

## **Gender, Income and Mental Health: The Turkish Case**

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### **Abstract:**

Mental health disorders display gender differences in various countries. This paper explores gender differences in mental health status of individuals in Turkey. For empirical analysis, it employs a nationally representative data set from Turkish Health Survey of Turkish Statistical Institute for 2016. This study constructs an index for mental health at individual level by using principal component factor analysis. In order to account for endogeneity between mental health measures and income level, simultaneous equation estimation frameworks are utilized. Conditionally mixed process models are estimated for quantification of associations between gender, income and mental health status. Empirical findings indicate that Turkish females report lower mental health measures than Turkish males. There is endogenous and positive relationship between household income level and mental health status of individuals in Turkey. Age level, use of mental health care services, having financial problems in payment of mental health care services and smoking frequency have negatively significant associations with mental health outcomes. Education level, being married, social support, physical activity and healthy dietary habits are positively related with mental health status of individuals in Turkey. Being employed is a positive correlate of mental health for only males. Alcohol consumption frequency is negatively related with mental health of only females. Being underweight has negative correlations with mental health outcomes for both males and females whereas severe obesity has negative correlations with mental health of females. Findings of this study imply that health policies should consider targeting specific sub-groups of the population and avoid applying one-fit-all approaches.

**Keywords:** Mental Health, Gender, Income, Conditional Mixed-Process Model, Turkey

**JEL Codes:** C30, I10, I14, J10, I30