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Figure 3.4: Medication for psychosomatic symptoms

When asked about the various form and frequency of illnesses they experienced over the past academic year, 35.4% of the students reported that they suffered no illness; whereas 7.1% suffered from at least four illnesses (Figure 3.5). Back pain was the most common ailment (40.9% of all cases). This may be attributed to the long hours students spend leaning over a desk or in front of their monitors. This physical symptom is followed by bronchitis, ear or sinus infection (21.1%) and allergy problems (18.8%), and anxiety (16.4%) and depression (9.7%). Conditions like sexually transmitted diseases and HIV infections and substance abuse are either very low in frequency or do not feature at all.
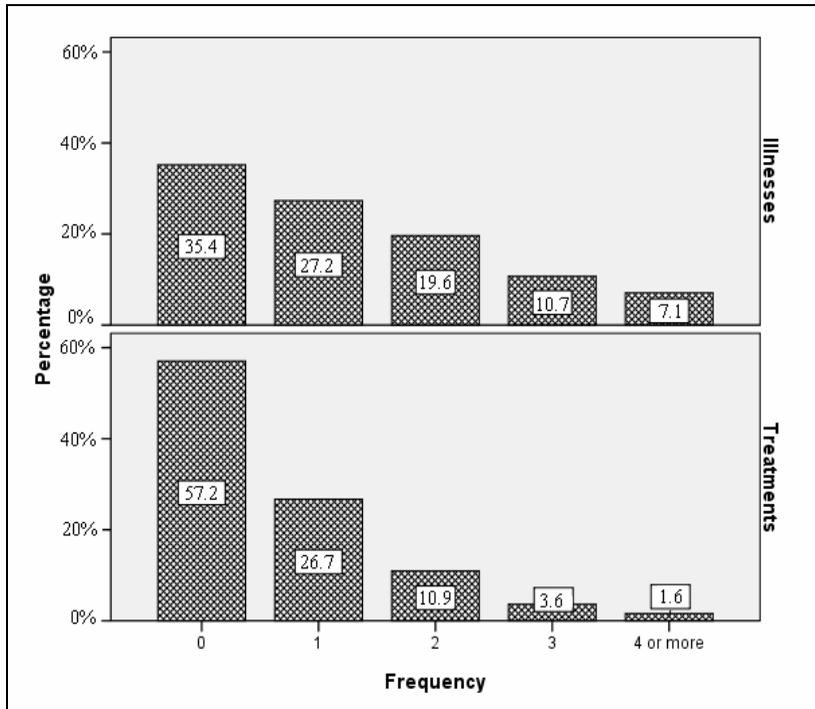
Figure 3.5: Percentage of illnesses and treatment for health conditions

When asked whether they were getting treatment for the specified illnesses, 57.2% stated that they receive no treatment. This proportion exceeds by far the proportion of students who suffer no illness (35.4%), suggesting a substantial number of students do not seek treatment. Almost all respondents sought treatment for broken bone/fracture, sexually transmitted diseases, endometriosis and diabetes, but fewer respondents followed treatment for anxiety disorder, chronic fatigue syndrome, back pain and depression, and none for severe substance abuse (Table 3.1) Further analysis shows a higher proportion of civil science and male students with depression, a higher proportion of females with back pain problems, and more 3rd to 5th year students with anxiety and chronic fatigue syndrome (Figure 3.6).

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Table 3.1: Percentage of illnesses and treatment for health conditions

| Treatment/Therapy		Suffered from	Followed treatment
Allergy problems	Count	93	77
	Percentage	18.8%	15.6%
Anxiety disorder	Count	81	29
	Percentage	16.4%	5.9%
Asthma	Count	31	22
	Percentage	6.3%	4.4%
Chronic fatigue syndrome	Count	19	4
	Percentage	3.8%	0.8%
Depression	Count	48	12
	Percentage	9.7%	2.4%
Diabetes	Count	1	1
	Percentage	0.2%	0.2%
Sexually transmitted diseases	Count	7	7
	Percentage	1.4%	1.4%
HIV infection	Count	0	0
	Percentage	0.0%	0.0%
Substance abuse problem	Count	10	0
	Percentage	2.0%	.0%
Back pain	Count	202	56
	Percentage	40.9%	11.3%
Broken bone/fracture	Count	12	12
	Percentage	2.4%	2.4%
Bronchitis/ear or sinus infection	Count	104	87
	Percentage	21.1%	17.6%
Endometriosis	Count	6	5
	Percentage	1.2%	1.0%

$\chi^2 = 61.24,\ v = 11,\ p < 0.0005$
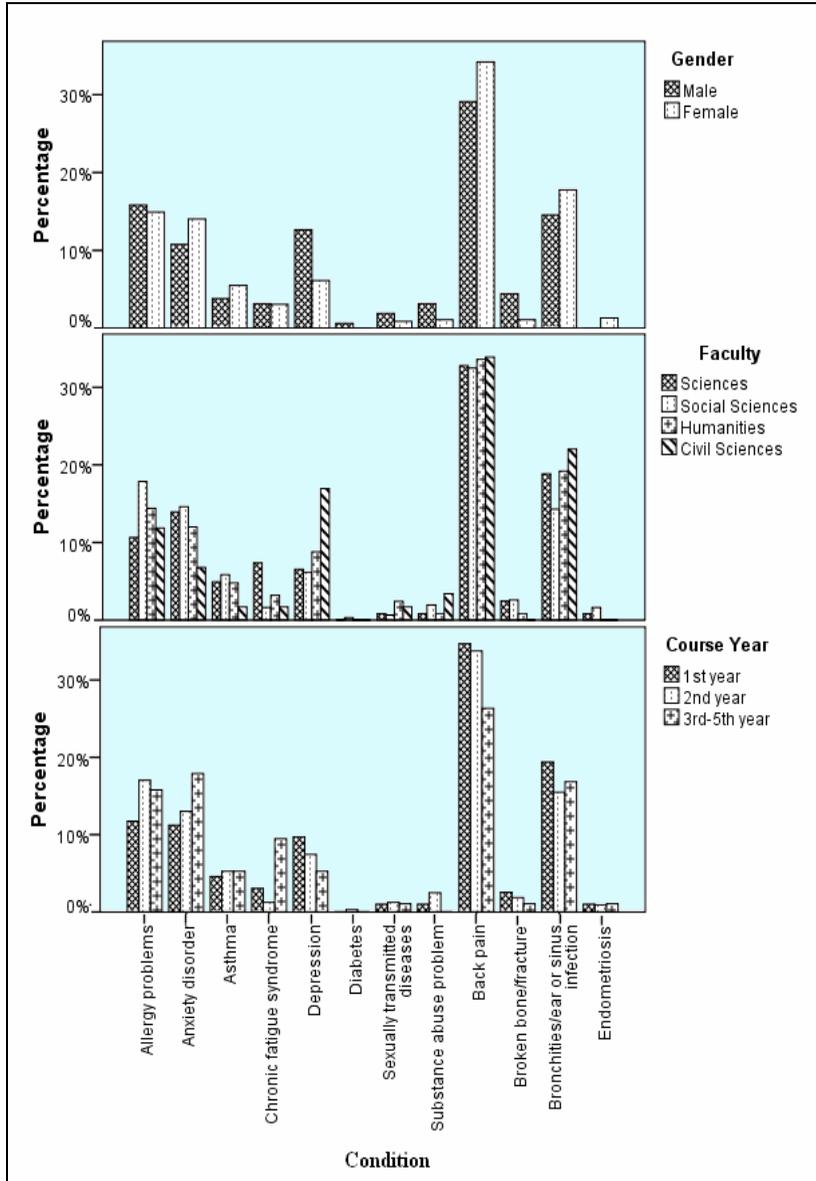
Figure 3.6: Illnesses by gender, course year and faculty

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Health does not seem to come in the way of attendance at university, as more than 90% of the students did not miss more than one week of lectures because of physical complaints during the past semester. 53.6% of the participants stated that they are never absent because of physical complaints, while 36.9% specified that they missed from 1 to 5 days during the previous semester (Figure 3.7).
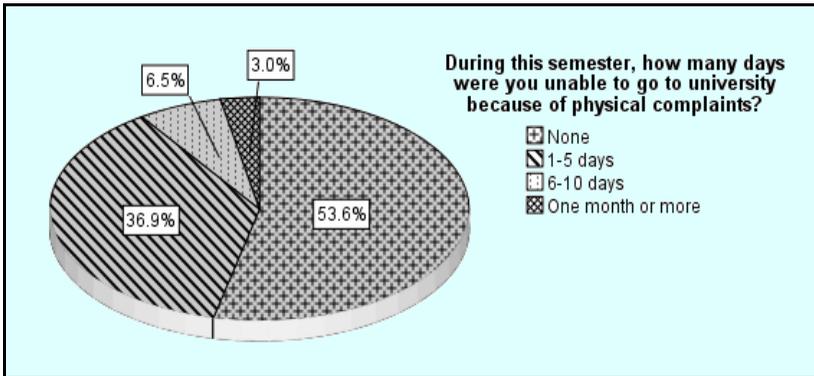

Figure 3.7: Days missed at University because of physical complaints

Civil science students, which comprise more males than females, are less likely to miss lessons compared to other faculties. This may partly explain why males are less absent from university compared to their female counterparts. Moreover, 3rd to 5th year students are more likely to be absent for a longer period (Figure 3.8).

When asked to indicate which health and lifestyle factors came in the way of their academic performance, more than half of the respondents mentioned stress (Table 3.2). This is followed by concerns over friends or family (26.8%); relationship difficulties (23.2%); cold, flu and sinus infections (19.1%); depression and anxiety (17.2%) and sleep difficulties (16%). The chi square test reveals that examination stress, study fatigue, family concerns and relationship difficulties significantly affect academic performance more than other difficulties.
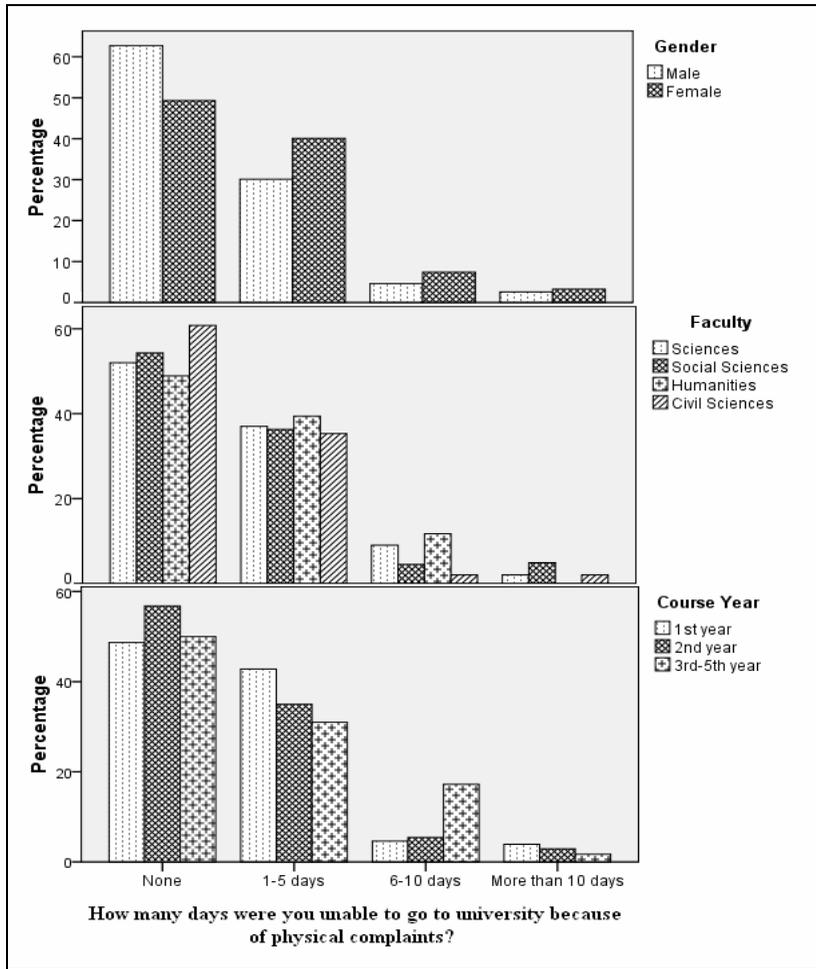
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Figure 3.8: Days missed at University by gender, faculty and course year

An interesting observation is that few participants mentioned that difficulties related to alcohol use, drug use and sexually transmitted diseases affected their academic performance. Excluding colds and flu, these are largely social and psychological factors, resonating the previous finding that physical health is not a concern for the students in contrast to psychologically related complaints.

Table 3.2: Factors influencing students' academic performance

Difficulty		Quite a lot	Not much	Not at all
Alcohol use	Count	20	56	391
	Percentage	4.3%	12.0%	83.7%
Allergies	Count	40	28	398
	Percentage	8.6%	6.0%	85.4%
Chronic illness and chronic pain	Count	19	15	425
	Percentage	4.1%	3.3%	92.6%
Colds/flu/sinus infections	Count	89	138	238
	Percentage	19.1%	29.7%	51.2%
Concern over friends or family	Count	125	138	203
	Percentage	26.8%	29.6%	43.6%
Depression/anxiety	Count	80	98	288
	Percentage	17.2%	21.0%	61.8%
Drug use	Count	4	7	448
	Percentage	.9%	1.5%	97.6%
Eating disorder	Count	16	39	409
	Percentage	3.4%	8.4%	88.1%
Injury	Count	7	23	432
	Percentage	1.5%	5.0%	93.5%
Harassment	Count	8	7	446
	Percentage	1.7%	1.5%	96.7%
Relationship difficulties	Count	108	101	257
	Percentage	23.2%	21.7%	55.2%
Sexually transmitted diseases	Count	4	6	449
	Percentage	.9%	1.3%	97.8%
Sleep difficulties	Count	75	82	311
	Percentage	16.0%	17.5%	66.5%
Stress	Count	237	110	122
	Percentage	50.5%	23.5%	26.0%

$\chi^2 = 1902.9,\ v = 26,\ p > 0.0005$

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Figure 3.9 shows that percentage wise, there are more male students whose academic performances is affected negatively by alcohol and drug use. Conversely, there is a higher proportion of females whose academic performance is affected considerably by stress, cold, flu and sinus infections.
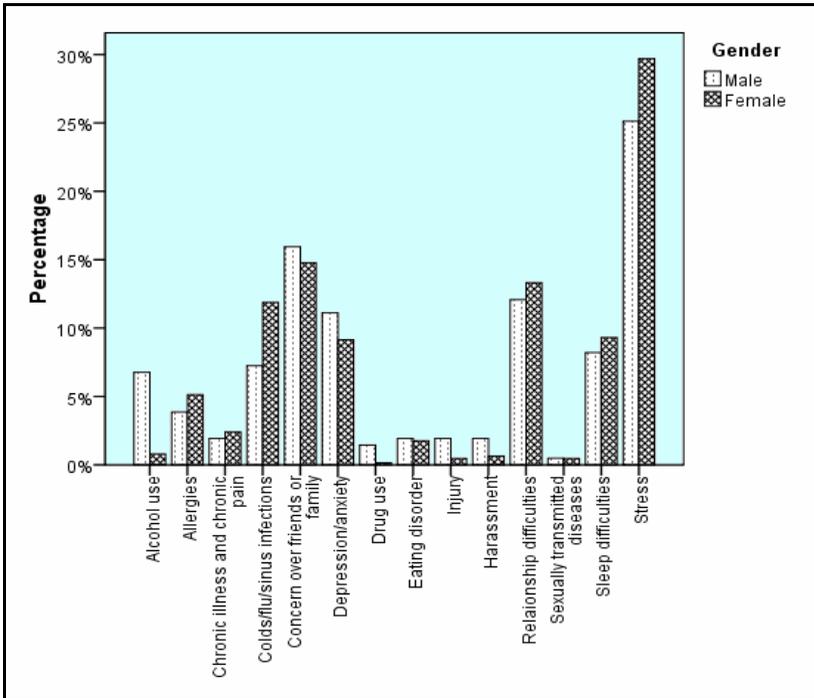

Figure 3.9: Factors influencing students' performance by gender

3.1.2 Diet, weight and exercise

3.1.2.1 Weight
About 64% of the students think they have the right weight, while a quarter describe themselves as being overweight, ranging from slightly to very overweight. Almost 10% believe they are underweight, while 1.4% are very underweight (Figure 3.10).
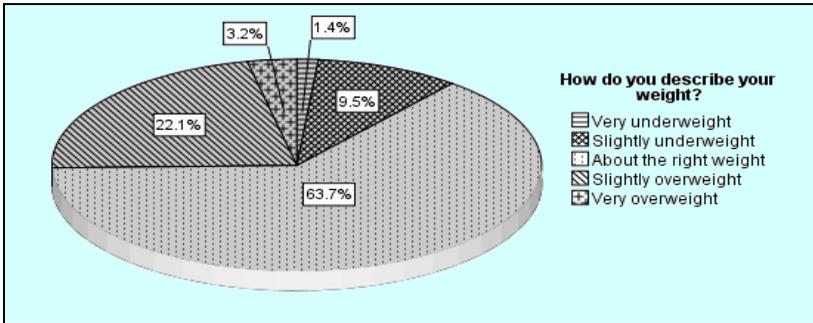
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Figure 3.10: Students' perceived weight

Females appear to be more satisfied with their weight than males; with more males being underweight. Dating seems a good motivator to keep the right weight, with proportionally more dating students (70.3%) considering their weight to be right (Figure 3.11).
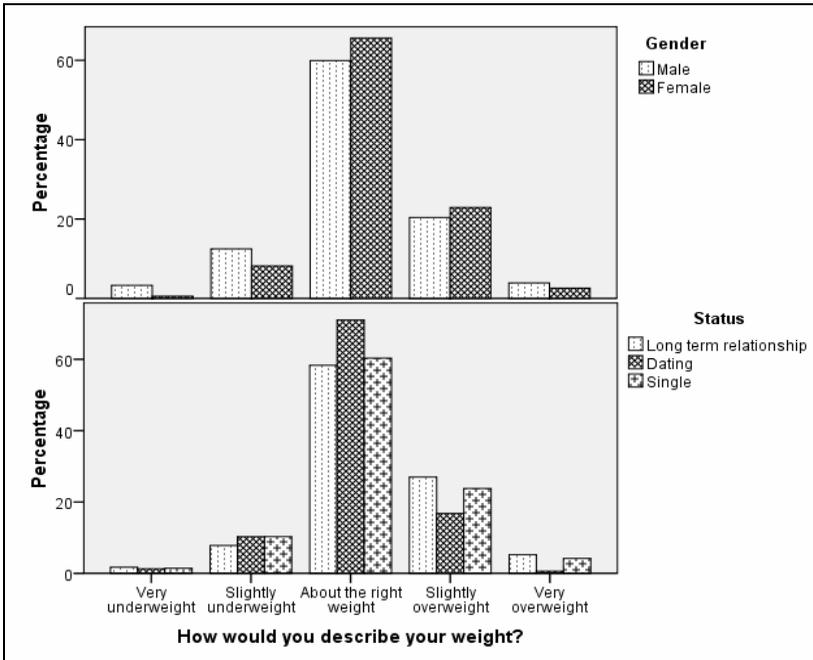

Figure 3.11: Students' perceived weight by gender and relation status

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