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Research Article

**THE PREVALENCE OF SOCIAL ANXIETY DISORDER
AMONG STUDENTS IN QASSIM REGION**¹Mohammed Mulfi Alharbi, ²Mohammed Alhumaid, ³Suliman Mohammad Alharbi,⁴Abdularahman Ali Abdullah Aloudah, ⁵Ibrahim Saleh Algosair,¹Qassim university, Research ID (Y-8204-2018), 331102480@qumed.org, ²Qassim University, m.alhomaid@qumed.edu.sa, ³Qassim University, 331100474@qumed.org, ⁴Qassim University 331100249@qumed.org, ⁵Qassim University, 371112586@qumed.org.**Abstract:**

Worries and fears are a natural and adaptive part of childhood development. Anxiety and fear meet the criteria for a clinical anxiety disorder when the concerns are persistent and excessive, causing notable distress or impairment in day-to-day life(1). The anxiety disorders constitute about 12% of psychiatric disorders in the Eastern Mediterranean Region(2). one of the anxiety disorders is a social anxiety disorder, it's prevalence in US 15.5% among Female, and 11.1% among males(1), the essential feature of social anxiety disorder is a marked or intense, fear or anxiety of social situations in which others may scrutinize the individual

Objectives: prevalence of social anxiety disorder among high school students.

Methods: Cross section study during the academic year 2018 in Buraidah city four high schools two male and two female using Arabic LSAS yielded 421 students.

Results: A total participant of 420 students 51.2% male and 48.8 female answered the questionnaire resulted in 79 cases scoring highest in acting, performing or giving a talk in front of an audience. We found 38 cases of moderate anxiety, 29 marked anxiety, 9 severe anxiety, 3 very severe anxiety. There is no association between gender or age and anxiety.

Conclusion: We analyzed the data of 420 students male and female, and it showed a high prevalence of social anxiety disorder in buraidah city 18.9 %. The female students had high prevalence of moderate and marked social anxiety and lower severe and very severe social anxiety disorder unlike male students who showed a high prevalence of severe and very severe social anxiety lower prevalence of moderate and marked social anxiety ,both genders scoring highest in Acting, performing or giving a talk in front of an audience.

Keywords: Anxiety, Social anxiety disorder, Prevalence, Students, Qassim.

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INTRODUCTION:

Worries and fears are a natural and adaptive part of childhood development. Anxiety and fear meet the criteria for a clinical anxiety disorder when the concerns are persistent and excessive, causing notable distress or impairment in day-to-day life(1). The anxiety disorders constitute about 12% of psychiatric disorders in the Eastern Mediterranean Region(2). One of the anxiety disorders is a social anxiety disorder. During our search we noted that there is lack of research regarding social anxiety in AlQassim region specially students. The prevalence of social anxiety disorder in US is 15.5% among Female, and 11.1% among males(1), the essential feature of social anxiety disorder is a marked or intense, fear or anxiety of social situations in which others may scrutinize the individual. In Saudi Arabia AlQassim region 2010 a research conducted for social phobia among patients attending to Buraidah mental health hospital using Social Phobia Inventory in score of ≥ 19 and ICD-10 criteria to confirm, the sample size of 764 patients, the research yielded 5.6% patients with social phobia with higher female predominance 2:1 scoring high in "Giving a speech or speaking in public" and "Taking part or speaking in a meeting or class" in the performance situations(3). The prevalence of Social anxiety disorder in male 2 secondary schools in Saudi Arabia Abha city 2013 was found to be 11.7% using cross-sectional LSAS Arabic version other socio-demographic were included, the students scored highest in severe form of social anxiety disorder about 35.9%, there is a strong association between age and social anxiety disorder compared to other factors in socio-demographic(4). 2007 two-phase survey conducted in Oman regarding social anxiety and gender differences using the LSAS questionnaire, a sample of 1511 adolescents, results show a strong association between gender and social anxiety disorder. (5)

METHODOLOGY:

A cross-sectional study was used during the academic 2018, Al-Qassim Region is located in Saudi Arabia it's capital is Buraidah in 2017 the population reached about 1.4 million(6). High schools in Buraidah city about 898 in total and the overall students 107351(7). We selected four high schools in buraidah city divided into two male and two female high schools using stratified random sample yielded 420 students from 1st, 2nd and 3rd year of high school which consists of 3 years in total the female sample was 205

and the male was 215 in a ratio of 1: 1. The inclusion criteria for this study the participants must be 1- from al-Qassim region 2- High school student 3-consent to participate in the study. Using validated LSAS questionnaires translated into Arabic. The Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale Test [LSAS] which evaluates two aspects avoidance and fear each with subscale and consisting of 24 elements 13 on the performance like Speaking up at a meeting or eating in public 11 on social interaction aspects like meeting strangers, Looking people, you don't know very well in the eye. The fear scaled 0-3 in which 0=no fear, 1=mild fear, 2=moderate and 3=sever fear, same for performance of actions scaled on 0-3 in which 0=never avoided(0%), occasionally avoided(1-33%), 2= often avoided(34-67%) and 3=usually avoided (68-100%). Each field must be filled to assess the severity of the social anxiety disorder then we sum both subscales and classify them. Category 1- the sum of both subscales (< 55) which means no social phobia 2- (55-65) moderate social phobia 3-(66-80) marked social phobia 4-(81-95) sever social phobia 5-> 95 very severe social phobia also listing Saudi and non-Saudi in the page and male and female with LSAS has been translated and validated in many languages Arabic(5,8), Brazilian Portuguese, (9), Turkish(10), Hebrew(11), French(12), Spanish(13). Ethical approval was obtained from the Regional research ethics committee AlQassim, university of AlQassim and the school authorities. We explained the aim of the study and how to fill the questionnaire and supervised the data collection for confidentiality. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL) software program for Windows 10 used for the data analysis. Chi-squared test, Frequencies, one-way ANOVA test, carried at 5% level of significance

RESULTS:

The total number of participants were 420 students in the current study, 215 (51.2%) were males, and 205 (48.8%) were females. The mean age of the student who participates was about 16.5 (SD was 1.04) years old. About 171 (40.7%) of the students were in the first year of high school, followed by 140 (33.3%) in the second year and 109 (24%) were third year. The majority of the student were Saudi students in which they were 391 (76%) student followed by 101 (24%) of non-Saudi students (Table 1.).

Table 1. sociodemographic information's of the participant

Variable	N (%)
Gender	
Male	215 (51.2)
Female	205 (48.8)
Age, mean (SD)	16.5 (1.04)
Education	
First year	171 (40.7)
Seconded year	140 (33.3)
Third year	109 (26)
Nationality	
Saudi	391 (76)
Non-Saudi	101 (24)

Responses of the students to the questions regarding their Social Anxiety Disorder were analyzed. The highest item regarding fear is doing an action in front of an audience, calling and talking to an unknown person, meeting strangers and being at the center of attention.

Table.2. the mean of participant answers (out of 4 marks)

Item NO.	fear	Avoidance
1.Telephoning in public.	0.30 (0.63)	0.69 (0.85)
2.Participating in small groups.	0.39 (0.71)	0.80 (1.02)
3. Eating in public places.	0.45 (84)	0.67 (0.98)
4. Drinking with others in public places.	0.39 (0.80)	0.87 (0.98)
5. Talking to people in authority.	0.83 (0.93)	0.87 (0.98)
6. Acting, performing or giving a talk in front of an audience.	1.19 (1.09)	1.14 (1.13)
7. Going to a party.	0.42 (0.8)	0.79 (1.04)
8. Working while being observed.	0.74 (0.92)	0.88 (1)
9. Writing while being observed.	0.66 (0.88)	0.79 (1)
10. Calling someone you don't know very well.	0.91 (1.07)	1.12 (1.16)
11. Talking with people you don't know very well.	0.95 (1.07)	1.15 (1.12)
12. Meeting strangers.	0.99 (1.07)	1.05 (1.13)
13. Urinating in a public bathroom.	0.71 (1)	1.04 (1.15)
14. Entering a room when others are already seated.	0.71 (0.92)	0.93 (1.03)
15. Being the center of attention.	0.99 (1.01)	0.92 (1)
16. Speaking up at a meeting.	0.86 (0.97)	0.85 (0.99)
17. Taking a test.	0.86 (1.05)	0.76 (1.07)
18. Expressing a disagreement or disapproval to people you don't know very well.	0.57 (0.90)	0.73 (1)
19. Looking at people, you don't know very well in the eyes.*	0.64 (0.973)	0.94 (1.1)
20. Giving a report to a group.	0.44 (0.78)	0.64 (0.91)
21. Trying to pick up someone.	0.59 (0.9)	0.80 (1.06)
22. Returning goods to a store.	0.44 (0.82)	0.76 (1.05)
23. Giving a party.	0.53 (0.91)	0.86 (1.12)
24. Resisting a high-pressure salesperson	0.55 (0.87)	0.79 (1.05)
Total score	16.19 (11.20)	20.85 (12.37)

The response of the student has been calculated and distributed into five groups, and the first group is those who don't have anxiety and the second group for students who have slight to moderate anxiety. The third one is the group with marked anxiety, fourth for students with severe anxiety, and the last one for students with very severe anxiety.

Comparing between the SAD and gender, male student (Table. 2) showed less anxiety than the female student (Table. 2). Also, the Female student

showed a higher prevalence of moderate and marked anxiety. However, the data reported that male students have a higher prevalence of Severe and very severe anxiety than female students, thus there was no significant relationship between anxiety and gender in this study. Regarding the age of the student, being at a certain age was not significantly associated with Social Anxiety Disorder. First year's student had less anxiety compared to the second and third-year students; however, Social Anxiety Disorder was not substantially related to specific academic year in high school.

Table 3. The relationship between anxiety and demographic information of the participant.

Variable	No anxiety	Moderate anxiety	Marked anxiety	Severe anxiety	Very severe anxiety	P value
Gender						
Male	181 (84.2)	14 (6.5)	12 (5.6)	6 (2.8)	2 (0.9)	0.208
Female	160 (78)	24 (11.7)	17 (8.3)	3 (1.5)	1 (0.5)	
Age, mean (SD)	16.5 (1.07)	16.6 (0.94)	16.7 (0.78)	16.5 (0.88)	16.3 (1.5)	0.855
Education						
First year	148 (86.5)	12 (7)	7 (4.1)	3 (1.8)	1 (0.6)	0.28
Second year	104 (74.3)	15 (10.7)	16 (11.4)	4 (2.9)	1 (0.7)	
Third year	89 (81.7)	11 (10.1)	6 (5.5)	2 (1.8)	1 (0.9)	
Nationality						
Saudi	265 (83.1)	26 (8.2)	20 (6.3)	6 (1.9)	2 (0.6)	0.541
Non-Saudi	76 (75.2)	12 (11.9)	9 (8.9)	3 (3)	1 (1)	

In table 4 there is a higher prevalence of social anxiety disorder among second-year students in every category except very severe anxiety which is the same as the first and second year

Table 4. The prevalence of Social anxiety disorder among high school students N = 420 (%)

Variable	No anxiety	Moderate anxiety	Marked anxiety	Severe anxiety	Very severe anxiety
First year	148 (65.2)	12 (2.9)	7 (1.7)	3 (0.7)	1 (0.2)
Second year	104 (24.8)	15 (3.6)	16 (3.8)	4 (1)	1 (0.2)
Third year	89 (21.2)	11 (2.6)	6 (1.5)	2 (0.5)	1 (0.2)

DISCUSSION:

The prevalence of social anxiety disorder in our study is 18.9% from sample size of 420 including 205 female and 215 male which is higher than previous studies reported in the kingdom a study in Abha city showed a prevalence of 11.7% (4) from a 454 sample although it's closer sample size we think the difference is due to including only boys in sample. In another study from India showed a prevalence of 10.3%(14) from 301 included both genders, the variation might be due to a difference in the sample size of girls which was 94 out of 301. The high prevalence of social anxiety among students in buraidah city raises red flags limiting their performance to reach their full potential especially in actions like acting, performing or giving a talk in front of an audience which is required in schools. Using LSAS ranking of social anxiety disorder into 5 categories 1-no anxiety,2-moderate anxiety 3-marked anxiety,4-severe anxiety,5-very severe anxiety the most prevalent form of anxiety according to previous studies is moderate anxiety and the rarest one is the very severe social anxiety(4,14) which is consistent with our results showing 48.1% moderate anxiety, 36.7% marked anxiety,11.4% severe anxiety,3.8% very severe anxiety. There is no gender nor age relation. Females show a high prevalence in moderate anxiety while male high in the more severe forms of anxiety, with the lack of mental health education and the fear of being stigmatized, will exaggerate the social anxiety disorder in which will negatively impact the quality of life for the individual and community.

CONCLUSION:

Data analysis of 420 students male and female shows a high prevalence of social anxiety disorder in buraidah city 18.9 %. Higher female predominance in moderate social anxiety category compared to male. Scoring highest in Acting, performing or giving a talk in front of an audience

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