

# SELF - ESTEEM AND ASSERTIVENESS AMONG MEDICAL AND NON - MEDICAL STUDENTS

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Self-esteem and Assertiveness are important factors for personal development and growth among College Students. Medical Students are public-spirited professions during this covid-19. The present Medical Students are the backbone of the professional doctors of tomorrow. In order to ensure competent and safe practice and to deliver therapeutic patient care, it is necessary for them to be individuals with high assertiveness and self-esteem. **Methods:** A survey was conducted among a group of students, who were selected using a purposive sampling method. The sample consists of Medical and Non-medical students. The age of the sample ranges from 18 to 30 (Young adults). Both Men and Women were included in samples. Data was collected using a Self-esteem scale by Rosenberg (1965) and Assertiveness scale by Rathus (1973). Correlational Research Design was used in this study. This study used correlation and a test of significance to test the hypothesis of the study. **Results:** The study revealed that both Medical and Non - Medical students, altogether had moderate levels of assertiveness and self-esteem. There was no significant difference between Medical and Non-Medical students in Self-esteem and Assertiveness. There was no significant difference between males and females in assertiveness and self-esteem. There was no significant difference in assertiveness and self-esteem among urban and rural people. Also there is a negative correlation ( $r = -0.271$ ) between Self-esteem and Assertiveness score with  $p$  value  $<0.001$ . **Conclusion:** It is highly important for medical students to express their viewpoints to the patients therefore high assertiveness can help them to express themselves effectively and stand up for their point of view. When people value themselves and have a good self-esteem, they feel secure and worthwhile. They can generally have a positive relationship with others and can feel confident about their abilities. Both Medical and Non-medical students can take assertive training and assertive training must contain a part to develop self-esteem, students should be given proper educational care.

**KEY WORDS:** Assertive skills, Self-esteem, Medical Students, Non-medical students.

## **INTRODUCTION**

According to Rosenberg (1965), self-esteem is one's positive or negative attitude toward oneself and one's evaluation of one's own thoughts and feelings overall in relation to oneself. Assertiveness is defined as an individual's ability to communicate his or her views, opinions, beliefs, or feelings to another person in an effective manner and without infringing or denying the other person's rights (Alberti & Emmons, 1978; Kelly, 2000).

In a society where doctors are considered as pillars of professional future, they face various challenges in their clinical setup and in academic classes, medical students face unique challenges when it comes to assertiveness and self-esteem due to the highly competitive environment, they live in. Many unpleasant incidents occur in college because students may have low self-esteem. There is a lack of understanding about the role of self-esteem in aggressive behavior. Awareness and mindfulness may aid in reducing its impact on those who are unaware of and unable to control their emotions.

Self-esteem is affected by factors such as an individual's ethnicity, social class, or gender group, and assertiveness is affected by factors such as ethical and cultural factors, marital status, morals and taught principles, an individual's level of education and culture.

### **SELF-ESTEEM IN MEDICAL AND NON-MEDICAL STUDENTS**

Good mental health is associated with a high level of self-esteem, and students who have high self-esteem perform well academically. So, in order to improve medical students' academic performance, healthy self-esteem is essential.

Healthcare professionals require high self-esteem in order to influence and induce positive well-being not only in patients but also in the healthcare team. (B. Shrestha, S. Yadav, S. Dhakal, P. Ghimire, Y. Shrestha, and E. Singh Rathoure (2021). Addressing self-esteem issues in college students is critical for overall student success and improved mental health. Self-esteem is linked to better health, less criminal behavior, a lower level of depression, and overall greater success in life, which is critical for adolescents.

### **ASSERTIVENESS IN MEDICAL AND NON-MEDICAL STUDENTS**

In healthcare settings, assertiveness focuses on clinicians' ability to communicate their views and concerns to patients which is an crucial attribute that supports and encourages successful inter-professional communication and collaboration. Being assertive means valuing their wants, needs, feelings, points of view, beliefs, and choices. Students must recognize their significance and make a conscious decision to prioritize these things. Assertiveness is a fundamental communication skill and it can assist them in effectively expressing themselves and standing up for their point of view, while also respecting the rights and beliefs of others. It can also keep them safe from bullies and other social predators, which are major

challenges among college students.

Kumar, Rathi (2020), Shrestha, (2019), Maheshwari, & Gill, (2015), Özşaker, (2013), Karagözoğlu, Kahve, Koç, & Adamısoğlu, (2008) made correlation study on Assertiveness and Self-esteem among Adolescence. There are enough documentation from the literature, which shows there is a significant association between self-esteem and assertiveness. Earlier studies were not based on the Indian context, and the majority of them were about nursing students. However, only a few studies had compared medical and non-medical students. The current study aims at Medical and Non-Medical Students. Self-esteem and assertiveness are essential skills for both medical and non-medical students.

## **RESEARCH PROBLEM**

To ensure competent and safe practice, it is necessary for the individuals to be with high assertive skills and self-esteem. In recent days Medical and Non-Medical students lack assertiveness and self-esteem, which leads to many inappropriate behaviors in college.

## **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

- To find the mean difference between Medical and Non-Medical Students in Self-esteem and Assertiveness.
- To find the association between Self-esteem and Assertiveness among Medical and Non-Medical Students.

## **HYPOTHESES**

- There will be a significant mean difference between Medical and Non-Medical Students in Self-esteem and Assertiveness.
- There will be a significant relationship between Self-esteem and Assertiveness among Medical and Non-Medical Students.

## **METHODS**

Self-esteem and Assertiveness in adolescents are the instruments for expressing themselves without any psychological disturbances in different situations. It is essential for better emotional wellbeing and to maintain socially supportive relationships. The aim of the study is to find the significant association between Self-esteem and Assertiveness. A Quantitative research design was used to conduct the study.

### **Sample:**

A descriptive survey was conducted among Medical and Non-Medical Students, in Chennai. Purposive sampling method was adopted for collecting data. The sample of the study consisted of 225 in number, in which 111 were Medical Students and 114 were Non-Medical Students, on the whole 127 females and 98

males, of age group 18 to 30.

### **Tools:**

An informed consent was taken from the respondents after explaining about study and its purpose. Questionnaires were circulated among Medical and Non-Medical Students through online survey. For collecting relevant information for the present study, a demographic Performa was developed using review of the literature. The study used two different research instruments to measure the variables: Rosenberg self-esteem scale [Rosenberg, M (1965)] and Rathus Assertiveness Scale (RAS) [Spencer A. Rathus (1973)].

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale presented high ratings in reliability areas; internal consistency was 0.77, minimum Coefficient of Reproducibility was at least 0.90 (M. Rosenberg, 1965, and personal communication, April 22, 1987).

The validity of the RAS was established by comparing self-reported RAS scores to two external measures of assertiveness. Test- retest reliability was established using a Pearson product moment correlation coefficient over a two month period ( $r = 0.78$ ), indicating moderate to high stability of test scores. Split-half reliability (a measure of internal consistency reliability) was calculated to be 0.77. Gustafson (1992) found that the original scale was reliable (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.82$ ).

### **Technique of data analysis:**

The statistical techniques (SPSS 16th version) which are used for the study are Pearson Correlation for assessing the correlation between self-esteem and assertiveness and t-test for assessing the difference between Medical and Non-Medical students.

## **RESULTS**

The present study was aimed to assess the mean difference and correlation between the Assertiveness and Self-esteem among Medical and Non-Medical Students. It was found that maximum students have Average Self-esteem, that is 73.7% (166 out of 225), 21.3% (48 out of 225) were having High Self-esteem and 4.8% (11 out of 225) were having Low Self-esteem, shown in figure 1. Also it was found that maximum students have Moderate Assertiveness, that is 81.7% (184 out of 225), 11.5% (26 out of 225) were having Normal Assertiveness, 6.6% (15 out of 225) were having Passive Assertiveness and none were having High Assertiveness, shown in figure 2. While male have higher levels of assertiveness than those of females (both Medical and Non-Medical Students), females have higher levels of self-esteem than male. Also it was found that rural people have higher assertiveness as compared with urban people, and moreover both urban and rural people have the same level of self-esteem.

**TABLE - 1 Mean difference between Medical and Non-Medical Students in Assertiveness and Self-esteem.**

	N	M±SD	t	p-Value
<b>Assertiveness</b>				
Medical	111	79.6±12.755	1.120	0.264
Non-medical	114	77.8±11.303		
<b>Self-esteem</b>				
Medical	111	18.36±5.465	1.960	0.051
Non-medical	114	17.11±4.064		

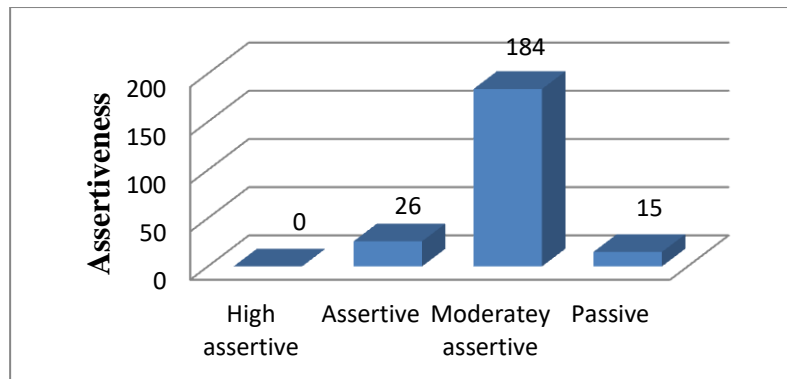
Significance level of p-value at 0.01

There was no significant difference between medical and non-medical students ( $t= 1.960$ ,  $p>0.01$ ) in self-esteem as well as in assertiveness ( $t= 1.120$ ,  $p>0.01$ ) (in table 1). There was no significant difference between males and females in assertiveness ( $t= -0.996$ ,  $p>0.01$ ) and self-esteem ( $t= 1.224$ ,  $p > 0.01$ ) (in table 2). There was no significant difference in assertiveness ( $t= -0.597$ ,  $p>0.01$ ) and self-esteem ( $t= 0.005$ ,  $p > 0.01$ ) among urban and rural people (in table 3).

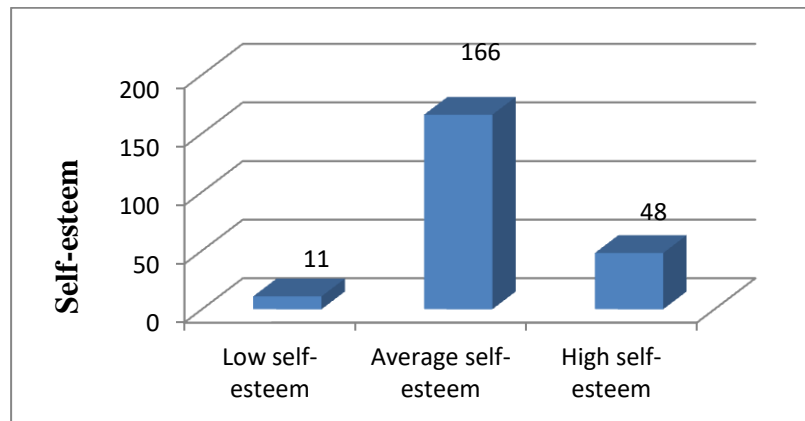
A negative correlation was identified between assertiveness and self-esteem in both Medical ( $r= -0.469$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and Non-Medical students ( $r= -0.271$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) (in table 4). But there is a significant association between assertiveness and self-esteem in both medical and non-medical students (in table 4).

## DISCUSSION

When the data were analyzed from the point of view of assertiveness and self-esteem, medical students have higher assertiveness and self-esteem as compared to non-medical students, as shown in Table 1. In the literature, there are studies with similar findings, in which an increase in assertiveness had an increase in self-esteem level. However, in the study conducted by Maheshwari (2015), assertiveness affects self-esteem and concluded that people who are non-assertive have low self-esteem. Also the study conducted by Karagozoglu (2008), shows that higher self-esteem = higher assertiveness.



**FIGURE 1 - ASSERTIVENESS AMONG BOTH MEDICAL AND NON-MEDICAL STUDENTS**



**FIGURE 2 SELF-ESTEEM AMONG MEDICAL AND NON-MEDICAL STUDENTS**

Few studies concluded that the educational environment and education process increases the level of assertiveness and self-esteem, Shanmugam (2017), concluded that the educational level of adolescents was the variable associated with assertiveness and self-esteem. These studies say that education is the other variable cause or associated with high assertiveness and high self-esteem.

Study conducted by Hamoud (2011), contradicts with the other studies that students with increased assertiveness have decreased self-esteem. That being assertive means speaking up for you, being able to express your opinions and feelings and being able to say no. Assertiveness is important for a healthy self-esteem and for your overall well being.

TABLE - 2 Mean differences between Gender (Males and Females) in Assertiveness and Self-esteem.

	N	M±SD	t	p-Value
<b>Assertiveness</b>				
Female	127	77.98±12.960	-0.996	0.320
Male	98	79.59±10.752		
<b>Self-esteem</b>				
Female	127	18.07±5.148	1.224	0.222
Male	98	17.28±4.383		

Significance level of p-value at 0.01

In our study, it was found that there is no significant difference between males and females in assertiveness ( $t = 1.120$ ,  $p > 0.01$ ) and in self-esteem ( $t = 1.224$ ,  $p > 0.01$ ) (in table 2). There are researches with similar findings in the literature that show that men have higher self-esteem than women. Srivastava (2013) came to the conclusion that there was no significant difference between gender and self-esteem, indicating that self-esteem was not gender dependent. Females today are more assertive and open about how they feel, and they take greater responsibility for their actions. In addition, men have a positive self-image, are goal-oriented, and have self-confidence similar to women. Özşaker, (2013), found that males have higher self-esteem than those of females but females had higher assertiveness as compared to males. According to the results of the current study, self-worth and assertiveness are unaffected by gender.

In our study, it is found that there is no significant difference between urban and rural assertiveness ( $t = -0.597$ ,  $p > 0.01$ ) and self-esteem ( $t = 0.005$ ,  $p > 0.01$ ). Many studies had shown that assertiveness and self-esteem have significant association with residence that is with urban and rural, (Shrestha, 2019). Compared to rural people, urban people don't feel shy from defending their points or goals, they are open to both compliments and constructive criticism, also those people will be honest about their feelings, opinions and even rights. Rural people who are aggressive because they feel threatened or disrespected may end up feeling like a bully and losing important relationships. As compared to urban people, rural people may lack confidence about who they are and what they can do, they often feel incompetent, unloved or inadequate. **But from the present study, it is found that both urban and rural people have equal levels of assertiveness and self-esteem**, may be due to advanced techniques and since education is equally available to rural people, may be that made them to be confident enough to defend their point, bold enough to express their opinions.

TABLE 3 Mean differences between Residence (Urban and Rural) in Assertiveness and Self-esteem.

	N	M±SD	t	p-Value
<b>Assertiveness</b>				
Urban	157	78.37±12.243	-0.597	0.551
Rural	68	79.41±11.633		
<b>Self-esteem</b>				
Urban	157	17.72±5.193	0.005	0.996
Rural	68	17.72±3.924		

Significance level of p-value at 0.01

Several studies have been conducted to analyze the relationship between assertiveness and self-esteem. In our study, a negative relationship ( $r = -0.469$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) in medical students, as well as in non-medical students ( $r = -0.271$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) was found between self-esteem and assertiveness (in table 4). Some studies have previously identified a negative relationship between assertiveness and self-esteem, Hamoud (2011) had a negative statistical significant correlation ( $r = -0.23$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) was proved between assertiveness and self-esteem. This is may be due to higher the self-esteem, sometimes goes beyond assertive, that is to aggressive state. Students think that they are being assertive, but they are being aggressive; the way they express their opinions turns into aggressive manner.

In contradiction there were studies concluded that self-esteem and assertiveness have a positive significant correlation, for example, Shanmugam (2017) with  $r = 0.64$ ,  $p < 0.05$  and Maheshwari (2015) had concluded that positive significant correlation between self-esteem and assertiveness ( $r = 0.272$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Kumar (2020) in his hypothesis states that there is a significant correlation between assertiveness and self-esteem in adolescents, that is with  $r = 0.14$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , and concluded that an individual with assertiveness and high self-esteem is able to be self-confident, ready to face emotional tribulations, anxiety, etc. Özşaker, (2013), had given that training individuals for assertiveness in their childhood and adulthood marked by both mental and physical development spurts will improve their self-esteem. **From our present study, it was found that there was a negative correlation between assertiveness and self-esteem.**



**TABLE 4 Pearson Correlation between Assertiveness and Self-esteem in Medical and Non-Medical Students.**

	N	Self-esteem
<b>Medical</b>	111	
Assertiveness		$r = -0.469, p = 0.000$
<b>Non-Medical</b>	114	
Assertiveness		$r = -0.271, p = 0.004$

Correlation is significant at p-value 0.05

In this study, there is no significant difference between medical and non-medical students in self-esteem, as well as in assertiveness. There was no significant difference between male and females in assertiveness as well as in self-esteem. There was no significant difference between urban and rural college students in assertiveness as well as in self-esteem. There was a negatively correlated significant association between assertiveness among medical and non-medical students as well as in self-esteem. The finding of this study confirms those of few other studies in the literature.

## MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- Assertiveness and Self – esteem remain unaffected irrespective of gender.
- Both urban and rural people have equal level of assertiveness and self-esteem.
- There was a negative correlation between assertiveness and self-esteem in.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of the study show a no significant difference between Medical and Non-Medical students in Self-esteem and Assertiveness. Also there shows a negative significant association between Self-esteem and Assertiveness in Medical and Non-Medical Students.

College is a critical period of transition for students, and it is essential that they possess the necessary assertiveness and self-esteem to be successful. Nowadays, these two traits have an enormous impact on college students' academic performance, mental health, and overall wellbeing.

Thus, the current study's recommendations are that students with low self-esteem and assertiveness can be improved by conducting Assertiveness training. It is an important part of developing self-esteem and confidence. It helps students to learn how to express their thoughts, feelings and opinions in a clear and direct manner without feeling intimidated or disrespected. As part of this training, it is also important to encourage students to participate in social activities so that they can practice their newly acquired assertive skills in a safe environment. These activities may include group discussions, role-playing exercises, or even taking part in public speaking events. By participating in these activities, students can

boost their self-confidence and become more assertive individuals.

## LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

In the future, a large number of samples can be taken, and data can be gathered from various geographic locations. School children and researcher scholars can be included in the sample.

People can take gender and year of education into consideration when determining mean difference and correlation. It is possible to conduct the study with more psychological factors.

## IMPLICATIONS

Being assertive is a core communication skill, which is highly required for adults, that is for both Medical and Non-Medical Students. It is highly important for medical students to express their viewpoints to the patients, also high assertiveness can help them to express themselves effectively and stand up for their point of view. When people value themselves and have a good self-esteem, they feel secure and worthwhile. They can generally have a positive relationship with others and can feel confident about their abilities.

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