Measuring the Level of Examination Anxiety among Students in a Private Medical College in Lahore

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ABSTRACT

Background: Examination anxiety is usually a combination of reactions that typically involve depression, excessive worry, irrelevant thinking, and tension stimuli based on the individual's experience of evaluation, test and result.

Aim: To measuring the Level of Examination Anxiety among Students in a Private Medical College.

Methods: It was a cross sectional descriptive quantitative study. The participants enrolled after taking consents from all students, those studying in central park medical college Lahore,pre- designed questionnaire was used to collect the data. The multiple rounds of data collection were done. The data was analyzed by SPSS 20, qualitative variables present in the form of frequency and percentage.Statistical test like Independent t- test and chi- square test was applied to obtain the required results. Level of significance was taken as ≤5%.

Results: The mean age of participants was 22.14± 2.44years whereas maximum 28 and minimum 17 years. 199(66.3%) participants having age group between 21-25 years.There were 135(45%) male and 165(55%) female participants in this study. The average anxiety level on VAS was evaluated as 62.21 ± 23.01, students showed mild 34(11.33%), 141(47%) moderate and 125(41.67%) with severe anxiety level.Response showed that mostly students of all professionals have moderate anxiety and especiallyin 3rd years 72(73.9%) students suffered at moderate level of anxiety. The severe level of anxiety was observed among students of 2nd years as 51(64.6%), results showed the statistically significant difference of level of anxiety between batches of medical students as p-value < 0.001.

Conclusion: This study indicates moderate level of exam anxiety based on Visual Analogue Scale (VAS).Teachers, parents, and college administration should work together to reduce the level of stress and enhance their strategy that promote a healthy lifestyle. Stress management and Time management should be taught along with first year curricula.

Keywords: Visual Analogue Scale, Exam Anxiety, Anxiety, Central Park Medical College Lahore (CPMC).

INTRODUCTION

Although anxiety is an indisputable phenomenon that is common in human life, it affects its performance and behavior. Effectiveness in different situations, an average level of anxiety is useful to keep working and responsible for what they need to do, and also helps people lead a more sustainable and prosperous life[1,2]. The high level of anxiety threatens people's mental and physical health and has one negative impact on personal, social, family, professional and educational achievement[3].

Exam anxiety and its dimensions are the most extensive areas of research in recent years. Research shows that the various types of disorders caused by anxiety have a high frequency around the world[4]. A little stress is needed, but sometimes it is so complicated, performance in the exam and leads to a behavioral disorder or low trust or low academic achievement. Sometimes individuals hate study and training only through

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assessment and examination[5]. .Life styles related matters include inadequate rest, insufficient physical activities, poor diet and mismanagement of time can be the contributing factors leading to exam anxiety among students as reported by many authors[6]. Acharya et al[8] have reported that lack of strategic study, ineffective study style due to inconsistent content coverage and studying all night before the exams, the inefficient study involves the lack of revising the course material, are the main factors leading to anxiety related to the exam, (e.g. going blank during exam) are reported by many authors[9].

In Pakistan, the fears and stress of medical students are more prevalent during the pre-screening sessions. Research on different types of stress and anxiety among medical students was done in Pakistan[10]. In particular, no study was conducted on the measurement of anxiety level among students of a private medical school, because the level of anxiety of private medical schools may differ in comparison with public medical schools due to different factors such as the additional financial burden and a relatively weak academic record.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

It was a cross sectional descriptive quantitative survey carried out in Central Park Medical College Lahore (CPMC). Approval for this study was taken both from University of Lahore and Central Park Medical College Lahore. All students of 4 batches at CPMC were included

in the study.Informed consent was acquired from all participants after confirming about their confidentiality. After fulfill all formalities, the data of 300 students were recorded by using structured questionnaire. The language of the questionnaire was easy and understandable by the participants.

Statistical Analysis: Data was analyzed by using statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0.Frequencies and percentages were given for qualitative variables..Statistical test like Independent t- test and chi- square test was applied to obtain the required results. Level of significance was taken as ≤5%.

RESULTS

In this study the mean age of all participants was 22.14± 2.44years whereas mean age maximum 28and minimum 17 years old.199(66.3%) participants having age group between 21-25years. There were 135(45%) male and 165(55%) female participants in this study (Table 1).

The average anxiety level on VASwas evaluated as 62.21 ± 23.01., students showed mild 34(11.33%), 141(47%) moderate and 125(41.67%) with severe anxiety level (Table 2).

Students response regarding anxiety, it was showed that mostly students of all professionals have moderate anxiety but in 3rd years 72(73.9%) students suffered at moderate level of anxiety. The severe level of anxiety was observed among students of 2nd years as 51(64.6%) which showed the statistically significant difference of level of anxiety between different batches of medical student as p-value < 0.001 (Table 3).

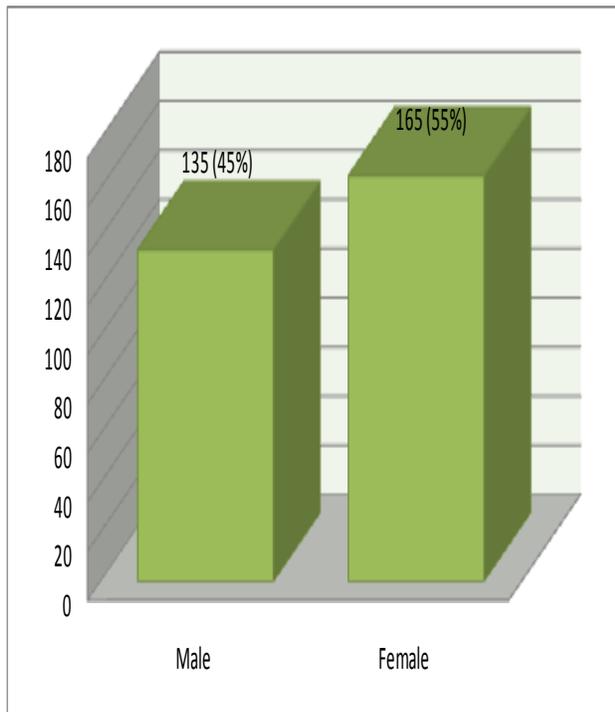Fig. 1: Graphical presentation with respect to gender

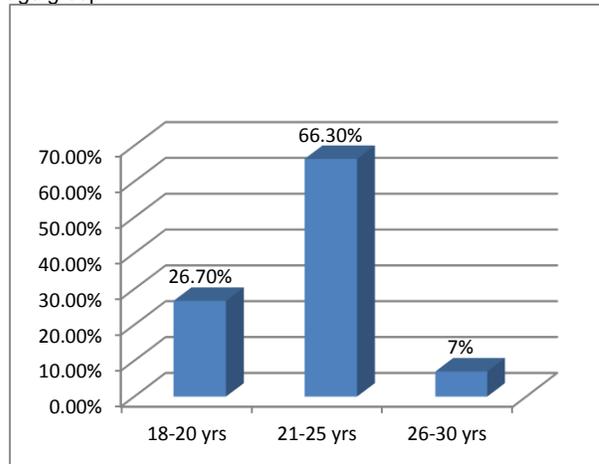Fig. 2: Demographic information of the participants with respect to age group

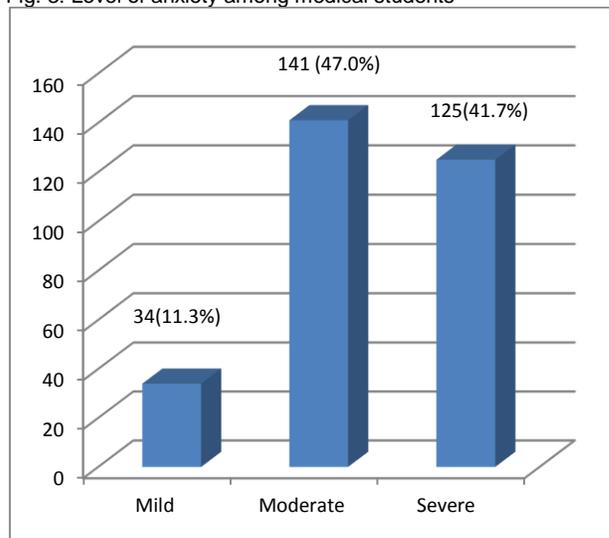Fig. 3: Level of anxiety among medical students

Table 1: Frequency distribution of students with respect to gender and grouped age

Characteristics	Frequency	%age
Age		
(Mean ± S.D)	22.14 ± 2.444	
Maximum	28.00	
Minimum	17.00	
Grouped Age		
18-20	80	26.67
21-25	199	66.33
26-30	21	7.00
Gender		
Male		45
Female	165	55

Table 2 Level of exam anxiety among medical students

Level of anxiety	n	%age
	34	11.33
Moderate	141	47.00
Severe	125	41.67
Total	300	100

Table 3 Level of exam anxiety among students of different batches

Anxiety Level	MBBS Years				Total	p-value
	2nd Year	3rd Year	4th Year	Final Year		
Mild anxiety	5(6.3%)	12(12.2%)	5(7.1%)	12(22.6%)	34(11.3%)	
Moderate anxiety	23(29.1%)	72(73.5%)	28(40.0%)	18(34.0%)	141 (47.0%)	0.001
Severe anxiety	51 (64.6%)	14(14.3%)	37(52.9%)	23(43.4%)	125(41.7%)	
Total	79(26.33%)	98(32.67%)	70(23.33%)	53(17.67%)	300	

DISCUSSION

A cross-sectional, quantitative, descriptive study was conducted with data collected at single point in time from Medical Students of Central Park Medical College, Lahore. The current study explored the status of anxiety exam anxiety among the medical students.Results of previous studies demonstrated the age of study participants above than 22, which was correlated with the results of current study where 39% (n=199/300) study participants were between the ages of 21-25 years. However researcher Zhang and colleagues conducted a study in 2011, there were 64 participants in and all were at the age of 20±0.1 years[12-13]. The results compiled by Trifoni A &Shahini M(2011)supported the conclusion of above researchers as there were 65.1% (71/109) participants were females[14] .The results of Zhang showed no prominent difference was observed between males and females and out of 64 half of these participants (33/64) were females[13].

Singh and colleagues, from India reported depressive symptoms are significantly higher in 1st year (58.3%) and 2nd year (54.6%) as compared to the students of 3rd (34.3%) and 4th year (37.2%)[15]. similarly Aktekin and colleagues from Turkey observed that the depression and anxiety increased significantly in medical students between the first and second years [16]. Inam and Mamdou in their studiesreported that the prevalence of anxiety and depression ishigh among newly entered students (1st and 2nd year) ascompared to students who have passed the firstprofessional examination i.e. 3rd and 4th year[17-18].

CONCLUSION

Medical students are important pillars of our young population and regular monitoring of students should be done to find out stressed students at the early as possible. Students may need guidance and reassurance from a positive role model and someone whom they can trust to talk to about such pressures, otherwise they may chose negative ways to cope with the stress in their lives. Teachers, parents, and college administration should work together to reduce the level of stress and enhance their coping strategy that promote a healthy lifestyle.

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