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Coping strategies used by international students who recovered from homesickness and depression in Malaysia (Article)

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Abstract

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International students use various self-help coping strategies to manage depression and homesickness, but previous studies have not concluded on how international students have recovered from depression and homesickness after using their self-help coping strategies. The aim of this study is to use the semi structured interview to identify the self-help coping strategies used by international students who were unwilling to get treatment and had recovered from their symptoms of depression and homesickness in Malaysia. The second aim is to quantitatively identify the major psychosocial problems attributing to depression and homesickness among students who have not recovered from the symptoms. Thirty-one international students out of 520 diagnosed with depression and homesickness yet were unwilling to get treatment, were invited for the reassessment of their homesickness and depression after three-and-a-half months. Psychological assessment shows 9 students had recovered but 20 students had not. These nine students were interviewed to explore how they recovered from depression and homesickness. Meanwhile, the 20 students were asked to complete a questionnaire which measured their reason for not being able to recover from depression and homesickness. Results of the semi structured interview shows that some of the self-help coping strategies used by participants including sharing their problems with others who were not experiencing homesickness and depression, keeping themselves busy with some useful activities, indulging in physical exercise, facing the situation courageously, thinking positively, and reading and following some advice from religious texts. The 20 students who did not recover faced more problems involving language, social connection, academic, loneliness, stress and family problems. Overall, self-help coping strategies used by this study's participants are useful in managing depression and homesickness. © 2018 Elsevier Ltd

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