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# Evaluation of the Generalized Anxiety Disorder among the Pharmacy Students during Examinations

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**ABSTRACT**

**Aim:** The main aim of this study is to evaluate the generalized anxiety disorder among the pharmacy students during examinations in the Indian scenario.

**Materials & Methods:** This was a prospective study conducted among the pharmacy students by using the GAD-7 questionnaire which was circulated by means of Google form to various Pharmacy colleges located in Andhra Pradesh, India. Students from pharmacy colleges with both the gender of all age groups were included. Students other than the pharmacy stream were excluded from the study.

**Results:** A total of 240 study participants were involved in the study and among them 71 (29.6%) were found to be males and 169 (70.4%) were found to be females. Among 240 study participants, 30 (12.5%) were observed with minimal anxiety, 105 (43.8%) were observed with mild anxiety, 78 (32.5%) were observed with moderate anxiety and the remaining 27 (11.2%) were observed with severe anxiety.

**Conclusion:** Most of the study participants were observed with mild anxiety symptoms followed by moderate anxiety symptoms during the examinations. Usually, whenever the students were going to appear for their examinations, the minimal anxiety is most commonly seen in them. But, the abnormal scores among some of the students may negatively impact their academic performance of the students. Parents and as well as the teaching faculty should provide some moral support for the students and in case of severe anxiety conditions, students must go for counseling sessions which may benefit them in a positive way in dealing with the academics.

## Introduction

Anxiety is a psychological condition as well as an emotional and behavioral disorder characterized by deleterious thinking, extreme worrying, agitation, a sense of fear and excessively sensitive responses [1,2]. In the context of academics, students used to experience high levels of stress due to high academic burden, continuous tests and examinations [3,4]. The physiological symptoms such as sweaty palms, cold hands & feet, racing heart beat and panic attacks can be observed among the students [5].

According to the recent studies, about 75% of the students experienced some degree of anxiety symptoms during their academics at college or university levels [6]. Anxiety and its associated symptoms greatly influence the students' academic performance was revealed by various studies from different countries and discipline [7-10]. The main aim of this study is to evaluate the generalized anxiety disorder among the pharmacy students during examinations in the Indian scenario.

## Materials and Methods

This was a prospective study conducted among the pharmacy students by using the GAD-7 questionnaire which was circulated by means of Google form to various Pharmacy colleges located in Andhra Pradesh, India. Students from pharmacy colleges with both the gender of all age groups were included. Students other than the pharmacy stream were excluded from the study.

A total of 240 pharmacy students were participated in the study by filling GAD-7 questionnaire. A link was generated for the questionnaire which was prepared in the format of Google forms and this link was circulated among the social media groups in order to get the responses from the study participants. By using this questionnaire, the severity of the anxiety was calculated by assigning the scores 0,1,2,3 for the options provided for each question in the questionnaire. The total score of the GAD-7 questionnaire for the seven items ranges from 0 to 21.

According to this questionnaire, the severity of the anxiety can be classified into minimal anxiety (0-4), mild anxiety (5-9), moderate anxiety (10-14) and severe anxiety (15-21). Responses from all the study participants were analyzed and the proper interpretations of the study were done.

## Results & Discussion

A total of 240 study participants were involved in the study and among them 71 (29.6%) were found to be males and 169 (70.4%) were found to be females (Figure 1).
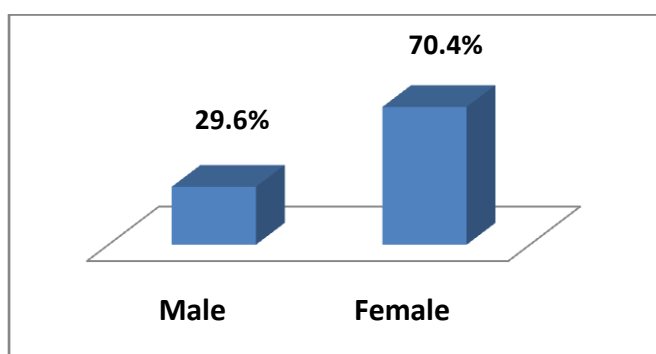


**Figure 1: Gender wise categorization of the study participants**

Among the 240 study participants, 14 (5.9%) were of 18 years of age, 18 (7.5%) were of 19 years of age, 37 (15.4%) were of 20 years of age, 68 (28.3%) were of 21 years of age, 62 (25.8%) were of 22 years of age, 30 (12.5%) were of 23 years of age, 9 (3.8%) were of 24 years of age and 2 (0.8%) were of 25 years of age. Among the 240 study participants, 99 (41.3%) were from urban areas and the remaining 141 (58.7%) were from the rural areas. Most of the study participants were from rural areas followed by urban areas.

Among 240 study participants, 45 (18.8%) were having a sleep of < 6 hrs/day, 159 (66.2%) were having a sleep of 6-8 hrs/day and the remaining 36 (15%) were having a sleep of > 8 hrs/day (Table 1). Majority of the study participants had a sleep of 6-8 hours per day (66.2%) and were having enough sleep according to their age group. This result was similar to the study done by Sana Samreen et al (2020) [11].

**Table 1: Sleeping pattern of the study participants**

| Sleeping pattern | Male (%) | Female (%) | Total (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| <6hr/day | 11 (15.5) | 34 (20.1) | 45 (18.8) |
| 6-8hr/day | 47 (66.2) | 112 (66.3) | 159 (66.2) |
| >8hr/day | 13 (18.3) | 23 (13.6) | 36 (15) |
| Total | 71 (100) | 169 (100) | 240 (100) |

Among 240 study participants, 30 (12.5%) were observed with minimal anxiety, 105 (43.8%) were observed with mild anxiety, 78 (32.5%) were observed with moderate anxiety and the remaining 27 (11.2%) were observed with severe anxiety (Table 2/Figure 3). About 210 study participants were having anxiety symptoms and majority of them were observed with mild anxiety followed by moderate anxiety. This result was similar to the study done by Sana Samreen et al (2020) [11].

**Table 2: Severity wise categorization of the study participants based on GAD-7 scale**

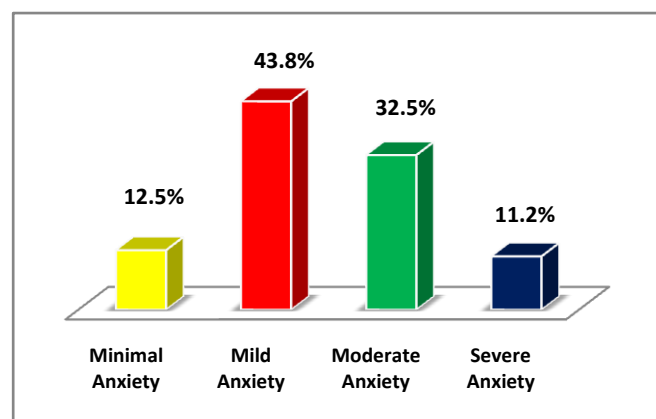| Severity of Anxiety | Male (%) | Female (%) | Total (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Minimal Anxiety | 8 (11.3) | 22 (13) | 30 (12.5) |
| Mild Anxiety | 34 (47.9) | 71 (42) | 105 (43.8) |
| Moderate Anxiety | 23 (32.4) | 55 (32.6) | 78 (32.5) |
| Severe Anxiety | 6 (8.4) | 21 (12.4) | 27 (11.2) |
| Total | 71 (100) | 169 (100) | 240 (100) |



**Figure 3: Severity wise categorization of the study participants based on GAD-7 scale**

## Conclusion

Most of the study participants were observed with mild anxiety symptoms followed by moderate anxiety symptoms during the examinations in this study. Usually, whenever the students were going to appear for their examinations, minimal anxiety is most commonly seen in them. But, the abnormal scores among some of the students may negatively impact the academic performance of the students. Hence, parents and as well as the teaching faculty should provide some moral support for the students in order to cope up with anxiety. In case of severe anxiety conditions, students must go for counseling sessions which may benefit them in a positive way in dealing with the academics.

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