

Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scores Inmale and Female Students

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Abstract

Psychological parameters play a key role in the daily life of young adults. It was reported that there was a high incidence of suicidal rate in these age groups when compared with others. The present study was undertaken to observe the selected psychological parameters that are depression, anxiety, and stress in young adults. A total of 50 (males =25, females =25) young adults studying undergraduate allied health courses both males and females were part of the study after obtaining the written informed consent. The following criterion was used to recruit the participants. Depression, anxiety, and stress levels were assessed using the DASS-42 questionnaire. Depression scores were significantly higher in females when compared with males. Anxiety and stress scores were not significantly different among males and females. Females were in severe depression where males were moderate. Anxiety scores of males and females were mild. Stress scores of males and females were severe. The study results support earlier studies and emphasize the need to assess psychological parameters in young adults. The study also recommends detailed studies in this area.

Keywords: Depression, anxiety, stress, young adults

Introduction

Psychological parameters play a key role in the daily life of young adults. The young adults in the age group of 18-24 were reported to be more sensitive as they are in the transition period of their life. It was reported that there was a high incidence of suicidal rate in these age groups when compared with others.^[1] There may be a number of causes for higher levels of stress in these individuals. It can be education stress, especially high in students of professional courses. It can be financial stress or issues with friends etc. The major issue is that though these students are undergoing stress, they do not know to whom to approach for management. Earlier studies suggested establishing a student monitoring cell that

assesses regularly the psychosocial behavior of young adults.^[1] Unmanaged or poorly managed stress leads to depression and further suicidal thoughts. Hence, there is a need for regular monitoring of the psychological parameters of young adults and counsel them with proper management strategies. The present study was undertaken to observe the selected psychological parameters that are depression, anxiety, and stress in young adults.

Materials and Methods

Study design: Cross-sectional study

Sampling technique: Convenient sampling

Study population: A total of 50 (males =25, females =25) young adults studying undergraduate allied health courses both males and females were part of the study after obtaining the written informed consent. The following criterion was used to recruit the participants.

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Inclusion criteria: Apparently healthy individuals within the age group of 18-24 were recruited in the study.

Exclusion criteria: Participants with health issues or undergoing any treatment or therapy and unwilling participants were excluded from the study.

Assessment of psychological parameters: Depression, anxiety, and stress levels were assessed using the DASS-42 questionnaire which is a standard questionnaire to assess the negative psychological aspects stress, anxiety, and depression.^[2]

Ethical considerations: The study protocol was approved by the institutional human ethical committee of the hospital. The study followed the guidelines issued by ICMR. Informed consent was obtained from all the participants before the study.

Data analysis: Data was analyzed using SPSS 20.0 version. Student t-test was applied to observe the significance of the difference between the groups. A Probability value less than 0.05 was considered significant.

Results

Results were presented in table no 1. The two-tailed P value equals 0.0016 for the depression score. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be very statistically significant. The two-tailed P value equals 0.1719 for anxiety score. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant. The two-tailed P value equals 0.0136 for the stress score. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be statistically significant.

Table 1: Psychological parameters of participants

Parameter	Males	Females	P value
Depression	16±0.80	13±0.40	0.0016**
Anxiety	9±0.60	8±0.40	0.1719
Stress	21±1.20	17±1	0.0136*

Data was presented as Mean and SEM. (*P<0.05 is significant, **P<0.01 is significant)

Discussion

The present study was undertaken to observe the selected psychological parameters that are depression, anxiety, and stress in young adults. Depression scores were significantly higher in females when compared with males. Anxiety and stress scores were not significantly different among males and females. Females were in severe depression where males were moderate. Anxiety scores of males and females were mild. Stress scores of males and females were severe. The psychological health of the students is much-neglected area of consideration. However, there is a need to assess the psychological parameters of young adults and monitor them and

counsel them for better mental health and quality of life. It was reported that young adults have higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression levels.^[3]

The reason for stress may be the academic pressures from parents and teachers or competition from classmates. This is true if the student belongs to a professional course especially medical or engineering. There is lots of academic stress in these students and they have absolutely no time to relax. The majority of students fail to adjust themselves to this excessive stress and enters into depression.^[4] Earlier studies reported that depression and anxiety are more prevalent than stress. However, in the present study, it was observed that

depression and stress are severe and anxiety is mild in participants.^[5]

Academic stress was reported to be the major reason for the mental health issues of young adults. Excessive stress due to academics leads to decline cognitive functions and quality of life of students.^[6] Interestingly, there is a strong link between the stress and immune system and excessive stress deteriorates the immune system and increases the incidence of diseases.^[7] When the student fell sick his performance in academics decreases which further acts as a stressor. This will act as a vicious cycle if not interrupted, which can increase suicidal thoughts in young adults.

Though a minimum amount of stress is required in life, excess stress is very deleterious for both physical and mental health. The young adults must be periodically assessed for psychological distress and monitored and counseled for management strategies for their better quality of life and academic performance.

Conclusion

The study results support earlier studies and emphasize the need to assess psychological parameters in young adults. The study also recommends detailed studies in this area.

Conflicts of Interest: None declared

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