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**Barriers and Facilitators to Help-Seeking for Common Mental Disorders among University Students: A Systematic Review**

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**Background:** High rates of mental health illness affect university students, most commonly depression and anxiety. Despite this, help-seeking behaviours are extremely low. This is the first systematic
review aiming to summarise the barriers and facilitators to help-seeking for depression and/or anxiety among university students.

**Methods:** Three databases, EMBASE, MEDLINE and PsychINFO were searched for studies reporting barriers and facilitators to help-seeking for university students with depression and/or anxiety. In order to review data from both qualitative and quantitative studies, information on barriers and facilitators were coded into themes.

**Results:** Ten final papers were included; four qualitative and six quantitative. The most prominent barriers were self-reliance, stigma, physical barriers, poor awareness of mental health symptoms, poor knowledge of services and effectiveness, and symptom severity. Although there was significantly less research on facilitators, common facilitator themes were good mental health literacy and encouragement or pressure from others to seek help.

**Conclusions:** A recommendation from this review is the need to explore self-reliance as a barrier to help-seeking as this was the most commonly barrier, but a little researched area. Another recommendation is that more research is undertaken to investigate the facilitators to help-seeking. Clinical recommendations include using the internet to provide support and information on mental health disorders and services, implementing anti-stigma workshops in universities and integrating family members, partners, and friends into an individual’s mental health care. It is hoped that the findings from this review will be used to improve mental health services to address poor help-seeking behaviours among this student population.