

Assessment of Social Phobia among Students of Nursing College in Hawler Medical University at Erbil City-Iraq

تقييم الرهاب الاجتماعي بين طلبة كلية التمريض في جامعة هولير الطبية في مدينة أربيل

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الخلاصة

الهدف: تهدف الدراسة الحالية الى تقييم مستوى الرهاب الاجتماعي لدى طلبة كلية التمريض في جامعة هولير الطبية في مدينة أربيل. **المنهجية:** أجريت دراسة وصفية في كلية التمريض بجامعة هولير الطبية في مدينة أربيل/أقليم كردستان العراق من شهر أيار 2015 الى شهر اب 2015. وقد تم اختيار عينة غير احتمالية "هادفة-غرضية" متكونة من 296 طالب. تم إعداد الإستمارة الإستبائية المتكونة من جزأين: الجزء الأول يشمل المعلومات الديموغرافية والاجتماعية للطلاب، والجزء الثاني يحتوي على مجموعة من الأسئلة حول تقييم مستوى الرهاب الاجتماعي والمتكون من 17 سؤالاً لخمسة إختيارات للإجابة من الأجوبة. وتم تحليل النتائج باستخدام البرنامج الاحصائي (SPSS V.22) كوسيلة إحصائية لتحليل البيانات وتم استعمال الاحصاء الوصفي من خلال تقييم التكرارات والنسب المئوية للرهاب الاجتماعي بواسطة مقياس جرد الرهاب الاجتماعي. والاحصاء الاستدلالي الذي شمل اختبار مربع كاي ومعامل الإختلاف ANOVA. **النتائج:** بينت نتائج الدراسة بأن عُمر غالبية الطلاب ما بين 17-22 سنة ومعظمهم كانوا من الإناث، غير متزوجين، ومتوسطي الحالة الاقتصادية، وهم من سكنة المناطق الريفية (59.8%) وإن غالبية الطلاب عندهم الرهاب الاجتماعي. كان هناك فرق كبير بين سنوات الأكاديمية للطلبة بخصوص شدة الرهاب الاجتماعي. **الإستنتاج:** استنتجت الدراسة بأن أكثر من نصف عدد طلاب كلية التمريض لديهم الرهاب الاجتماعي وهناك علاقة ذات دلالة إحصائية عالية بين المرحلة الأكاديمية ومستوى الرهاب الاجتماعي. **التوصيات:** أوصت الدراسة بأعداد برنامج تعليمي عن الرهاب الاجتماعي والتكيف معه لدى الطلبة التمريبيين في جامعة هولير الطبية في مدينة أربيل.

Abstract

Aims: Present study aims to assess the social phobia among nursing students at Hawler Medical University in Erbil City.

Methods: Quantitative, Descriptive study was conducted on nursing students in the college of Nursing at Hawler Medical University in Erbil City in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq from 5th May to 4th August 2015. A non-probability (purposive sample) was used for selection of 296 students. Questionnaire was designed and divided into two parts; socio-demographic characteristics of nursing students, and social phobia items which included Inventory scale questions that include 17 items with 5 responds. The data were analyzed through the SPSS software V.22 application, descriptive data analysis was done through measuring of frequency and percentage of social phobia score using Social Phobia Inventory Scale. Inferential data analysis was done by Chi-square and ANOVA tests.

Results: The results shows that most of the study sample was between 17-22 years old, female, single, and faire economic status from rural area (59.8%). Most of the students had social phobia. There was significant difference between students' academic years regarding severity of social phobia.

Conclusions: The study concluded that more than half of the study sample had social phobia and there are a highly significant relationship between academic years and social phobia among the nursing students.

Recommendations: The study recommends educational programs for all nursing students regarding social phobia and how to cope with such situations in Hawler Medical University.

Keywords: Assessment, Social phobia, Nursing students, Hawler Medical University, Academic social phobia anxiety

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INTRODUCTION:

Social phobia is characterized by anxiety provoked by certain types of social or performance situations, which often leads to avoidance behavior ⁽¹⁾. The study done in Brazilian university students revealed that the prevalence of social phobia was 11.6% ⁽²⁾.

The other unconscious fears may also be expressed in a symbolic manner as phobias. For example, a female child who was sexually abused by an adult male family friend when he was taking her for a ride in his boat grew up with an intense, irrational fear of all water vessels. Psychoanalytical theory postulates that fear of the man was repressed and displaced on to boats. Boats became an unconscious symbol for the feared person, but one that the young girl viewed as safer since her fear of boats prevented her from having to confront the real fear ⁽³⁾.

Social phobia can be precipitated by stressful or humiliating experiences, death of a parents, separation or chronic exposure to stress, or it may have an insidious onset. Social phobia occurs in 3-4 % of the whole population (age of onset in children under 5 years, and puberty to 35 years, also the sex ratio is Female 2.5 :1 Male. It is associated with panic disorder and other anxiety disorders. Although individuals with social phobia may well have been shy adolescents, this should be distinguished from anxious (avoidant) personality disorder ⁽⁴⁾.

Regarding the social phobia many researches has been studied in a deferent place in the world, and the shown the incidence of social phobia, and also according to the study has been done in cumhuriyet university lifetime prevalence of social phobia was 9.8% among female students and 9.4% among male students. The highest lifetime prevalence of it was found in the group aged 21 to 24 years (11%), and lowest lifetime prevalence was found in the group age 25 years and over 5.5% ⁽⁴⁾.

In a study which included 700 students with a mean age of 21.16 years. In total, 332 (47.4%) were male and 368 (52.6%) were female. In all, 146 participants (20.9%) had social phobia during the previous year, whereas 152 participants (21.7%) had social phobia for a lifetime. Among the students, 74.6% that had social phobia during the previous year and 76.5% of those that had social phobia for a lifetime had a specific social phobia. Among those with a specific phobia, speaking or performing in front of an audience and speaking in a meeting without preparation were the most common anxiety-provoking social situations ⁽⁵⁾.

This subject was studied previously in other country or city in Iraq, in 2011 a study is carried out in college of nursing among first year students at university of Baghdad,

Karkuk, Thi-qar, and Kufa. The study result shows the social phobia inventory (5.8 %). Academic social phobia anxiety is an important educational problem that affects millions of students in colleges and schools over the world each year. Since social phobia is present among most people especially the first years of college's student. Social phobia has a significant impact upon nursing collegians self-esteem ⁽²⁾. So the researchers interested to do the study on social phobia among student nurses because no studies done among nursing students at Hawler Medical University, so researchers want to carry out this study.

METHODOLOGY:

Research design: A quantitative, descriptive study design.

Setting: The study conducted in College of Nursing at Hawler Medical University in Erbil City of Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

Duration of the study: This study was carried out from 5th May 2015 to 4th August 2015.

Study sample: The population of this study was nursing students. A non-probability (purposive sample) of 296 nursing students in all academic years were selected from College of Nursing at Hawler Medical University in Erbil City.

Tools and methods of data collection: The aims of this study are to assess the social phobia among nursing students, to determine relationship between severity of social phobia and demographic characteristics, and to between the social phobia and academic year students. The questionnaire was contained of two parts. Part one: consisted of socio-demographic characteristics of the students, and part two: Was a Scale which used to measure the severity of social phobia among nursing students. Measuring of social phobia score using Social Phobia Inventory (SPIN) scale which includes 17 questions and each questions has 5 responses that are marked from 0 to 4 and the student select one response that are more suitable with his emotional state. Less than 20 is indicate no social phobia, from 21-30 is indicate mild social phobia, from 31-40 is indicate moderate social phobia, from 41-50 is indicate severe social phobia and 51 or more is indicate very sever social phobia. The data was collected through using of self-report technique.

Ethical considerations: The ethical approvals for conducting the study and sample selection were obtained from the ethical committee of research in College of Nursing / Hawler Medical University. Permission has been taken from the students before starting the interview. Informed consent to participate and maintain confidentiality was observed. Before data collection researcher explained the objectives of this study to students and request consent for participation in the study.

Statistical analysis: The data were analyzed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS, version 22). Descriptive statistical analysis was used to find out frequencies and percentage. Inferential statistical analysis was used through Chi-square test to determine the association between severity of social phobia and student's socio-demographic characteristics and ANOVA test was used for comparing between severity of social phobia and academic years of students.

RESULTS:

Table 1: Sociodemographic characteristics of 296 nursing students

Sociodemographic characteristics		F	%
Age Group / years	17-22	255	86.1
	23-28	37	12.5
	29-34	4	1.4
Gender	Male	53	17.9
	Female	243	82.1
Marital status	Single	264	89.2
	Married	32	10.8
Economic status	Good	110	37.2
	fair	179	60.5
	Bad (poor)	7	2.4
Residential area	Urban	119	40.2
	Rural	177	59.8

Table 1 shows the sociodemographic characteristics of the study sample. Regarding the age group, the highest percentage of the study sample was in the age group between 17-22 years old (86.1%). About the gender, most of the study sample was female (82.1%). The highest percentage of the study sample was single in marital status (89.2%), because all of them were students which is difficult to get married before graduation and also being unemployed. Since the majority of the study sample was financially dependent on their family status, and as illustrated from table 1, More than half of the study samples had a fair economic status. Regarding the residential area, more than half of the study sample was in the rural area. The present sample are college students joined there academic study after secondary school according to their wishes and degree of achievements in the final secondary school, probably this explain their age and even gender difference in addition to other socio demographic characteristics.

Table 2: Students response regarding Social Phobia Inventory (SPIN) scale

Social phobia items	Not at all		A little bit		Somewhat		Very much		Extremely	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
I am afraid of people in authority	162	54.7	67	22.6	42	14.2	18	6.1	7	2.4
I am bothered by blushing in front of people	77	26	76	25.7	43	14.5	48	16.2	52	17.6
Parties and social events scare me	190	64.2	54	18.2	37	12.5	10	3.4	5	1.7
I avoid talking to people I don't know	63	21.3	67	22.6	75	25.3	50	16.9	41	13.9
Being criticized scares me a lot	106	35.8	82	27.7	56	18.9	32	10.8	20	6.8
Fear of embarrassment causes me to avoid doing things or speaking to people	95	32.1	66	22.3	57	19.3	48	16.2	30	10.1
Sweating in front of people causes me distress	115	38.9	69	23.3	48	16.2	45	15.2	19	6.4
I avoid going to parties	108	36.5	70	23.6	56	18.9	29	9.8	33	11.1
I avoid activities in which I am the center of attention	72	24.3	77	26	74	25	44	14.9	29	9.8
Talking to strangers scares me	114	38.5	93	31.4	51	17.2	22	7.4	16	5.4
I avoid having to give speeches	86	29.1	74	25.0	68	23	42	14.2	26	8.8
I would do anything to avoid being criticized	61	20.6	69	23.3	68	23	44	14.9	54	18.2

Heart palpitations bother me when I am around people	87	29.4	77	26.0	54	18.2	52	17.6	26	8.8
I am afraid of doing things when people might be watching	75	25.3	77	26.0	62	20.9	54	18.2	28	9.5
Being embarrassed or looking stupid is among my worst fears	87	29.4	66	22.3	63	21.3	46	15.5	34	11.5
I avoid speaking to anyone in authority	109	36.8	80	27.0	49	16.6	33	11.1	25	8.4
Trembling or shaking in front of others is distressing to me	71	24	86	29.1	56	18.9	50	16.9	33	11.1

Table 2 shows the items of Social Phobia Inventory (SPIN) scale, which consists of 17 questions. The highest percentage of the study sample answered not at all parties and social events scare me (64.2%), and answered extremely I would do anything to avoid being criticized (18.2%).

Table 3: Severity levels of social phobia among 296 nursing students

Severity of Social phobia	F	%
None (≤ 20)	131	44.3
Mild (21-30)	76	25.7
Moderate (31-40)	59	19.9
Severe (41-50)	24	8.1
Very Severe (≥ 51)	6	2
Total	296	100

Table 3 shows the occurrence of social phobia as estimated on Social Phobia Inventory reveals that, 25.7% are having mild social anxiety, 19.9 % of subjects have moderate social anxiety and only 8.1% of subjects have severe social anxiety.

Table 4: Association between sociodemographic characteristics of the 296 nursing students and severity levels of social phobia.

Severity of Social phobia		None (< 20)	Mild (21-30)	Moderate (31-40)	Severe (41-50)	Very Severe (> 51)	P-value Chi-square Test
		F	F	F	F	F	
Sociodemographic	Age Group						
	17-22 (years)	110	72	49	20	4	0.170
	23-28	18	4	10	3	2	NS
Gender	29-34	3	0	0	1	0	
	Male	30	10	7	4	2	0.211
Marital status	Female	101	66	52	20	4	NS
	Single	116	69	52	22	5	0.952
Economic status	Married	15	7	7	2	1	NS
	Good	46	32	20	9	3	0.646
	fair	82	43	38	13	3	NS
Residential area	Bad (poor)	3	1	1	2	0	
	Urban	57	26	27	8	1	0.574
	Rural	74	50	32	16	5	NS

Table 4 shows the association between sociodemographic characteristics of the nursing students and severity levels of social phobia. There were non-significant associations between severity of social phobia and sociodemographic characteristics of all nursing students.

Table 5: Comparison between academic years of 296 nursing students regarding the severity levels of social phobia

Academic years	First Years	Second Years	Third Years	Fourth Years	P-value ANOVA Test
Severity of Social phobia	F	F	F	F	
None (< 20)	66	21	17	27	
Mild (21-30)	35	20	15	6	
Moderate (31-40)	26	10	15	8	0.001
Severe (41-50)	7	8	7	2	VHS
Very Severe (> 51)	1	2	3	0	
Total	135	61	57	43	

Table 5 shows the comparison between academic years of nursing students regarding the severity levels of social phobia. There were highly significant difference between academic years of nursing students about the severity levels of social phobia.

DISCUSSION:

Regarding the age group of present study, the highest percentage of the study sample was in the age group between 17-22 years old. This result supported by the study which was done by Shah and Kataria (2009), social phobia and its impact in Indian university students showed that the highest percent of participants having an age of 19, 20, 21 years⁽⁶⁾. About the gender, most of the study sample were females, the results of this study was similar to the study was done by Gultekin and Dereboy (2011) which the majority of the samples were female⁽⁵⁾. The highest percentage of the study sample was single in marital status, because all of them were students which is difficult to get married before graduation and also being unemployed although the present study agree with the study done by Izgic (2004), the highest percent of them were single⁽⁴⁾. Since the majority of the study sample was financially dependent on their family status, and as illustrated from table 1, More than half of the study samples had a fair economic status, this result was agreed by the study which was done by Izgic (2004) the highest percent were a fair in economic status⁽⁴⁾. Regarding the residential area, more than half of the study sample was from the rural area, this finding supported by Shah and Kataria (2009), that most of them from rural area⁽⁶⁾.

The present sample are college students joined their academic study after secondary school according to their wishes and degree of achievements in the final secondary school, probably this explain their age and even gender difference in addition to other socio demographic characteristics.

Table 2 shows the items of Social Phobia Inventory (SPIN) scale, which consists of 17 questions. The highest percentage of the study sample answered not at all parties and social events scare me, and answered extremely I would do anything to avoid being criticized.

Table 3 shows the occurrence of social phobia as estimated on Social Phobia Inventory reveals that, 25.7% are having mild social anxiety, 19.9 % of subjects have moderate social anxiety and only 8.1% of subjects have severe social anxiety. Which nearly similar to the results of the study done by Reghuram and Mathias (2014), which stated that prevalence of social phobia among nursing students in India was highest percent (64.6%) are having mild social Anxiety, while, 27.4% of subjects have moderate social anxiety and only 1.2% of subjects have severe social anxiety ⁽⁷⁾.

Table 4 shows the association between sociodemographic characteristics of the nursing students and severity levels of social phobia. There were non-significant associations between severity of social phobia and sociodemographic characteristics of all nursing students. The study results supported by the studies which were done in NitteUsha Institute of Nursing Sciences in Karnataka of India among nursing students they shows that there were non-significant relationship between sociodemographic data (except gender) and severity of social phobia. They found that the highest percentage of the study sample who had social phobia were female gender⁽⁷⁾.

Table 5 shows the comparison between academic years of nursing students regarding the severity levels of social phobia. There was a very highly significant deference between academic years of nursing students about the severity levels of social phobia. The study results supported by the study which was done by Reghuram and Mathias in NitteUsha Institute of Nursing Sciences in Karnataka of India, they find that there were difference between academic years of education regarding levels of social phobia and first year had more social phobia ⁽⁷⁾.

CONCLUSIONS

Most of the study sample had social phobia ranging from mild to very severe, but less than half of the nursing students had no social phobia.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Providing adequate knowledge for nursing students through psychiatric lectures in curriculum of nursing schools focusing on academic social phobia and how to cope with such situations.
2. Continuing annually studies on academic social phobia for all nursing students and risk groups in nursing schools. The nursing educators should be alert about the importance of educating their students clearly and comprehensively about academic social phobia.

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