# Depression Research: Weisman et al

**Aim:** To investigate the prevalence of depression in different countries

**Procedure:**

- This study was carried out in 10 countries across the world, including a range of different cultures - the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico, France, West Germany, Italy, Lebanon, Taiwan, Korea, and New Zealand.
- Participants in each country were randomly selected using telephone registries.  A trained interviewer would call the people selected and interview them about their mental health history.  A total of 38,000 participants were interviewed

**Findings:**

- Rates of depression varied tremendously in different countries.  The lifetime prevalence of depression was only **1.5%** in Taiwan, but as high as **19%** in Beirut, Lebanon
- Surprisingly, the rate of depression in Paris (**16.4%)** was almost as high as that of Beirut, despite the fact that Beirut had just experienced 15 years of brutal civil war
- In spite of the large variation in depression rates, some patterns were noticed across the world.  In each country, the rate of depression in women was 2-3 times higher than in men.  And people who were separated or divorced had much higher rates of depression than people who were currently married

**Conclusion:**

- Depression is a universal disorder, and some risk factors for depression - like being female, or having a divorce - are common across the world
- On the other hand, people from some countries seem to suffer from much higher rates of depression than others, for reasons that are not certain

**Evaluation:**

- This study had an impressive number of participants, as well as a strong random sampling method, so the findings can be generalized to the population of each country
- Because this study was carried out in multiple languages, there is always the risk that translation between languages may not be completely precise
- Although the study found very different rates of depression in different countries, it does not explain *why* people in some countries seem to be more likely to become depressed