Original Research Article

STUDY ON SOCIAL PHOBIA AMONG MEDICAL STUDENTS IN TERTIARY CARE HOSPITAL, ANDHRA PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

Background: More people are becoming aware of social phobia as a debilitating but curable illness that frequently first manifests in adolescence. In addition to negatively affecting academic achievement, it can cause despair and severe social disengagement. The objective of the study being to estimate the prevalence of social phobia among the medical students and to determine their association.

Materials and Methods: A cross sectional study has been conducted among 400 medical students in the medical college, Kurnool from March –August 2024. Social Phobia Inventory (SPIN) scale has been used to diagnose Social phobia.

Results: The prevalence of social phobia was about 73% among medical students(n=400), where it was higher in females, first year students and nuclear family that is 84.4%, 79.9% and 73.4%respectively

Conclusion: Our research revealed a notably elevated prevalence of SAD among medical students, which requires a thorough assessment for future planning.

Keywords: Medical students, Social phobia, socio demographic factors, Social phobia inventory

INTRODUCTION

Social phobia [SP] (also known a Social anxiety Disorder SAD), involves fear and anxiety about the social interaction and associated with avoidant behaviour.[1] A person with social phobia feels anxious in circumstances where they could be scrutinized and watched by others. They might constantly worry about being looked down upon, condemned, or humiliated.[2] Adults with SAD are more likely to have poorer quality connections with family and partners, lower earnings or unemployment, and lower educational achievement.[3] In situations where he feels inspected and watched, such as family gatherings, professional meetings, and academic conferences, the person may exhibit signs of social anxiety. He could have palpitations, sweating, and other autonomic system symptoms associated with anxiousness. They are more prevalent in women than in men, peaking in early adolescence, and are linked to a higher risk of depressive episodes.[4]

According to several research, the frequency of SAD ranged from 2% to 16%, and compared to the primary healthcare context, SAD is significantly more common in the general population.[5]

In a recent (2020) online research of seven nations, prevalence rates among the young population ranged from 23% to 58%, with the lowest rates in Indonesia and the highest in the United States, with an equal distribution of boys and females. Thus, social anxiety was shown to be substantially more common than previously thought, with more than 36% of people fitting the diagnostic criteria for SAD.[6]

In a study done on Indian under graduate medical students, the prevalence of social phobia was about 41.1% and Medical students from rural area were 1.7 (95% CI: 1.2-2.5) times more likely to exhibit SP than students from urban area.[7] The medical area is a significant one that calls for regular

communication with other professionals at academic gatherings and conferences as well as updated knowledge. Additionally, it necessitates regular interpersonal contact. Social phobia can make it difficult to interact and puts one's success or even survival in the workplace at jeopardy. Therefore, we need to know the size of the issue so that we can make the right plans.

Objectives

1. To estimate the prevalence of social phobia among the medical students
2. To determine the association between the socio demographic variables and social phobia

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Type of study: Descriptive, cross-sectional study

Study subjects: Undergraduate Medical college students aged between 18-25 years of Kurnool medical college

Study setting: Kurnool medical college

Study period: Six months, March 2024- August 2024

Sample size: using the formula $n=Z\alpha^2PQ/d^2$

{$z\alpha=1.96$, P=60.9, Q=39.1(100-60.9), d=5}

P is the prevalence 60.9% according to the study done by Elavarasan K et al,[9]

$n = 1.96^2 X\ 60.9X39.1/5^2 = 366$ using 10 % of non response rate it is rounded to 400

Inclusion Criteria

1. Students of all the years aged between 18-25 years who are willing to participate in the study

Exclusion Criteria

1. Students already diagnosed with medical and psychiatric disorder
2. Students who are not willing to participate in the study.

Sampling method: Simple random sampling wasl used to select the students.

Data collection procedure and study tools:

After obtaining permission from the institutional ethics committee, the purpose of the study was be explained to the students and informed consent was be taken. Data was collected by a self-administered questionnaire consisting of sociodemographic data, Family characteristics such as family structure (occupation, education), order of birth, family conflicts, and family history of mental disorder were elicited among medical students

The Social Phobia was measured by using 17 items Social Phobia Inventory (SPIN) scale with cut-off points ≥21.[8] A 5-point Likert scale was used for scoring

- Not at all=0
- A little bit=1
- Somewhat=2
- Very much=3
- Extremely=4
- The SPIN score was used to categorise the SP as:
- none (0-20)
- mild (21-30)
- moderate (31-40)
- severe (41-50)
- very severe (51-68)
- The minimum and maximum score were 0 and 68, respectively.

RESULTS

Table 1: Socio demographic profile of study participants (n=400)

Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage(%)
Age	<20 years	90	22.5
	>20 years	310	77.5
Gender	Female	224	56
	Male	176	44
Area	Rural	93	23.2
	Urban	307	76.8
Year of study	1st year	159	39.7
	2nd year	139	34.7
	3rd year	102	25.6
Fathers education	<12th std	119	29.8
	>12th std	281	70.2
Mothers education	<12th std	196	49
	>12th std	204	51
Place of stay	Home	70	17.5
	Hostel	330	82.5

The study included 400 participants in which males were 176(44%) and 224 (56%) were females in which majority (77.5%) of them are above 20 years.

Most of the study participants (76.8%) are from urban area. Majority 330 (82.5%) of the participants were staying in the hostels.

Table 2: Association of socio demographic characteristics and social phobia

| Socio demographic characteristics		Social phobia		P value
		Absent	**Present**	
Age	<20 years	15(16.7%)	75(83.3%)	0.01
	>20 years	93(30%)	217(70%)	
Gender	Female	35(15.6%)	189(84.4%)	0.000
	Male	73(41.5%)	103(58.5%)	
Area	Rural	24(25.8%)	69(74.2%)	0.894
	Urban	84(27.4%)	223(72.6%)	
Year of study	1st year	32(20.1%)	127(79.9%)	0.00
	2nd year	62(44.6%)	77(55.4%)	
	3rd year	59(57.8%)	43(42.2%)	
Fathers education	<12th std	35(29.4%)	84(70.6%)	0.53
	>12th std	73(26%)	208(74%)	
Mothers education	<12th std	54(27.6%)	142(72.4%)	0.82
	>12th std	54(26.5%)	150(73.5%)	
Place of stay	Home	16(22.9%)	54(77.1%)	0.46
	Hostel	92(27.9%)	238(72.1%)	
Type of family	Joint	12(30.8%)	27(69.2%)	0.57
	Nuclear	96 (26.6%)	265(73.4%)	
Percentage of marks scored in 12 th stand	<75%	104(59.7%)	70(40.3%)	0.00
	>75%	193(86.9%)	29(13.1%)	

Out of 310 students in the age group >20 years, 70% of the students have social phobia and this difference was statistically significant. Majority of the females that is 84.4% were having social phobia when compared to male study subjects which is found to be statistically significant. Social phobia was found to be more (79.9%)in 1st year students when compared to rest of the years. out of 281 students whose father's education was 12thstd or more, 208 (74%) were having social phobia and this difference was not statistically significant. students who are away from homes staying in the hostels are found more (72.1%) to be social phobic than who are staying at homes. Students who have scored > 75% marks in 12th standard are found to have only 13.1% social phobia which is found to be statistically significant.

Table 3: Family characteristics associated with social phobia

Family characteristics		Social phobia		P value
		Absent	**Present**	
Are you a single child ?	No	100(27.5%)	264(72.5%)	0.56
	Yes	8(22.2%)	28(77.8%)	
Family h/o mental illness	No	101(26.7%)	276(73.3%)	0.80
	Yes	7(30.4%)	16(69.6%)	
Family conflict	No	225(61.2%)	143(38.8%)	0.02
	Yes	13(39%)	19(61%)	
Parent status	Both alive	318(83%)	64(17%)	0.00
	Either one dead	9(50%)	9(50%)	

In the present study the single child parents are found to be more (77.8%) social phobic when compared to the students who are having siblings. Out of 32 students who reported family conflict, 19 students i.e 61% reported social phobia which is found to be statistically significant. (table 3)
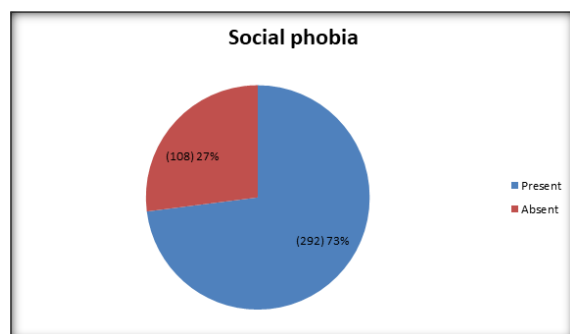
Figure 1: Prevalence of social phobia

DISCUSSION

In the present study out of 400 medical students social phobia was found in 292 students that is to be 73% which is found similar to the study done byKarthikeyan E et al in Maduranthagam, tamil nadu 61% of the medical students reported social phobia.

Similar studys done by Jogdande AJ et al,[10] in maharastra , Ramkumar Sundaram et al,[7] in tamil nadu and Hazeem Abeljaleel Suleiman et al,[11] in sudan reported social phobia was more among medical students ie 46%, 41.1% and 61.3% respectively .

In the present study females are found to be more social phobic ie 84.4% which is found to be similar with study done by Dr. Prina Clarissa Crasta, et al,[12] among the 140 medical students of a tertiary care medical college and hospital in Mangalore, Karnataka who reported 55.1%

Students staying at hostel are more likely (72.1%) to experience social phobia i.e when compared to students at home which is similar to the study done by Ratnani, et al,[13] among 290 medical undergraduate students in gujarath .

In present study, family history of mental illnesses was found to be 16 (69.9%), which is not statistically significant with SocialPhobia, whereas study done by Ramkumar Sundaram et al.[7] and Zahra A and Alkhafji M,[14] found that students with Social phobia have a family history of mental illness.

In the present study out of 400 students 265 (73.4%) of the students who belong to nuclear family reported social phobia which is similar to the study done by Naligala Mercy among Medical students of Osmania Medical College, Hyderabad,[15] reported similar findings. This implies supportive family and emotional support plays a very important role in moulding the mental status of the student.

72.9% of the students in the present study experienced social phobia in first year when compared to rest of the years. This is now a debate that over whether this would increase alertness or hinder academic achievement.

Social phobia was found to be higher in the students who have scored <75% in 12th standard and was found to be statistically significant which is similar to the findings in the study done by Jogdande AJ et al.[10]

CONCLUSION

The prevalence of social phobia was found to be very significant in the present study. Gender, being a single parent, and having family disputes all significantly correlate with an increase in social phobia. Therefore, the results showed that more research is necessary to fully understand the causes of the important predictors of social phobia. According to the results, the counselling centres should be strengthened in order to identify frequent disorders early and develop effective preventive measures.

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