	O.R. (95% C.I.)	P-value
Residence				
Urban [®]				
Rural	1.47(1.112,1.951)	0.01	0.9(0.831,0.983)	0.02
Education				
No Schooling [®]				
1-4 years	0.94(0.536,1.637)	0.82	0.94(0.804,1.098)	0.43
5-9 years	1.09(0.75,1.575)	0.66	0.95(0.862,1.048)	0.31
10-11 years	1.03(0.672,1.593)	0.88	1.07(0.945,1.21)	0.29
12+ years	1.4(0.918,2.138)	0.12	1.28(1.133,1.454)	0.00
Religion				
Hindu [®]				
Muslim	1.38(0.994,1.923)	0.05	1.13(1.024,1.243)	0.02
Others	0.91(0.595,1.378)	0.64	1.15(1.01,1.299)	0.03
Social group				
ST [®]				
SC	1.05(0.733,1.517)	0.78	1.23(1.081,1.389)	0.00
OBC	1.27(0.901,1.777)	0.17	1.23(1.1,1.386)	0.00
Other	1.24(0.873,1.773)	0.23	1.33(1.178,1.496)	0.00
Wealth				
Poorest [®]				
Poorer	1.29(0.92,1.802)	0.14	1.19(1.062,1.327)	0.00
Middle	1.37(0.946,1.969)	0.10	1.58(1.403,1.778)	0.00
Richer	2.3(1.539,3.442)	0.00	1.91(1.676,2.171)	0.00
Richest	2.56(1.596,4.096)	0.00	2.76(2.374,3.212)	0.00
Region				
North [®]				
Central	0.7(0.474,1.03)	0.07	0.81(0.718,0.903)	0.00
East	0.8(0.546,1.167)	0.24	1.06(0.935,1.192)	0.38
Northeast	0.65(0.417,1.01)	0.06	0.74(0.651,0.843)	0.00
West	0.52(0.322,0.823)	0.01	0.79(0.672,0.939)	0.01
South	0.35(0.241,0.515)	0.00	0.96(0.851,1.09)	0.55
Marital status				
Never Married [®]				
Married	1.59(1.273,1.985)	0.00	1.21(1.119,1.318)	0.00
W/D/S	1.6(0.612,4.198)	0.34	1.21(0.981,1.484)	0.08
Health insurance				
No [®]				
Yes	1.04(0.802,1.343)	0.78	1.25(1.14,1.366)	0.00
Constant	0.65(0.355,1.181)	0.16	1.18(0.976,1.437)	0.09

Percentage visiting health facility by facility type and reason for visit among male and female aged 15-35 years.

	Male		Female	
	n	%	n	%
Visit health facility (last 3 months)	N=70956		N=488081	
No	52409	74.01	334106	68.89
Yes	18547	25.99	153975	31.11
Facility type	N=18547		N=153975	
Public	10232	47.34	92841	54.59
Private	8315	52.66	61134	45.41
Reason for visit	N=18547		N=153975	
Self-treatment	7094	37.25	57942	36.35
health check up	3339	19.57	31445	20.61
treatment for child	5637	30.17	45227	30.73
treatment for other person	2790	13.63	8706	5.18
Any other reason	1897	10.68	46873	30.44

Conclusion

- The prevalence of selected morbidities was higher among females than males in the age group 15-35 years
- Overall a higher proportion of females with morbidities sought treatment than males with morbidity in the age group 15-35 years.
- Residence, religion, social group, wealth, region, marital status, and health insurance were significantly associated with treatment-seeking behaviour among females. On the other hand, social group and health insurance were not significantly associated with treatment-seeking behaviour among males.