RESEARCH ARTICLE

Depression, anxiety, and stress among the 1st year medical students in Kanchipuram District

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ABSTRACT

Background: Medical education is a full-time commitment and responsibility of students that include academic assignments, activities, social behavior, support, and patient care. The health of students around the world is becoming a major concern as they are more prone to depression, stress.

Aim and Objective: This study aims to assess the severity of depression, anxiety, and stress in the 1st year medical students.

Materials and Methods: The DASS 42 questionnaire was used to study stress, depression, and anxiety. The DASS is a 42-point questionnaire containing three self-report scales designed to measure the negative emotional states of depression, anxiety, and stress.

Results: It was found that 16%, 25%, and 27% of medical students were affected by mild symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress. About 11%, 12%, and 4% of medical students with moderate depression, anxiety, and stress; 12%, 4%, and 3% of medical students with severe depression, anxiety, and stress; and 3%, 4%, and 1% of medical students suffered from extremely severe depression, anxiety, and stress.

Conclusion: In our study, emotional distress is common medical students and attention, support, and personalized counseling are compulsory for the students.

KEY WORDS: Anxiety; DASS; Depression; Stress; Medical Students

INTRODUCTION

Medical education is a full-time student commitment and responsibility that includes academic assignments, activities, social behavior, patient support, and care. A medical student’s mental health remains compromised throughout their education with long hours of study and work, extensive course content, examinations, peer competition, uninspiring environments, lack of sleep, and loneliness, including other factors that affect daily personal, social, and family life. Most undergraduate medical students experience depression, anxiety, and stress. Usually, the examinations are scary for all students for many reasons, such as parent expectations, peer pressure comparisons are a major concern for students taking their exam. College student mental health is becoming increasingly important as college students are more prone to depression. Depression is a serious and often underrated mental illness that affects both the mind and body, but also affects the health of college students. Students suffering from examination anxiety can do poorly on an examination, themselves if they know the material better than a student. According to the different studies carried out in different regions of India, they reflect different situations depending on the use of study tools. A study by Vaidya et al., prevalence of depression, anxiety, or stress among medical students using the DASS scale. Another study reported that 39.44% of students suffered from depression, 66.05% from anxiety, and 51.37% from stress. A Jodhpur, Rajasthan-based study found that 57.98% of students were depressed and 47.41% had anxiety disorders. The overall prevalence of previously...
diagnosed major depressive and depressive disorders among medical students in a Delhi-based study was 21.5% and 7.6%, respectively.\textsuperscript{[8]} In contrast, some studies that were conducted two decades ago have found little or no signs of stress in medical students.\textsuperscript{[9,10]}

The present study was conducted to find the levels of depression, anxiety, and stress among the 1st year medical students by DASS42 questionnaire in Kanchipuram district.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A cross-sectional study is carried out on 100 1st year medical students aged 18–20 for a period of 2 months from April 2019 to May 2019, which is carried out in an institute for physiology of the Institute for Karpaga Vinayaga Medicine, Science and Research Centre, Chinnam Kolambakkam. The approval of the institutional ethics committee was obtained.

It is a completely questionnaire-based study. It is entirely voluntary and you are also free to discontinue the study at any time. The course is explained in detail to the students. The verbal consent of all participants will be obtained. The DASS 42 questionnaire is used to study stress, depression, and anxiety. The DASS is a 42-point questionnaire containing three self-report scales designed to measure the negative emotional states of depression, anxiety, and stress.

DASS 42 questionnaire categorization on the basis of scores:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Severity</th>
<th>Depression</th>
<th>Anxiety</th>
<th>Stress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>0–9</td>
<td>0–7</td>
<td>0–14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mild</td>
<td>10–13</td>
<td>8–9</td>
<td>15–18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>14–20</td>
<td>10–14</td>
<td>19–25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe</td>
<td>21–27</td>
<td>15–19</td>
<td>26–33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely severe</td>
<td>28+</td>
<td>20+</td>
<td>34+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RESULTS

A total of 100 students were participated in this study, most of the students residing in hostel. Depression, anxiety, and stress were assessed by DASS42 questionnaire. It was found that 16%, 25%, and 27% of medical students were affected by mild symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress, respectively. About 11%, 12%, and 4% medical students affected by moderate depression, anxiety, and stress. About 12%, 4%, and 3% of medical students affected by severe depression, anxiety, and stress. About 3%, 4%, and 1% of medical students affected by extremely severe depression, anxiety, and stress.

DISCUSSION

In our study, most students show depression, anxiety, and mild stress, very fewer students, less than 5%, show only severe depression, anxiety, and stress. Our study was carried out by Given and Tija medical students who were depressed, while another US study also reported that 12% of medical students were likely to be diagnosed with major depression by DSM-III criteria, 37.2% and 47.1% of medical students suffered from depression, anxiety, and stress, respectively.

CONCLUSION

In our study, emotional distress is common medical students and attention, support, and personalized counseling are compulsory for the students.

REFERENCES

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