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.