Impact of Spousal Migration on Mental Health of women in Nepal

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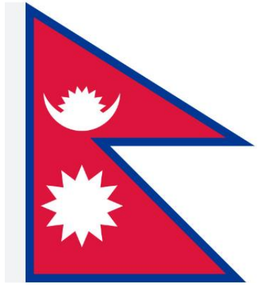
Background

- **Migrant labor**: people who routinely migrate from one place to another while providing their services on a temporary, mostly seasonal basis [1]
- In LMICs, migration has emerged as one of the primary means of **economic survival**[2]
- **Men** are more likely than women to relocate temporarily or permanently in search of employment, often with the initial goal of supporting their families back home [2]

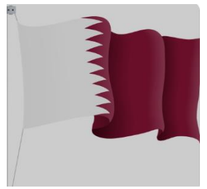
Nepal



25 percent of households have at least one family member who lives outside the country[3]

Destination countries:

UAE

Qatar 

Saudi Arabia

Kuwait

Malaysia[4]

Nepal

Improved objective dimensions: economic well-being, housing, access to health services, and other materialistic lifestyles[5]

Raised the burden of work, increased stress, low social support, increased divorces, and does not raise life satisfaction [6]

Depression and anxiety among wives of migrant workers

	Depression	Anxiety
Bangladesh	28.36% [8]	32.7% [8]
Sri Lanka	12.3% [7]	14.4% [7]
Nepal	6.5% [9]	

- Link between migrants and the well-being of the spouse who gets to stay native country is not addressed
- Lack of evidence and research regarding the circumstances
- Is a dire need for evidence-based research in the respective area

Research Objective

To assess the association between spousal migration and mental health symptoms (depression, anxiety, stress) among women in Chandrapur Municipality of Rautahat district

Methodology

Study Design: Cross-sectional study

Study Population: Married women aged more than 18 years

Study Site

Population: 81,579 [10]

Population aged group 18-59: 45,389 [10]

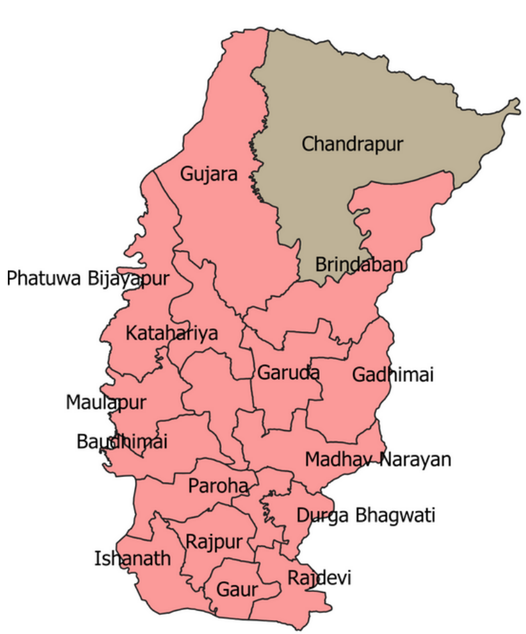
Total household: 16,589 [10]

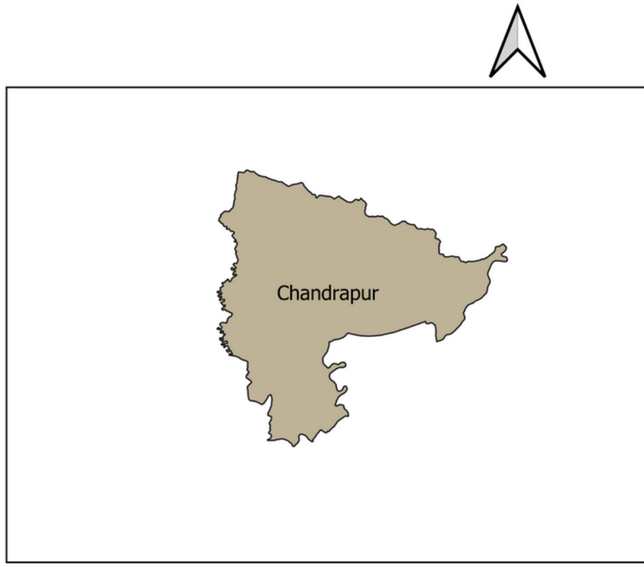
Family size: 4.92 [10]

Migrants: 2,900 [10]

Prevalence of labor migration: 6.38% among the active population

Prevalence of labor migration according to household 17.4%





Inclusion Criteria

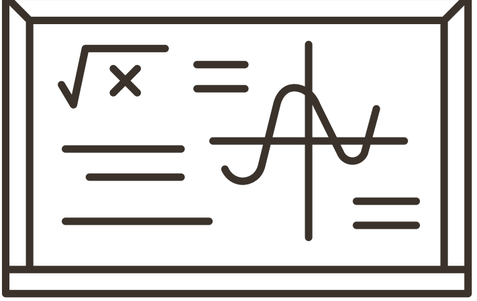
- Married women aged more than 18 years
- Who are married for at least one year and
- Whose husbands migrated outside the country for at least six months [9]

Exclusion Criteria

- Only one woman from a house-randomly
- Wives of those migrant workers who have returned home temporarily for at least one month

Sampling Technique

- Systematic Random Sampling
- Selected first house of the tole from each lane
- Skipped one house
- Unknown about spousal migration



Sample Size calculation

Power	90%
Level of significance	95%
Prevalence of depression in Nepali population (P1)	11.7 % [11]
Prevalence of depression among wives of migrant workers (P2)	28.36% [8]
Prevalence of labor migration of Chandrapur municipality Ratio of sample size (n2/n1)	17% [10] 0.17
Sample size	495
With 10% non-response rate:	545 married women

https://epitools.ausvet.com.au/twoproportions

Study Variables

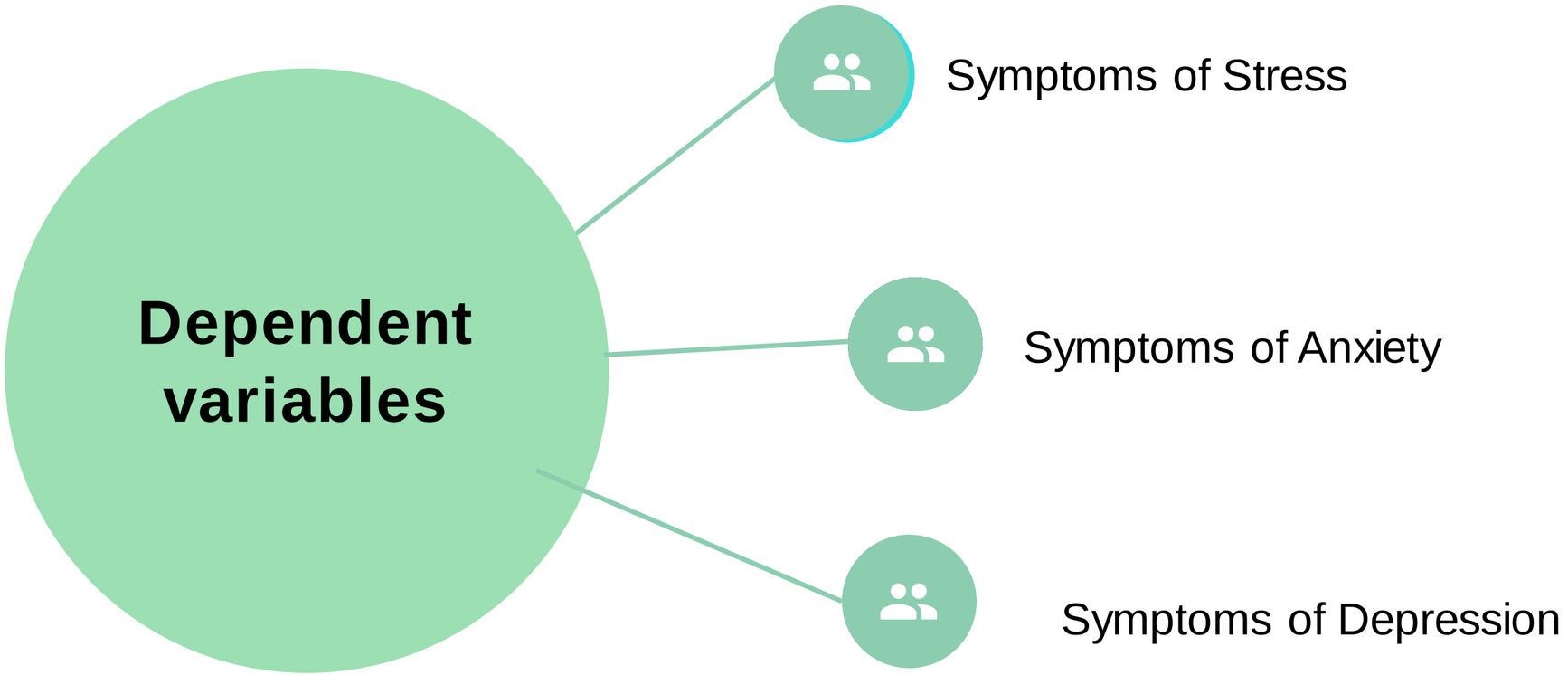
Independent Variables

Socio-demographics of women		Socio-demographics of men
• Age • Ethnicity • Religion • Education status • Age of marriage • Duration of marriage • Type of family • Residence • Occupation	• Main occupation of family • Household income • Family members • No. and age of children • Pregnancy and postpartum status	• Age • Ethnicity • Religion • Education Status • Occupation

Study Variables

Independent Variables

Migration related information
• Name of destination country • Time of migration • Interval of home return • Duration of last home visit • Communication with husband • Means of communication • Who initiates the conversation?


Dependent variables
Symptoms of Stress
Symptoms of Anxiety
Symptoms of Depression

Data Collection Tools and Technique

- Socio-demographics
- Migration characteristics
- DASS-21

Interviewer Administered face to face interview

Reliability and Validity of tool

DASS-21

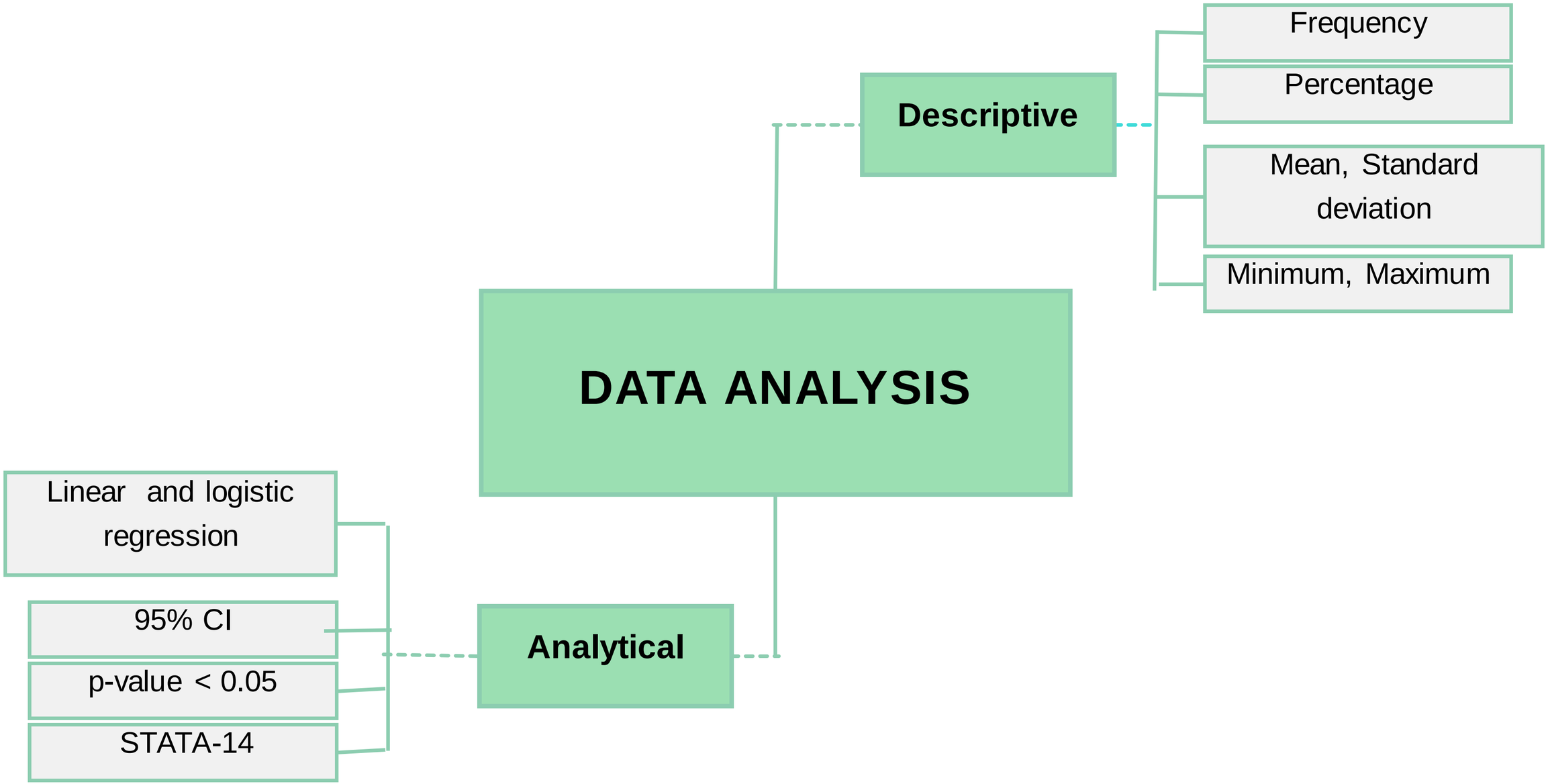
Validated among Nepali migrant workers

Cronbach's alpha

- 0.82 for DASS-S
- 0.80 for DASS-A
- 0.77 for DASS-D

Other tools:

- Pretested among 10% of participants
- Necessary modifications


DATA ANALYSIS
Descriptive
Frequency
Percentage
Mean, Standard deviation
Minimum, Maximum
Analytical
Linear and logistic regression
95% CI
p-value < 0.05
STATA-14

Ethical Issues and Consideration

- Institutional Review Committee of Kathmandu University
- Written Consent
- Informed Consent
- For those unable to read and write: Verbal consent
- No incentive

Results

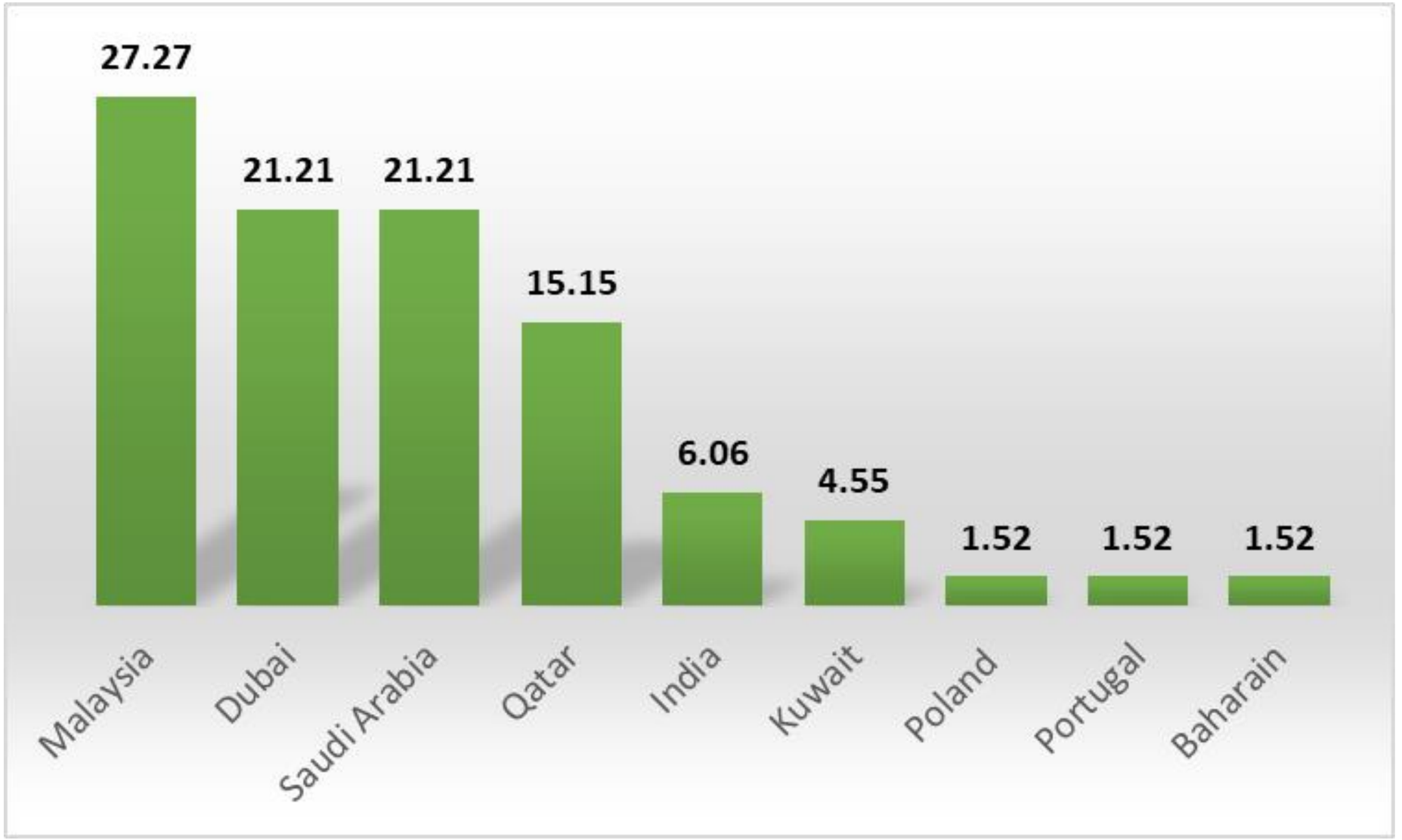
Migration related information-1

Variables	n (%)
Spousal migration	
No	479 (87.89)
Yes	66 (12.11)
Total migrated years (mean SD)	6.42 ± 4.11
(min, max)	(0.5,25)
Frequency of home return	
1-2 years	24 (36.36)
2-3 years	24 (36.36)
3 years and more	13(19.70)
Not returned yet	3(4.55)
Duration of last home visit	
6 months-1 year	28 (42.42)
1-3 year	17 (25.76)
3 years and more	6 (9.09)
Not returned yet	15 (22.73)

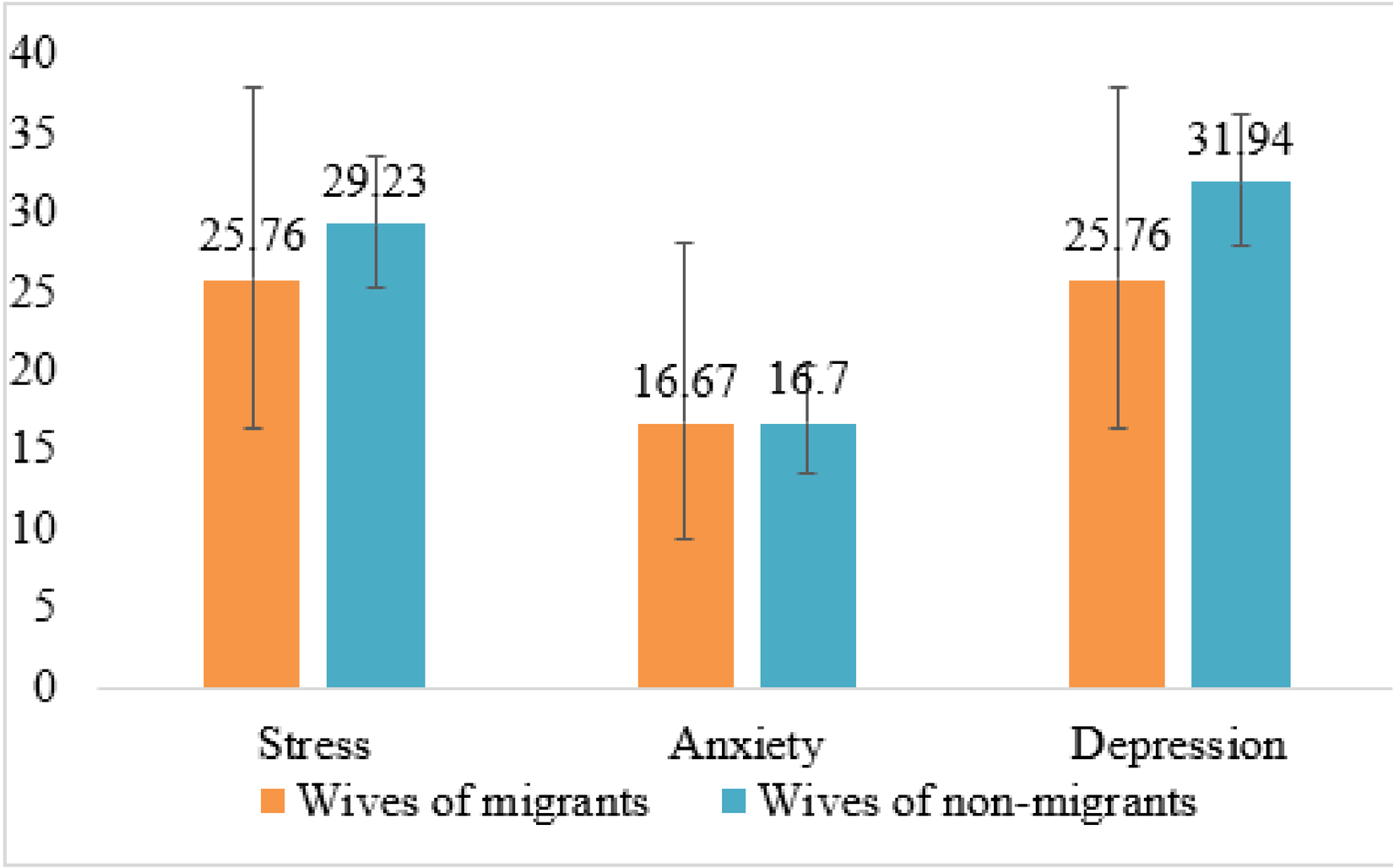
Migration related information-2

Who initiates the conversation	
Husband	62 (93.94)
Wife	4 (6.06)
Means of communication	
Phone call	5 (7.58)
Audio and video call	61 (92.42)
Communication with husband	
Daily	59 (89.39)
Not daily	7 (10.61)

Name of Migrated Country



Prevalence of Stress, Anxiety and Depression



Association between spousal migration and symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression (Logistic regression)

Variables	Bivariate analysis			Multivariate analysis		
	OR	95 % CI	p-value	OR	95 % CI	p-value
Stress						
Spousal Migration						
No	Ref			Ref		
Yes	0.84	0.46 to 1.50	0.56	0.94	0.50 to 1.74	0.85
Anxiety						
Spousal Migration						
No	Ref			Ref		
Yes	0.99	0.50 to 1.98	0.99	1.10	0.53 to 2.28	0.79
Depression						
Spousal Migration						
No	Ref			Ref		
Yes	0.73	0.41 to 1.32	0.31	0.87	0.47 to 1.61	0.66

Adjusting for husband's age, education status, age of marriage, annual household income, family type and no. of children

Stress and Migration related characteristics-1

	B	95 % CI	p-value
Migrant husband			
No	(Ref)		
Yes	-0.61	-2.66 to 1.43	0.55
Years of migration	-0.38	-0.86 to 0.09	0.11
Frequency of home return			
Not returned yet	(Ref)		
1-2 years	0.13	-6.82 to 7.08	0.97
2-3 years	-0.78	-6.39 to 4.83	0.78
3 years and more	0.06	-6.00 to 6.13	0.98
Last home visit			
Not returned yet	(Ref)		
6 months to 1 year	0.92	-4.77 to 6.63	0.74
1-3 years	-1.24	-6.98 to 4.49	0.66
3 years and more	-2.74	-9.54 to 4.06	0.42

Adjusting for husband's age, education status, age of marriage, annual household income, family type and no. of children

Stress and Migration related characteristics-2

	B	95 % CI	p-value
Communication			
Daily	(Ref)		
Not daily	2.72	-4.16 to 9.61	0.43
Communication Means			
Phone call	(Ref)		
Audio and video call	-5.22	-12.46 to 2.01	0.15
Conversation starts			
Husband	(Ref)		
Wife	7.81	-1.87 to 17.50	0.11

Adjusting for husband's age, education status, age of marriage, annual household income, family type and no. of children

Anxiety and Migration related characteristics-1

	B	95 % CI	p-value
Migrant husband			
No	(Ref)		
Yes	-0.30	-1.87 to 1.26	0.70
Years of migration	-0.16	-0.52 to 0.19	0.35
Frequency of home return			
Not returned yet	(Ref)		
1-2 years	-1.36	-6.27 to 3.54	0.58
2-3 years	-2.71	-5.84 to 0.42	0.08
3 years and more	-2.96	-6.16 to 0.23	0.06
Last home visit			
Not returned yet	(Ref)		
6 months to 1 year	-1.31	-4.63 to 2.01	0.43
1-3 years	-3.41	-6.28 to -0.55	0.02
3 years and more	-5.32	-8.86 to -1.78	0.004

Adjusting for husband's age, education status, age of marriage, annual household income, family type and no. of children

Anxiety and Migration related characteristics-2

	B	95 % CI	p-value
Communication			
Daily	(Ref)		
Not daily	2.48	-0.97 to 5.95	0.15
Communication Means			
Phone call	(Ref)		
Audio and video call	-0.66	-4.98 to 3.66	0.76
Conversation starts			
Husband	(Ref)		
Wife	8.92	2.31 to 15.54	0.009

Adjusting for husband's age, education status, age of marriage, annual household income, family type and no. of children

Depression and Migration related characteristics-1

	B	95 % CI	p-value
Migrant husband			
No	(Ref)		
Yes	-0.42	-2.07 to 1.22	0.61
Years of migration	-0.15	-0.87 to 0.56	0.66
Frequency of home return			
Not returned yet	(Ref)		
1-2 years	-3.37	-9.19 to 2.45	0.25
2-3 years	-2.52	-6.88 to 1.84	0.25
3 years and more	-2.00	-6.57 to 2.57	0.38
Last home visit			
Not returned yet	(Ref)		
6 months to 1 year	-1.94	-6.36 to 2.47	0.38
1-3 years	-3.12	-7.69 to 1.43	0.17
3 years and more	-2.72	-8.08 to 2.64	0.31

Adjusting for husband's age, education status, age of marriage, annual household income, family type and no. of children

Depression and Migration related characteristics-2

	B	95 % CI	p-value
Communication			
Daily	(Ref)		
Not daily	1.48	-4.89 to 7.87	0.64
Communication Means			
Phone call	(Ref)		
Audio and video call	-4.57	-10.18 to 1.02	0.10
Conversation starts			
Husband	(Ref)		
Wife	8.91	-2.45 to 20.29	0.12

Adjusting for husband's age, education status, age of marriage, annual household income, family type and no. of children

Discussion

Impact of Spousal Migration in Mental health

Our study

No significant association between spousal migration and symptoms of stress, anxiety and depression

Other studies

Other study of Nepal :

- Wives of migrant workers have accepted husband's labor migration as an instrumental part of their personal and social life

- Acceptance of their situation positively impacted migrant wives' mental and psychosocial health
- Some of the migrant wives spent very little time with their husbands after their marriage
- Nations where migration is more prevalent, the departure of family members appears less traumatic
- People in these situations may be better prepared to handle separation

Conclusion

- No significant association between spousal migration and mental health symptoms
- The main destination for labor migration was Malaysia, Dubai, Saudi Arabia
- A slightly low prevalence of symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression among wives of migrant workers compared to those who live together with their husbands
- Negative association between anxiety and last home visit of husband
- Significantly associated with symptoms of anxiety and who does the conversation

Recommendations

Further longitudinal studies are needed to increase our understanding of how spousal migration might affect women's mental health status over a time period

Further refined studies should be conducted in various settings of Nepal to determine whether spousal migration has in real negative impact on symptoms of stress, anxiety and depression

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