

All is Well: Advancing Learning and Living: International Students

Wellbeing Enhancement for Learning and Living

International Students' Mental Health Well-Being Research Project

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1. Executive Summary

Australia's cultural tapestry is significantly enriched by international students, who play a notable role in fostering a diverse and vibrant society of the nation. In addition to enhancing academic excellence, their presence contributes to deeper cross-cultural understanding. However, there are many ongoing and unique challenges international students face, one of which concerns their mental health and well-being. Studies have indicated that tertiary students from overseas often do not seek support when it comes to their mental health-related matters due to cultural barriers along with other hurdles, resulting in underutilization of existing counseling and support services.

In response to these issues, the Ethnic Communities Council of Western Australia has started the "ALL IS WELL?: Advancing Learning and Living – International Students Wellbeing Enhancement for Learning and Living" project. The project aims to examine the current state of the accessibility and awareness of mental health-related services among international students in Australia. The online survey conducted for this research revealed that a great number of international students are unaware of the pre-existing counseling and support services, potentially due to culturally normalized stigma revolving around mental health-related concerns. The results indicate a need for increased accessibility of culturally sensitive counseling, social support schemes, and enhanced service provision knowledge among others.

1.1 About ECCWA

The culturally and linguistically diverse communities of Western Australia are represented by and have support from the Ethnic Communities Council of Western Australia (ECCWA), a preeminent advocacy group. Our goal is to advance equality of opportunity, harmony, and inclusivity for all. Concerning ECCWA The culturally and linguistically diverse communities of Western Australia are represented by and have support from the Ethnic Communities Council of Western Australia (ECCWA), a preeminent advocacy group. Our goal is to advance equality of opportunity, harmony, and inclusivity for all.

1.2 Our Vision



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ECCWA envisions a society in which job opportunities and vocational training are equally accessible to people from all cultural backgrounds. With competent and welcoming workplaces, we hope to establish a culture that values diversity, strengthens communities, and promotes economic prosperity.

2. Introduction

International students play an important part in enhancing Australia's cultural fabric and creating a varied and dynamic society. Their presence not only helps the country's academic performance but also fosters cross-cultural understanding and global viewpoints.

Australia's total economic benefit from its "education exports" was AUD\$37.6 billion in 2018–19, making higher education the nation's third-largest export earner, behind only coal and iron ore, according to a press release issued in November 2019 by former Coalition Education Minister Dan Tehan. This economic effect goes beyond tuition costs, as foreign students contribute to local economies through housing, living expenditures, and tourism activities (Parliament of Australia, 2023). The presence of international students on Australian campuses and in communities also promotes the interchange of ideas, viewpoints, and experiences, resulting in a more inclusive and internationally aware society (Zhang & Chan 2023). Furthermore, foreign education has long-term advantages, as many international students become vital members of Australian society after finishing their studies, building strong people-to-people ties with their home countries and enabling future commerce, investment, and diplomatic interactions, therefore enhancing Australia's worldwide status and economic success (Ferguson & Spinks, 2021).

Despite their countless contributions, international students encounter a variety of challenges as they transition to new educational and social situations, frequently away from their families. Due to the diverse adversity they may come across during their studies, management of mental health well-being is especially crucial for international students. International students' ability to study, socialize, and function effectively can be severely hampered by poor mental health, which can negatively impact both their academic performance and overall experience (Forbes-Mewett 2019). Currently, most tertiary educational institutions are reported to provide on-campus counseling services, peer support programs, and designated foreign student advisers (Banjong, 2015). The



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Australian government also offers the Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) program, which covers mental health for overseas students (Orygen Youth Mental Health, 2020). However, previous studies have found that international students underutilize mental health services due to cultural stigma, a lack of mental health literacy, and a misunderstanding of available options (Yakunina et al., 2010; Forbes-Mewett 2019). Such a low level of help-seeking behavior could aggravate mental health problems and impede academic progress (Sherry et al., 2010). This signifies the importance of investigation into the current state of accessibility of mental health support and the level of awareness and education among international students surrounding the matter.

In light of these current initiatives, the Ethnic Communities Council of WA (ECCWA) carried out the "ALL IS WELL?: Advancing Learning and Living - International Students Wellbeing Enhancement for Learning and Living" campaign. This effort aims to collect data on the existing level of services for foreign students, identify areas for development, and ultimately assure their well-being and successful results while studying in Australia. A comprehensive data gathering through an online survey was conducted to determine what is and is not working, as well as what can be done to improve the services and support systems available for international students.

ECCWA's mission is to remove the question mark from "ALL IS WELL", pave the way in developing a better system and security for international students' mental health and overall well-being. By addressing the highlighted gaps and obstacles, ECCWA hopes to foster an atmosphere in which foreign students may prosper academically, emotionally, and culturally without jeopardizing their mental health and well-being.

3. Method

An online survey was developed and launched to investigate the attitudes, experiences, accessibility, and perceived quality of present mental health support services in Western Australia from the standpoint of international students. The survey consists of 14 multiple-choice questions and 3 open-ended questions.

3.1. Survey Instrument



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- The survey questions addressed the following areas:
- Demographic data (gender, home country, length of stay in Australia, English competence)
- Self-rated overall mental health since coming in Western Australia
- Access and Use of Mental Health Support Services
- Perceived usefulness of accessed services
- Barriers to getting mental health services
- Adequacy of mental health coverage in abroad student health insurance
- Types of mental health support required (open-ended).
- Recommendations for useful services/programs for overseas students (open-ended)
- Experiences seeking mental health care and outcomes (open-ended).

3.2. Data Collection

The link to the online survey was delivered using the following methods between May 6th and May 17th, 2024:

- International students frequently use social media networks.
- Email lists and online portals for WA's universities and tertiary education institutes
- Campus advertising (posters, digital displays, etc.)

Participation was optional and anonymous. The poll was accessible to all overseas students presently enrolled in educational institutions in Western Australia.

3.3. Data analysis

Quantitative data from multiple-choice questions were evaluated using descriptive statistics to estimate frequencies and percentages. Open-ended replies were thematically analyzed using automatic text analytics and human coding by two independent coders to uncover major themes and feelings. Discrepancies were resolved by discussion among the developers. The mixed-methods approach, which combined quantitative and qualitative data, enabled for a thorough knowledge of foreign students' perspectives on mental health assistance needs, experiences, and suggestions for change.

4. Results

4.1. Demographics and State of Mental Well-being

The majority of students participating in the survey were identified to be from South and Southeast Asian countries, with Singapore and India being the top two nationalities (Figure 1). More than half of these students (59%) had lived in Australia for less than one year (Figure 2). Furthermore, the majority of these students rated themselves as having high to very high English proficiency levels and also tended to rate their overall mental health as fairly high since arriving in Western Australia (Figure 3).

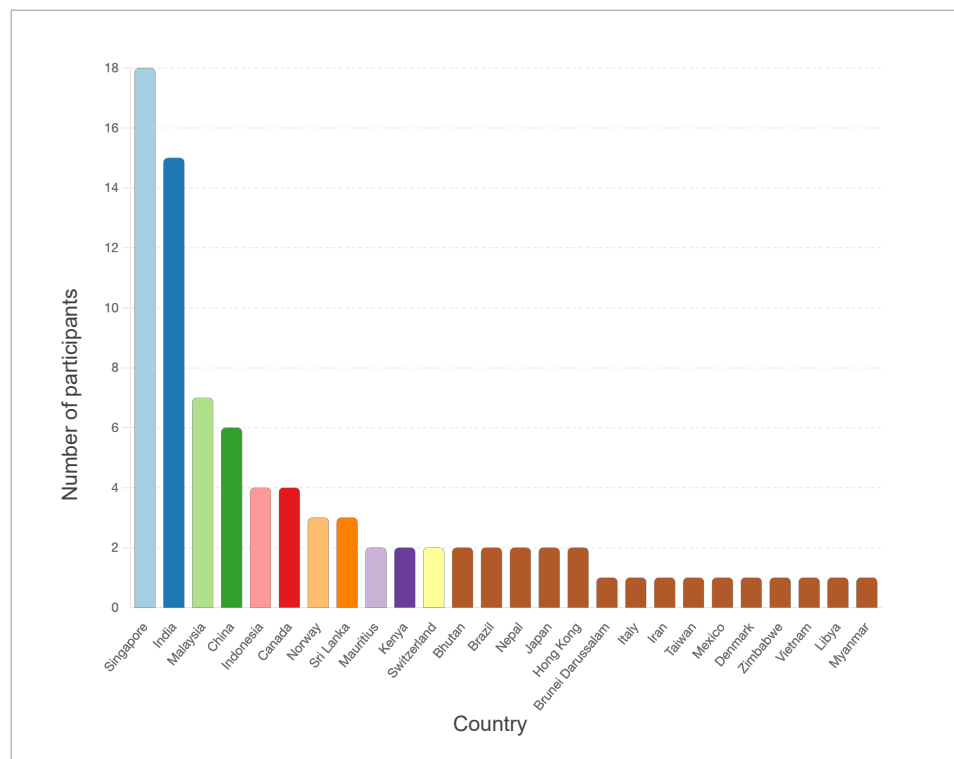


Figure 1. Number of international students from each country that participated in the online survey

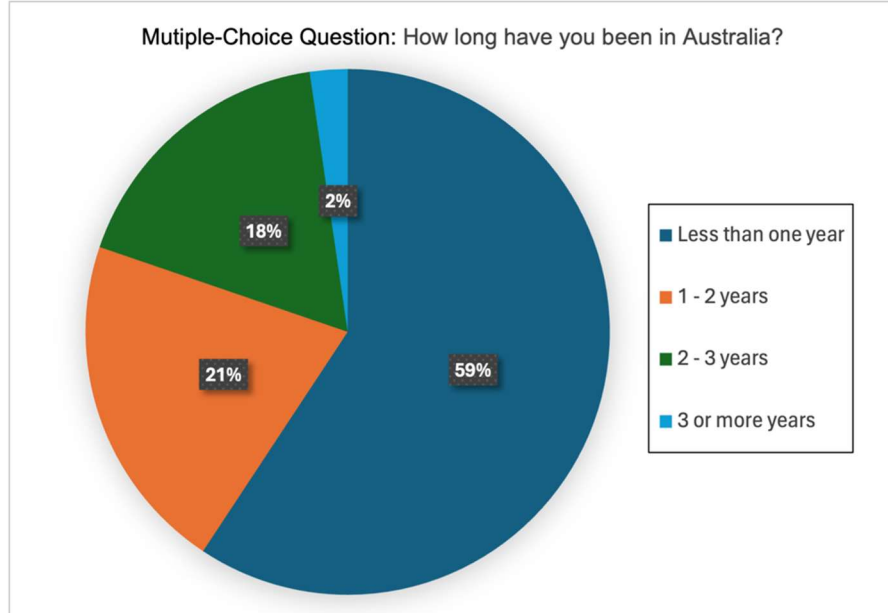


Figure 2. Amount of international students (survey participants) for each categorized length of stay in Australia (less than one year, 1- 2 years, 2 – 3 years, or 3 or more years).

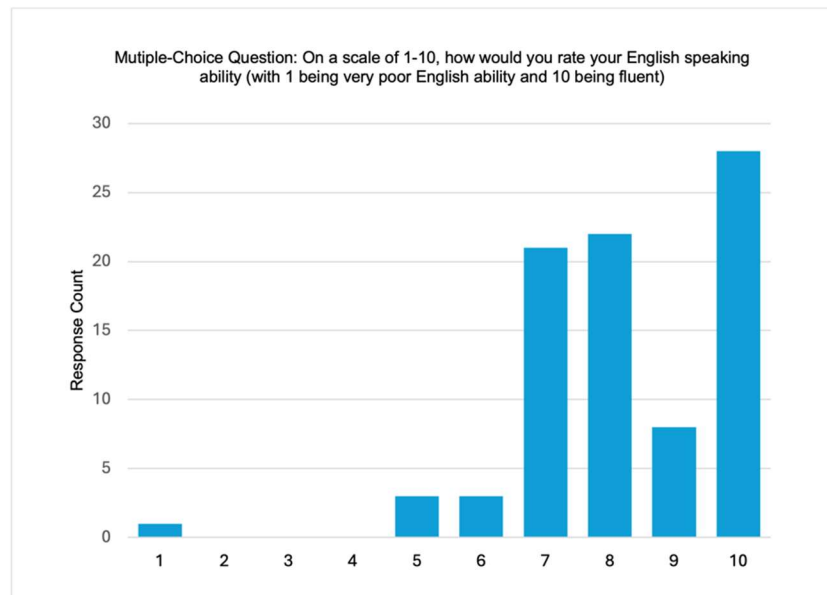


Figure 3. The level of English proficiency of the survey participants, rated by themselves on a scale from 1 to 10.

4.2. Access to Mental Health Services

Out of the 86 international students who participated in the survey, only 19 of them had accessed mental health services in Western Australia (Figure 4). The majority of these students who had accessed mental health support in WA utilized the services provided by their own educational



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institutions (Figure 5). The students evaluated the mental health-related services they had accessed as mostly high, with 73% of students rating the services above 5 out of 10. Moreover, only 15% of the international students had experienced barriers when accessing mental health support in WA, which reflects the percentage of students that had accessed mental health-related services since arriving in WA (Figure 4).

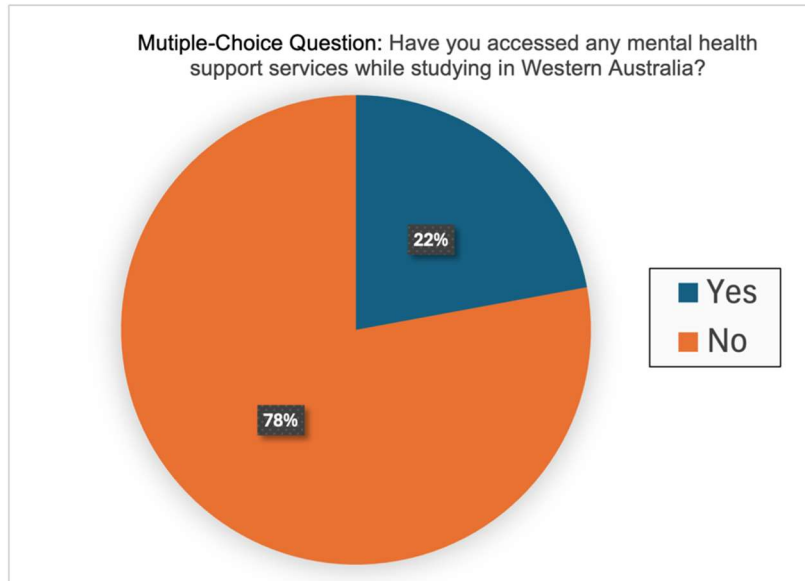


Figure 4. Amount of survey participants who have or have not accessed any sort of mental health support services while studying in Western Australia.

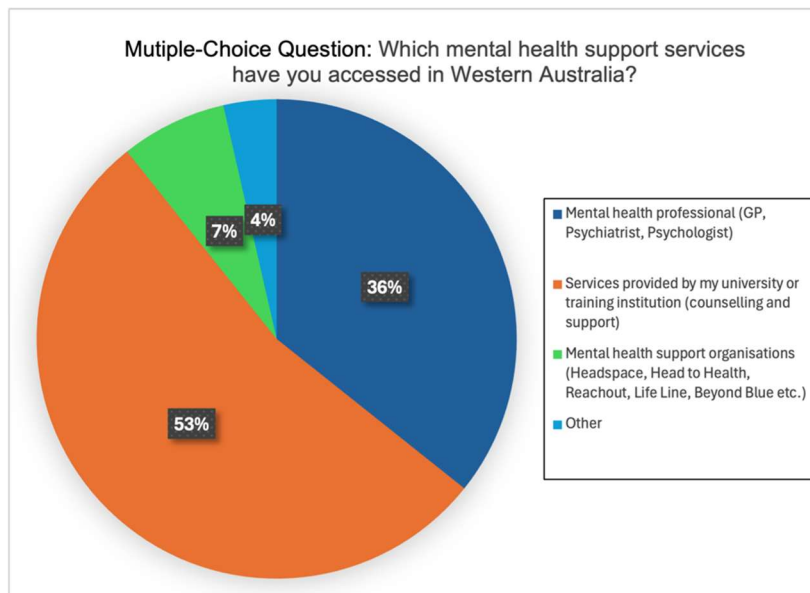


Figure 5. Amount of survey participants who have accessed Mental Health Professionals (GP, Psychiatrist, Psychologist), Services provided by their own university or training institution (counseling and support), Mental



Health Support Organizations (Headspace, Life Lie, Beyond Blue, etc.), or other during their stay in Western Australia.

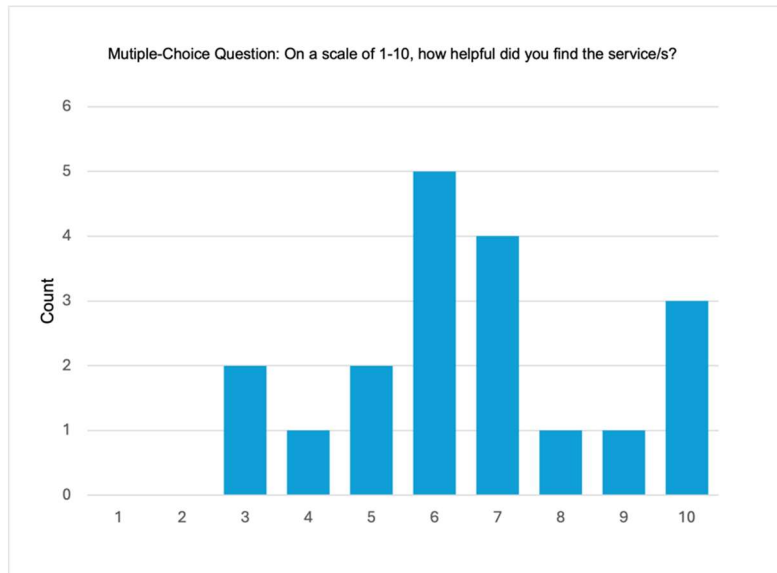


Figure 6. The level of satisfaction experienced by survey participants through the mental health-related support services they have accessed during their stay in Western Australia rated on a scale from 1 to 10.

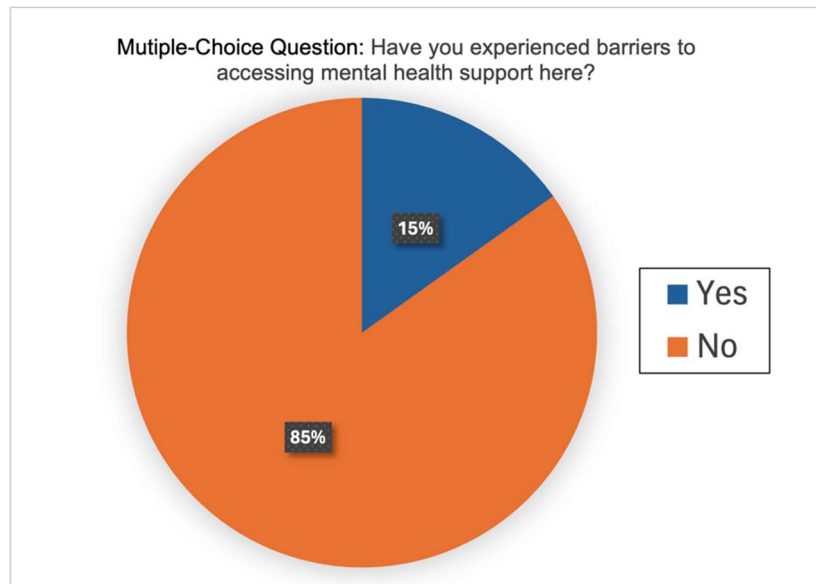


Figure 7. Amount of survey participants who have or have not experienced any sort of barriers to accessing mental health support during their stay in Western Australia.

4.3. Barriers to Accessing Mental Health Services

In terms of the preventative factors in accessing the services, lack of time, lack of knowledge about available services, and lack of assurance that the services could provide for their specific needs were identified as the three largest constraints out of the eight listed (Figure 8).

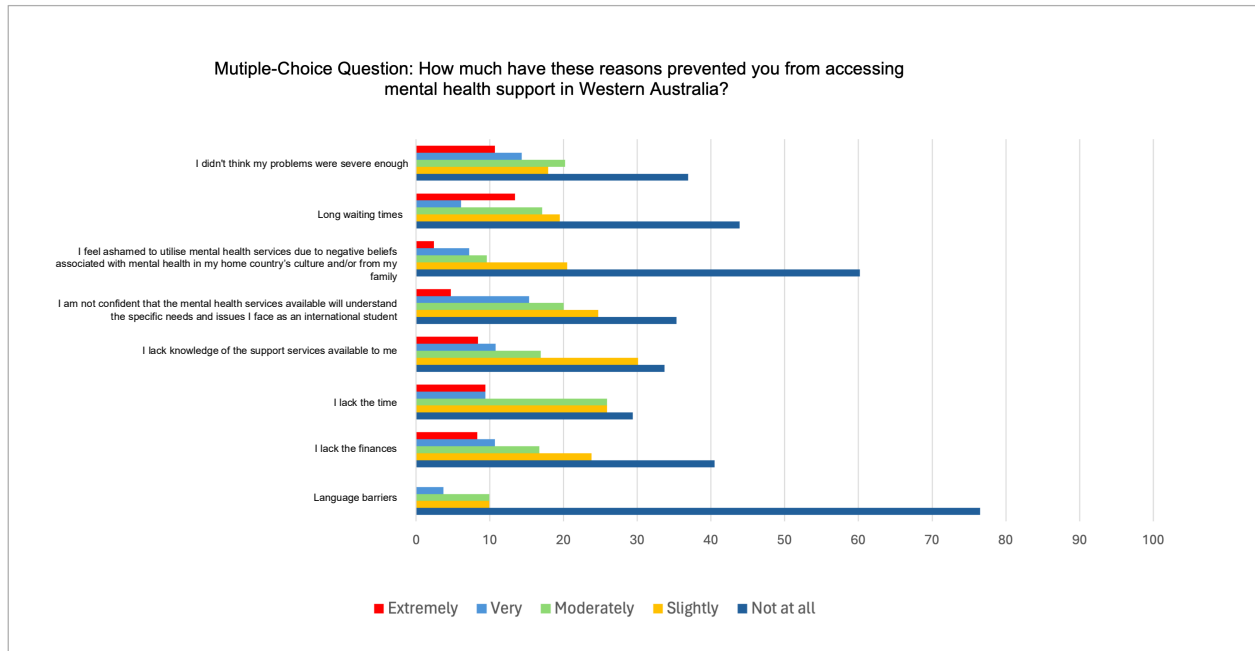


Figure 8. Degree of eight constraining factors that have prevented the survey participants from accessing mental health support in Western Australia (chosen either Extremely, Very, Moderately, Slightly, or Not at all)

4.4. Overseas Student Health Cover Insurance

Regarding the mental health coverage provided by overseas student health cover insurance, 76% of students regarded their coverage as 5 or higher out of 10 (Figure 1), a statistic that also aligns with the number of international students who utilized mental health-related services (Figure 4).

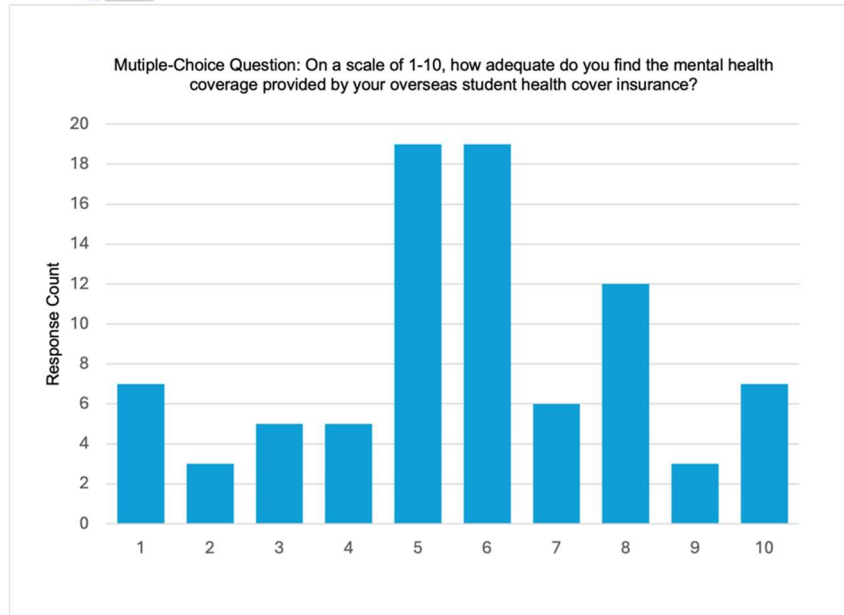


Figure 9. Adequacy of mental health coverage provided by the survey participants' student health over insurance, based on their experience rated from 1 to 10.

4.5. Responses from open-ended questions

Three open-ended questions were asked for the participants to answer including:

1. "What type of mental health support would be most helpful to you?"
2. "What kind of mental health support services or programs do you believe would benefit international students the most?"
3. "Can you share any experiences where you sought mental health support in Western Australia? What was the outcome?"

4.5.1. Question 1: "What type of mental health support would be most helpful to you?"

The open-ended question "What sort of mental health support would be most useful to you?" elicited 63 replies. To find common themes, responses were assessed using automatic text analysis as well as manual coding.

Automated Text Analysis

Emotion analysis found that the majority of comments (68%) had a neutral tone, with 22% positive and 10% negative sentiment. A word cloud visualization revealed that the most often stated terms



were "counseling," "therapy," "support," "talk," and "help," showing a need for counseling services and therapeutic support.

Themes in Manual Coding

Manual categorization of the responses revealed five major themes addressing wanted mental health support:

4.5.1.1. Counseling and Therapy Services

The most common topic, cited by more than 25% of respondents, was the desire for counseling, therapy, or someone to talk to. Specific demands include:

- Individual counseling/therapy sessions, either in person or online.
- Group therapy or support groups
- Peer Counseling Opportunities

Example responses:

"Just talk therapy. Having someone to talk to when times become stressful or tough."

"Regular psychotherapy counselling sessions"

4.5.1.2. Improved Access

Many respondents (16%) mentioned access concerns as a hindrance, calling for increased availability, shorter wait times, and broader service coverage.

"Availability, less waiting times"

"Current services are good but the long wait times is the issue"

4.5.1.3. Stress and Anxiety Management

Approximately 10% of responders indicated a need for particular assistance in managing stress, and anxiety, and establishing coping strategies.

"Sessions related to reducing anxiety, social speaking skills, self confidence etc"

"One that helps to calm me down and helps in stopping addictions"



4.5.1.4. Social Support

Some respondents (8%) expressed a need for additional social activities, events, and opportunities to connect with people as a form of mental health assistance.

"Having more events to have a rest during the busy time"

"Healthy social gatherings (not involving alcohol)"

4.5.1.5. Other Support Needs

Other requirements cited by fewer respondents were financial support, career aid, skill-building programs, and general "inspiration and encouragement." The findings primarily indicate that respondents have a major need for better access to counseling and therapy services, as well as additional assistance such as stress management training and social activities.

4.5.2. Question 2: "What types of mental health support services or programs do you feel would be most beneficial to international students?"

The open-ended question "What type of mental health support services or programs do you feel would help international students the most?" elicited 59 replies. To find common themes, responses were assessed using automatic text analysis as well as manual coding.

Automated Text Analysis

Emotion analysis found that the majority of replies (76%) had a neutral tone, with 17% positive and 7% negative sentiment. A word cloud visualization reveals that the most often used words were "counseling," "support," "therapy," "social," and "group," indicating a concentration on counseling services, social support, and group-based activities.

Themes in Manual Coding

Manual processing of the responses revealed five major areas of mental health support services and initiatives pursued by foreign students:



4.5.2.1. Counseling and Therapy Services

The most common topic, cited in more than 30% of replies, was a need for counseling, treatment, or the opportunity to speak with someone. Specific recommendations were included:

- Individual counseling or therapy, either in person or online
- Group therapy or support groups
- Counselors/therapists who speak the same language or have similar cultural origins

Example responses:

"Providing counseling services tailored to the cultural backgrounds and experiences of international students"

"Counselling, peer-support, educational support"

4.5.2.2. Social Support and Activities

Approximately 20% of respondents expressed a need for additional social activities, events, and opportunities to connect with people and form communities.

"Something interactive/engaging as many international students find it difficult to settle in, meet people"

"Having more different kinds of events"

4.5.2.3. Culturally Relevant Support

Many replies (15%) emphasized the importance of culturally relevant mental health care tailored to the specific experiences of overseas students.

"A program in which the students are paired up with a psychologist/psychiatrist who came from the same country."

"Services which connect them to students coming from the same country"

4.5.2.4. Improved access and awareness

Some respondents (10%) suggested improving access through extended service periods, on-campus availability, and improved advertising of current services.

"Longer services. 6 sessions usually provided are not enough."

"Low-threshold to reach out to. Preferably on campus, high availability."



4.5.2.5. Other Support Needs

Other requirements noted in the responses were financial help, academic support, language aid, and general adjustment/acclimatisation support.

"Financial and study stress"

"Getting accustomed to Australia"

Ultimately, the findings indicate that foreign students would benefit the most from culturally relevant counseling services, social support programs that foster community, and increased access to and understanding of mental health resources. Addressing these requirements may assist improve the well-being of this group.

4.5.3. Question 3: "Can you share any experiences where you sought mental health support in Western Australia? What was the outcome?"

A total of 48 responses were received to the open-ended question "Can you share any experiences where you sought mental health support in Western Australia? What was the outcome?".

4.5.3.1. Overview of Responses

Approximately 60% of respondents stated that they had not sought any mental health support services in Western Australia, either replying "N/A", "No", or leaving the response blank. The remaining 40% of responders reported their good and bad experiences seeking mental health care as overseas students in Western Australia.

4.5.3.2. Positive Experiences

Several respondents reported positive experiences when with the counseling or therapy services they have accessed:

"I was able to personally avoid waiting times by going to a private therapist/counsellor...with external/private engagement I found my mental health support to be great."

"It was with no doubt a brilliant experience. I don't know what i would have done to myself had it not been for the counselling service that I received."



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"I got assistance from a UWA counsellor. The services were extremely helpful to alleviate financial pressure at the time."

Positive outcomes noted included feelings of support and comfort, as well as the avoidance of self-harm. One responder characterized informal peer support as valuable.

4.5.3.3. Negative Experiences

However, many of the responses highlighted significant challenges in accessing timely mental health care:

"In my first year I sought support. It was great honestly. But now trying to get a hold of a professional takes way too much time and effort"

"I went to uwa counselling...but the waiting time was too long, i had to wait two to three weeks for my first session and one whole month for the next."

"3 month wait time"

Long wait periods of weeks or months were a typical complaint, prompting some to stop seeking help. Several replies described unpleasant experiences:

"Sought out a peer support on campus...but I felt like it was trying to solve my problems when all I wanted was a listening ear"

"I haven't, I sought help to sort out some troubles I had with the administration with UWA though, only to get sent between multiple people, receiving no help from anybody."

4.5.3.4. Other relevant experiences

A few replies cited other challenges that overseas students confront that may have an influence on their mental health, such as loneliness, sadness, financial stress, and administrative obligations. Overall, the findings show a range of experiences, with some students receiving effective mental health treatment when it was available, while many others encountered major hurdles to care, such as extended wait times and unhelpful services. This underscores the need for improvement in mental health services for overseas students in Western Australia.



5. Discussion

A survey of 86 international students in Western Australia was conducted to assess their mental health assistance needs and experiences. Several key findings were highlighted from the quantitative and qualitative data collected.

5.1. Culturally Relevant Care

The results indicated a considerable need for better access to counseling, therapy, and other mental health support services among international students. The most often referenced words in open-ended queries, according to automated text analysis, were "counseling," "therapy," "support," "talk," and "help." Counseling/therapy services were recognized as the most common topic by manual coding, with more than 25-30% of replies to each open-ended question. Students also reported a need for individual and group therapy, peer support, and culturally appropriate treatments adapted to their backgrounds. Previous research has supported this behavioral pattern among international students in terms of mental health assistance. Forbes-Mewett Study concluded that "the occurrence of mental health difficulties was commonly acknowledged" among international students, and therapy was frequently thought to be acceptable support (2019). However, research has repeatedly indicated that international students tend not to use therapy/counseling services, owing to cultural shame and other impediments (Forbes-Mewett, 2019). Furthermore, around 15% of respondents emphasized the significance of culturally appropriate and sensitive mental health support services and programs. This is consistent with the findings of Yakunina et al. (2011), who revealed that international students frequently encounter cultural hurdles and a lack of cultural fit with existing counseling services. Scholars such as Banjong have pushed for "culturally deliberate" mental health interventions and outreach initiatives that are customized to international students' individual backgrounds and experiences (2015). A strong need for this form of support for international students was clearly shown in the online survey results.

5.2. Need for social support

The survey respondents also indicated a need for additional social events and community-building initiatives along with greater accessibility of support services through shorter waiting times. The potential effectiveness of better service promotion and auxiliary assistance such as stress



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management training was also mentioned. Approximately 15% of respondents emphasized the significance of incorporating culturally appropriate and relevant mental health care for international students. Lack of social support and connection is a well-known risk factor for mental health problems in overseas students. Sawir et al. found that friends were the most crucial source of support for overseas students, surpassing family and professions (2008). Similarly, Orygen Youth Mental Health also found that social isolation and a lack of relationships were significant stressors affecting international students' well-being (2020). The literature emphasizes the value of social bonds and a sense of belonging as important factors for their improved mental health. The survey findings suggest a coherent demand for initiatives that promote social and cultural integration in the provided services.

5.3. Access and Awareness Barriers

Some students reported long waiting times, a lack of understanding about available programs, and other access hurdles, as the limiting factors in accessing existing support bodies. This result is consistent with reports from previous studies. Yakunina et al. discovered that students from overseas frequently had insufficient understanding of on-campus mental health options (2011). Furthermore, Sherry et al. noted that overseas students encounter considerable delays and difficulty in getting counseling and psychiatric treatments due to a shortage of practitioners with similar cultural backgrounds (2010). The negative experiences with ineffective treatments could be due to cultural insensitivity and a lack of understanding from mental health practitioners that international students frequently confront (Frey & Roysircar, 2006).

While some students had favorable experiences with therapy that gave solace and even stopped self-harm, a large proportion also reported unpleasant experiences. Long wait periods of weeks or months to see a counselor were frequently described in the survey. Some respondents who sought support found the service to be ineffective or felt like they were shuffled between services without receiving enough assistance.



5.4. Issues with Overseas Student Health Cover in mental health-related services

| OSHC Provider | Mental Health Coverage | Counselling/Therapy Services | Additional Support Services |
|--|--|--|---|
| AHM OSHC | Psychiatric Services (2-month waiting period) | Stress and Trauma Counselling Services: Access to qualified counsellors for initial discussions over the phone, with potential in-person follow-up | 24/7 Student Health and Support Line: Medical assistance from a registered nurse, emergency legal advice, health system navigation, interpreter service, family and friends message service |
| Allianz Care Australia (Peoplecare) | Psychiatric Services (2-month waiting period for pre-existing conditions of a psychiatric nature) | 24-hour helpline for medical advice and assistance, telephone access to a solicitor for legal advice, and access to an interpreting service | Assistance with replacing travel documents or passports, emergency message service |
| Bupa Australia | Outpatient Psychiatric Services, Hospital Psychiatric Services | Not specifically mentioned in the document | Student Advice Line: Medical, home and property inquiries, general tax and legal enquiries, available in 150 languages |
| CBHS International Health | Psychiatric Services (specified waiting period for pre-existing conditions) | Not specifically mentioned in the document | 24/7 Health Advice Line: Medical support and other health-related advice |
| Medibank Private | Psychiatric Treatment (12-month waiting period for pre-existing conditions and pregnancy-related services) | Not specifically mentioned in the document | 24/7 Health Advice Line: Access to health-related support and services |
| NIB OSHC | Psychiatric Services (2-month waiting period for psychiatric services) | Not specifically mentioned in the document | 24/7 Online Services: Access to health cover information, claims submission, and other support services online |

Table 1. Summary of mental-health-related services covered by Overseas Student Health Cover for 6 insurance providers (ahm Health Insurance, n.d.; Bupa HI Pty Ltd, 2023; Bupa HI Pty Ltd, 2024; CBHS International Health, 2020; Medibank Private Limited, 2023; NIB Health Funds Limited, 2018).



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Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC), which offers mental health coverage to overseas students studying in Australia, raises several possible issues that could seriously impede students' ability to get the care they need. When it comes to pre-existing conditions, the majority of OSHC providers have waiting periods of two to twelve months before providing psychiatric services. Students who need immediate mental health support upon arriving in Australia may suffer as a result of this delay. Furthermore, even though the majority of providers provide psychiatric services, counseling and therapy sessions are noticeably underinsured. Due to this disparity, students might have to pay for these necessary services out of pocket, which would put up financial obstacles to access (Orygen, 2020). Furthermore, due to the complexity of insurance claims and the need to navigate unfamiliar healthcare systems, students may also be discouraged from seeking help particularly when they are experiencing mental health challenges. Additionally, continuing mental health treatment may be interfered with by the transitory nature of student visas and the possibility of students switching providers or returning home (Hyun et al., 2007; Russell et al., 2009).

6. Suggestions

Five critical areas of potential reforms in improving mental health care for international students at Western Australian higher institutions were identified through survey results, coupled with literature reviews.

Three major proposals include:

- Improved Coordination and Referral Pathways.
- Improved Accessibility and Awareness of Services: A Short Course for Mental Well-Being
- Enhanced Cultural Competence and Tailored Approaches

6.1. Improved Coordination and Referral Pathways

Yakunina et al. (2011) found that international students frequently had insufficient understanding of relevant mental health facilities. The lack of awareness of mental health options among international students has been proven a major obstacle to obtaining treatment (Arthur, 2017; Forbes-Mewett, 2016; Hyun et al., 2007; Mori, 2000; Yakunia et al., 2011). Therefore, building greater connections and referral networks between campus mental health services, academic departments, and outside community providers might help solve the fragmented treatment experiences observed by some students. Prior research has highlighted the significance of



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integrated, collaborative care strategies for this group (Forbes-Mewett, 2019; Sherry et al., 2010). Implementing case coordination support for overseas students with complex needs who require specialized care might also help to enhance the continuity of treatment. It is also crucial to keep referral directory listings up to date.

6.2. Improve accessibility and awareness

International students face considerable challenges in seeking treatment due to a lack of mental health literacy and comprehension of accessible options (Yakunina et al., 2011; Sherry et al., 2010). This necessitates proactive awareness initiatives. This has led to another critical improvement suggestion which proposes an increase in access to and understanding of mental health care. Centralized information resources outlining all available campus and community services, together with instructional materials on recognizing indicators of mental health concerns and supporting oneself and others, might be beneficial.

6.3. Improve Cultural Competency, Tailored Approaches, and a Short Course for Mental Well-Being

Finally, improving the cultural competency of mental health services and creating personalized programs for international students may boost their mental health awareness and literacy. The lack of knowledge in mental well-being-related matters and the stigma for reaching out for support may be addressed through an educational short online course. The short course can be comprised of a list of information for various ranges of support services including their educational institution's private resources regarding private consultations. Educational materials regarding the signs of mental illnesses, their types, and degrees may also be included to support not only themselves but also their peers in finding the right support they need. The effectiveness of establishing personalized programs has been especially supported by previous researchers (Forbes-Mewett, 2016; Hyun et al., 2007; Mori, 2000).

6.4. Forum Comments and Conversation

An in-person forum was held with a subset of international students, in order to further validate and enrich the survey results. The majority of forum attendees agreed with the survey's findings, which highlighted the need for better access to social support programs, culturally appropriate



services, and counseling. Regarding the recommended Short Course for Mental Health, one student said, "First aid, for instance, might be very useful....and with mental health issues, it's a lot less frightening just knowing why it's happening."

6.5. Potential Limitations

One potential impediment to recommended approaches is a lack of capacity among current mental health facilities to accommodate the growing number of students seeking help. It is critical that services can handle a potential influx of students seeking assistance; hence, methods for managing the increasing demand should be devised in tandem with improved awareness (Lipson et al., Watkins et al., 2011; 2019; Xiao et al., 2017).

Successfully outreach and gaining the involvement of international students is another potential obstacle. However, this may be addressed through the introduction of technology-based interventions, such as online counseling, which can help international students get past obstacles that prevent them from accessing traditional in-person services (Lattie et al., 2019). A campus-wide plan that incorporates mental health training for staff and faculty may also help to create a welcoming atmosphere for foreign students in existing mental support services.

7. Conclusion

The ECCWA initiative "ALL IS WELL" highlights the importance of providing international students in Western Australia with specialized mental health support services. The results of the survey indicate the presence of many factors preventing international students from accessing mental health services, such as lengthy wait times and a lack of care that is culturally appropriate. There is also a significant gap in the current support framework, as evidenced by the desire for better counseling and therapeutic services, stress management education, and social support activities.

A diversified strategy is needed to close these gaps. The development of culturally competent support services, raising accessibility and awareness of mental health resources, and improving coordination and referral pathways between campus services and community providers are all crucial first steps suggested in this report. Through the implementation of these recommendations,



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educational institutions and policymakers can enhance their support for international students' mental health and general well-being, thereby facilitating their academic and personal success in Australia.

In addition, it is imperative that strategic planning and resource allocation guarantee that mental health services have sufficient staffing and resources to fulfill the increasing demand. Customized delivery strategies, like providing virtual counseling after hours, can aid in removing obstacles to traditional in-person service access. A comprehensive, campus-wide strategy that includes staff and faculty mental health training can foster a supportive environment that is beneficial to international students' well-being.

8. Appendices:

Niina Ohta (Chief Investigator)

Niina is an undergraduate student majoring in Environmental Science at the University of Western Australia. As an international student from Japan, she advocated with the Ethnic Communities Council of WA as a policy and research intern. Niina contributed to the ALL IS WELL project as a research investigator and as an author of the final report.

Seb Elissegaray (Co-Investigator)

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