



10 OCTOBER 2022
PRESS RELEASE

Pinoy youth in worse mental shape today, nationwide survey indicates

Close to one in five Filipino youth aged 15-24 have ever considered ending their life. This is among the key findings of the 2021 Young Adult Fertility and Sexuality Study (YAFS5), the fifth in the series of nationwide surveys on Filipino youth led by the University of the Philippines Population Institute (UPPI) and funded by the Department of Health (DOH).

Participated in by 10,949 randomly selected youth aged 15-24, the study examined two sets of mental health indicators, namely depressive symptoms and suicidal experiences, which the YAFS study has tracked since 2002.

The UPPI found that the percentage of youth who often felt depressive symptoms in the reference week substantially increased from 2013 to 2021, with the share of those who often felt loneliness, sadness, and being disliked by other people almost doubling over the period (see Figure 1). Incidentally, data collection for YAFS5 was conducted in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, whereby physical and social isolation may have gravely affected young people's disposition.

Similarly, the share of youth who have ever experienced suicide ideation and suicide attempt more than doubled between 2013 and 2021, and the corresponding percentages among female youth are twice as high as that of male youth. This reverses the trend that was observed between 2002 and 2013 (see Figures 2A and 2B).

In 2013, more than 574,000 or 3% of Filipino youth ever tried ending their life. In 2021, the percentage rose to 7.5%, equivalent to almost 1.5 million youth with such experience.

Unfortunately, six in 10 of those who ever thought of committing suicide did not reach out to anyone about it. The few who did so mostly sought help from close friends or peers (25% of suicide ideators), followed by parents/guardians (7%) and other relatives (5%). Even among those who acted on their suicidal thought, seeking professional help was highly unpopular (4%). In every 10 young adults, only one is aware of any suicide prevention program or service.

These alarming findings indicate that today's youth have poorer mental well-being than in the last few decades. The reasons for this are many and complex, but as it is, multiple challenges, including severe understaffing, the cost of consultation and treatment, and the stigmatization of mental health problems confront mental healthcare in the country.

On World Mental Health Day, October 10, the UPPI is one with the global call for making mental health and well-being for all a priority in all sectors of society.

The national dissemination of the full key findings of the YAFS5 will be on Friday, 14 October 2022, at Park Inn by Radisson Hotel in Quezon City. We invite members of the press and interested organizations to be there.



Reference:

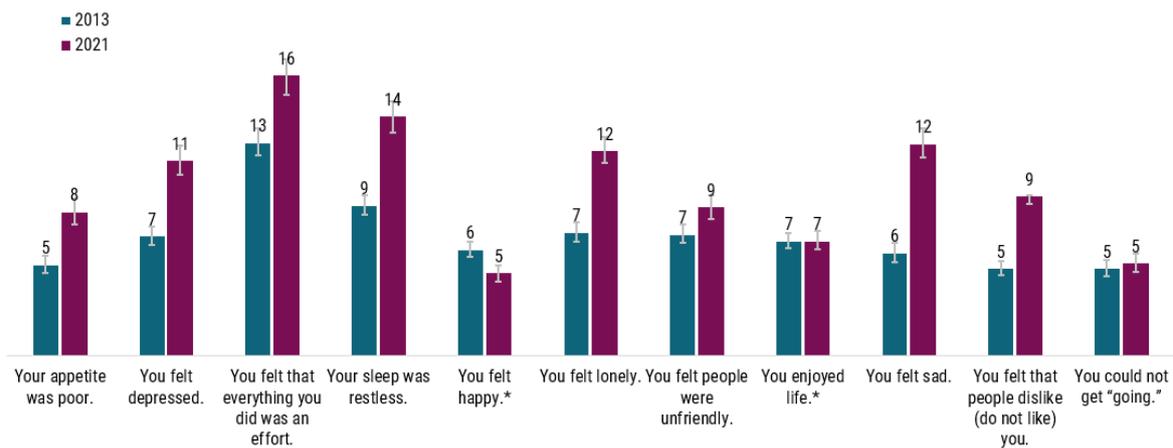
Maria Midea M. Kabamalan, PhD
Professor, UP Population Institute
YAFS5 Project Coordinator

Email: yafs5.upd@up.edu.ph



For more info on the study,
scan QR Code

Figure 1. Percent of youth who, in the past week, "often" felt the depressive symptoms from the Center for Epidemiological Studies - Depression (CES-D) Scale: 2013 and 2021



* Inverted responses

Figure 2A. Percent of youth who have ever thought of committing suicide: 2002-2021

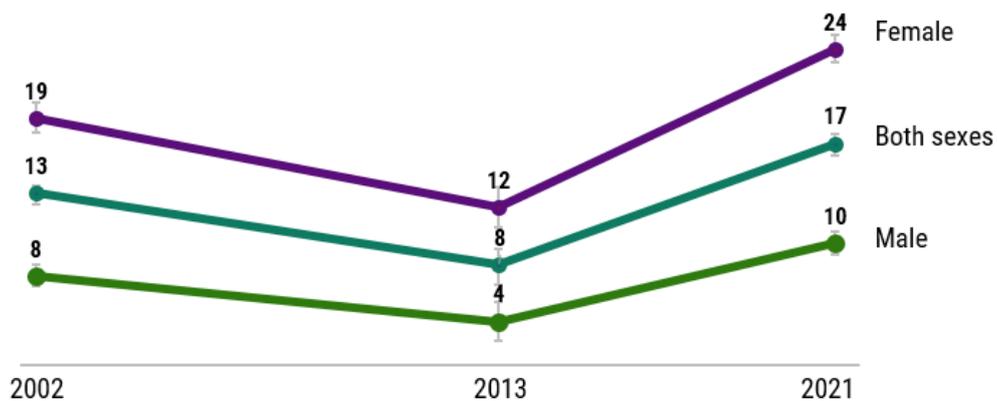


Figure 2B. Percent of youth who have ever tried committing suicide: 2002-2021

