



Prevalence of Generalized Anxiety Disorder among the Patients Attending a Peripheral Health Center in Kashmir Valley

Authors

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Abstract

Background: Anxiety disorder is one of the common mental disorders emerging in the current world. Among all type of anxiety disorder the prevalence of generalized anxiety disorder is around 1-5% among Indian population. In the valley of Kashmir very little data is available in literature regarding this issue. Our study aimed to contribute on the baseline data regarding generalized anxiety disorder in Kashmir.

Objective: To find out the prevalence of generalized anxiety disorder among the patients attending general OPD in a peripheral health center of district Srinagar block hazaratbal.

Methods: The study was conducted under the department of Community Medicine GMC Srinagar. All patients attending general OPD were included in the study with the exclusion of the patients who were critically ill and needed immediate referral; patients with acute severe trauma, patients with age less than 18 years were also excluded from the study. The study was conducted for 2 months. After selection of each patient, presence of generalized anxiety disorder was assessed by using the DSM V criteria, GAD 7 scale was used to assess the severity of disorder.

Results: A total of 1553 patients were assessed for generalized anxiety disorder. Among them, 15 patients were found having generalized anxiety disorder according to DSM 5 giving the prevalence of around 0.96%. Among these, 86% were females. About two third patients belonged to class II socioeconomic status according to modified Kuppusami scale.

Conclusion: Prevalence of GAD in this urban population is approximately close to the prevalence at the national level. This study points to the need for proper assessment of patients at each peripheral health center to diagnose such patients at earlier severity of the disorder so to prevent social economical and physical deterioration of such patients.

Key Words: Anxiety, Mental Disorders, Prevalence, Kashmir.

Introduction

Anxiety disorder is one of the common mental disorders emerging in the current world. Occasional anxiety is a normal part of life. One might feel anxious when faced with a problem at work, before taking a test. But anxiety disorders involve more than temporary worry or fear and can interfere with daily activities such as job

performance, school work, and relationships.¹ There are several different types of anxiety disorders like generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, and social anxiety disorder. Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) is characterized by excessive worry about a variety of everyday problems for at least 6 months.² Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), also known as “chronic

anxiety neurosis,” is characterized by chronic “free-floating anxiety,” accompanied by such autonomic symptoms as tremor, tachycardia, and diaphoresis.³ Among all type of anxiety disorder the prevalence of generalized anxiety disorder is around 1-5% among Indian population. They are the sixth leading cause of disability worldwide with 4% of all YLD (years lived with disability). It is seen more commonly in females as compared to males. Roughly 273 million had an anxiety disorder as of 2010.⁴ In the valley of Kashmir, very little data is available in literature regarding this issue. Our study aimed to contribute to the baseline data regarding generalized anxiety disorder in Kashmir. The study was conducted with the intention of finding out the prevalence of generalized anxiety disorder among the patients attending general OPD in a peripheral health center of district Srinagar Block Hazaratbal.

Material & Methods

The study was conducted in urban field practice area of department of Community Medicine GMC Srinagar. All patients attending general OPD who consented to participate in the study were included. The patients who were critically ill and needed immediate referral; patients with acute severe trauma, patients with age less than 18 years were excluded from the study. The study was conducted for 2 months. After selection of each patient, the respondent was interviewed for the presence of generalized anxiety disorder using DSM V criteria. GAD 7 scale was used to assess the severity of disorder. A 7-item scale—the GAD-7 is a useful tool with strong criterion validity for identifying probable cases of GAD and the scale is also an excellent severity measure.⁵ Any patient who was not willing to participate was excluded from the study.

Results

A total of 1553 patients were interviewed.

Table no. 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of the patients interviewed (n= 1553):

Socio-demographic characteristics	Numbers (n)	Percentage (%)
1. Sex		
Male	675	43.4
Female	878	56.6
2. Age		
<20	170	10.9
21-30	297	19.1
31-40	417	26.8
41-50	375	24.1
>50	294	19.1
3. Educational Qualification		
Illiterate	834	53.7
Upto Matric(10 th)	322	20.7
Higher secondary (12 th)	264	16.9
Graduate & above	133	8.7
4. Occupation		
Home maker	866	55.7
Laborer	311	20.2
Govt Employ	112	7.2
Others	264	16.9
5. Socio-Economic Class		
Class 1	567	36.5
Class 2	411	26.4
Class 3 & above	575	37.1

56% of respondents were female and 70% were belonging to economically reproductive age group. Among the respondents, 53.7% were illiterate and 55% were home maker by occupation.

Table no. 2: Distribution of the sample according to the presence of GAD:

GAD	No. of frequencies	Percentage (%)
Present	15	0.96
Absent	1538	99.03

Table no. 3: Distribution of the patients with GAD according to different variables:

Variables			
Gender Distribution	Male 2 (13.3)	Female 13 (86.7)	
Education	Illiterate 11 (73.3)	Literate 4 (26.7)	
Socio- Economic class	Class 1 0 (0)	Class 2 11 (73.3)	Class 3 & above 4 (26.7)

Table no.4: Distribution of patients with GAD according to the severity:

Severity	Male n(%)	Female n(%)
Mild	1 (6.6)	6 (40)
Moderate	0 (0)	5 (33.3)
Severe	1 (6.6)	2 (13.5)

Table no 2 reveals that only 15 patients were having GAD, among whom 86% were females and 74% were belonging to socio economic class

2. Regarding the severity, 40% were suffering from mild form whereas only one patient had severe form of GAD.

Discussion

The present study revealed 0.96% prevalence of GAD among the patients attending the peripheral Health centers of Block Hazratbal. There is a limitation of this study that the study population does not represent the population truly but this study gives a baseline data about the GAD in our settings.

A very low prevalence of <1% was reported by this study which is very less as compared to other studies. Olfson et al has reported the prevalence of GAD as 0.4% in their study.^{6,15} However there are other studies which has reported higher prevalence of GAD.^{7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,16,17} The study reported higher prevalence of GAD among females, illiterates and those belonging to lower socio economic class.^{6,7,9,11,12,14,15}

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