

**IB DP Psychology**  
**Higher level**  
**Paper 3 – resource booklet**

The sources in this examination have been collated to assess the claim that cultural bias influences the diagnosis of major depressive disorder.

**Source 2**

A study was conducted comparing self-reported depressive symptoms and clinical diagnosis rates among university students in two countries. Fifty students from each country completed the same standardised depression questionnaire. Scores ranged from 0 to 30, with higher scores indicating more severe depressive symptoms.

The table shows depression questionnaire scores in relation to clinical diagnosis rates of MDD.

**Table 1: Depression questionnaire scores and clinical diagnosis rates**

	<b>USA</b>	<b>Japan</b>
<b>Mean questionnaire score</b>	18.2	17.5
<b>Standard deviation</b>	4.1	4.3
<b>Percentage clinically diagnosed with MDD</b>	46%	19%

### Source 3

A researcher conducted focus group interviews with mental health professionals from four different cultural backgrounds to explore how depression is recognised and diagnosed. A thematic analysis identified the following themes:

- Emotional symptoms such as sadness and hopelessness were prioritised in Western diagnostic contexts
- Physical symptoms (e.g. fatigue, headaches, sleep problems) were more frequently emphasised in non-Western clinical settings
- Clinicians reported concern that Western diagnostic criteria may not adequately capture culturally specific expressions of distress
- Some clinicians noted stigma surrounding mental illness influenced patients' willingness to report emotional symptoms

### Source 4

A correlational study examined the relationship between cultural orientation (measured on an individualism–collectivism scale) and likelihood of receiving an MDD diagnosis among patients reporting depressive symptoms. The results are shown in **Table 2**.

**Table 2: Correlation coefficients between cultural orientation and likelihood of major depressive disorder (MDD) diagnosis**

Variable	Correlation with MDD diagnosis
Individualism score	+0.72
Collectivism score	-0.68

## Source 5

**Figure 2** shows the number of MDD diagnoses made by clinicians before and after receiving cultural competence training. The training focused on recognising somatic symptoms and culturally specific expressions of distress.

**Figure 2: Number of MDD diagnoses before and after cultural competence training**

