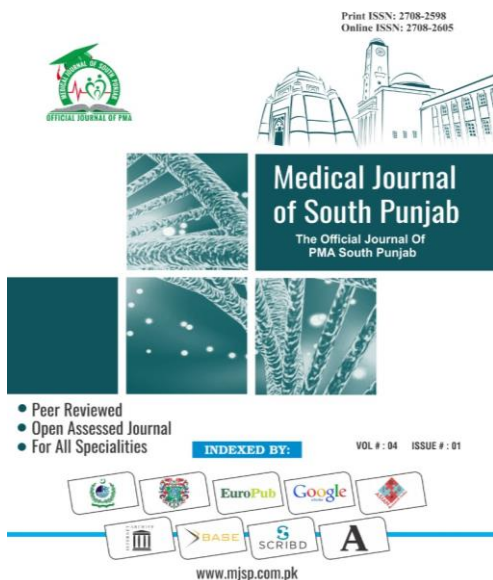


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**Assessment of Examination anxiety
among undergraduate Students at Public
Sector Nursing College, Jamshoro**

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**Assessment of Examination anxiety among undergraduate Students at Public Sector
Nursing College, Jamshoro**

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To identify anxiety levels between undergraduate nursing students' and examine the impact of this anxiety on their academic performance.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was carried out at Liaquat College of Nursing, Jamshoro (LCON) during the period of May 15, 2023 to June 15, 2023. Data of 103 nursing students were collected by using Westside anxiety scale to assess the anxiety score. Descriptive analysis, such as frequency counts and corresponding percentages was done, in addition non-parametric test to look at the relationship between two variables.

Results: 103 Female participants completed the study. 54(52.4%) participant showed high test anxiety, 38(36.9%) participant showed moderately high test anxiety, 9(8.7%) participant showed high normal test anxiety, 2(1.9%) participant showed average test anxiety. The Fisher's Exact Test shows statistically noteworthy correlation between CGPA and Examination anxiety score with P-value = 0.004, that means Test anxiety have great impact on student's academic performance.

Conclusion: The study's findings indicated that a notable proportion of the students who took part in the research encountered moderate to severe levels of examination anxiety. It is important for assisting nursing undergraduate to cope with examination anxiety and identifying the triggers for it. Test anxiety can be effectively reduced through collaborative tasks including students, parents, educators, academic advisors, and other involved individuals. Nursing students should have access to counseling services when required.

Keywords: Academic Performance, CGPA, OSCE, Test Anxiety, Undergraduate Nursing Students

1. INTRODUCTION

Experiencing exam anxiety is a delicate aspect of life that one must endure, particularly in situations where an individual feel that their performance is being evaluated. Examination anxiety is assessed by an intense fear of unlucky performance in exam.¹ Exam anxiety is a prevalent issue where heightened stress levels, stemming from the anxiety-inducing nature of exams, hinder individuals from showcasing their true abilities, ultimately leading to underperformance, particularly within educational contexts.² Nursing students worldwide commonly grapple with stress and anxiety during their educational journey. The factors contributing to this phenomenon encompass academic difficulties, clinical experiences, technological advancements, financial worries, familial issues, physical and mental health challenges, insufficient support, and limited coping capabilities, as extensively documented. Nursing students often encounter various sources of stress within the clinical learning environment. These sources primarily encompass academic-related stressors, such as assignments, insufficient knowledge, examinations, and teaching methods.^{3,4,5}

Worldwide examination anxiety among undergraduates varies between 25% and 40% and takes an unfavorable impact on students' educational performance and achievement. Experiencing anxiety related to challenging exams is a prevalent health concern among medical students.⁶ Thomas and his team found that around a quarter of undergraduate university students experience significant nervousness when it comes to exams. These statistics are concerning because exam anxiety can impede academic success and have a negative impact on both mental and physical well-being.⁷ Studies conducted in various countries have

consistently revealed that a significant proportion of medical student's encounter anxiety and depression during their educational journey. It is approximated that approximately 15% to 25% of medical students undergo some form of psychological distress while pursuing their medical education.^{8,9}

While numerous studies have examined anxiety levels in nursing students within Western populations, there is a noticeable scarcity of research on examination anxiety between nursing undergraduates in Pakistan. This study gap underscores the need for a more comprehensive investigation into the specific influence of examination anxiety on the educational performance of nursing students in Pakistan. Anxiety related to examination is the most significant issue that students encounter in their educational field. This study will help to identification of anxiety level then we can explore the factors causing examination anxiety and its management. Finally, management of anxiety can enhance the academic achievement, self-esteem of undergraduates which ultimately reflect the quality care/health outcome of patients.

2. METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional study was carried out involving BS-Nursing students of 2nd and 3rd years at Liaquat College of Nursing (LCON), Jamshoro. The period of data collection was May 15, 2023, to June 15, 2023. There were 140 students enrolled at LCON. By using the RAOSOFT sample size calculator, 103 was selected as the sample size, with 52 students from the 2nd year (3rd semester) and 51 students from the 3rd year (5th semester) of the BS-Nursing program. A sample size of 103 was gathered with a 95% confidence level and a margin of error of 5%. The convenience sampling approach was adopted for undergraduate nursing students. The criteria for inclusion consisted of nursing

students who had participated in the examination and expressed their willingness to participate in the study. Exclusion criteria were applied to nursing students who had not taken part in the examination or were not willing to participate. The data collection process involved a two-section questionnaire. The first section included participant's demographic characteristics, as related to age, place of residence, CGPA, and academic level. The another section of the questionnaire featured the Westside Test Anxiety Scale, a measurement tool developed by Richard Driscoll.

The ten items in this assessment tool are rated on a 5-point Likert scale. After calculating total score, the results are categorized as follows:

Low test anxiety is represented by results between 1.0 and 1.9.

A result in the range of 2.0 to 2.5 indicates usual anxiety about an exam.

A high-normal level of anxiety is shown by scores between 2.5 and 2.9.

3.0 to 3.4 is the range for moderately high test anxiety.

High test anxiety is indicated by scores between 3.5 and 3.9.

Extremely high test anxiety is represented by ratings between 4.0 and 5.0.

The Westside scale picks up both impairment in performance capabilities and the presence of intrusive worrying. It has been employed to assess test anxiety, exhibiting an alpha coefficient of 0.78, a split-half reliability score of 0.77, and a validity coefficient of 0.51.^{10,11,12,13}

Statistical analyses were conducted at the subject level using SPSS software Version 22. Summary measures, such as frequency and percentage, were computed to summarize the raw data. In order to evaluate the relationship between two categorical variables, Fisher's Exact test was employed. A calculated p-value below 0.004 was

deemed statistically significant. Confidentiality and informed consent were upheld.

3. RESULTS

Table-1 showed the range of the participant's age, with 74.8% of them being in the 21–25 age range. 13.6% belonged to the 15–20 age group, while 11.7% were between 26-30 years old. In Table-2, it is shown that 49 students (47.6%) received good remarks, 30 students (29.1%) received very good remarks, and 24 students (23.3%) received excellent remarks. These remarks are based on CGPA ranges, with CGPA between 2.5-2.99 indicating good remarks, CGPA between 3.0-3.59 indicating very good remarks, and CGPA between 3.6-4.0 indicating excellent remarks. Each participant's scores by evaluating each item of Westside anxiety scale were tallied to calculate their anxiety score, as illustrated in Table-3 The distribution of examination anxiety scores is divided as: 2 participants (1.9%) exhibited an average level of test anxiety, 9 participants (8.7%) had normal test anxiety, 38 participants (36.9%) displayed moderately high test anxiety, and 54 participants (52.4%) exhibited high levels of test anxiety.

A statistically significant relationship was found between student's CGPA (Cumulative Grade Point Average) and their anxiety scores, as indicated by the Fisher's Exact test by the p-value of 0.004. This implies that students who experience high levels of test anxiety typically perform worse academically in terms of their CGPA compared to those with lower test anxiety.

Table-1: Age of Participant

	Frequency	Percent
15-20	14	13.6
21-25	77	74.8
26-30	12	11.7
Total	103	100.0

Table-2: CGPA of Students

	Frequency	Percent
Excellent	24	23.3
Very good	30	29.1
Good	49	47.6
Total	103	100.0

Table-3: Test Anxiety score of students

	Frequency	Percent
Average test anxiety	2	1.9
High normal test anxiety	9	8.7
Moderately high test anxiety	38	36.9
High test anxiety	54	52.4
Total	103	100.0

4. RESULTS

There is ample evidence in the literature that nursing programs are inherently stressful, and stress among nursing students is a well-known phenomenon. In this context, "stress" is characterized as a physical or psychological stimulus that interferes with an individual's ability to adapt and triggers a coping mechanism.¹⁴ The primary objective of this study is to determine how much anxiety nursing undergraduate experience.

The current study's findings show that a significant proportion of undergraduate students (52%) experienced high level of examination anxiety and (38%) experienced moderate anxiety. This finding somehow correlate with the study in which Zahidullah Khan reported that Inam SNB and colleagues identified a 60% prevalence rate of anxiety within the Ziauddin Medical University study population.¹⁵

Present study showed that 52% students experienced with high level of anxiety and 38% students experienced with

moderate anxiety but in contrast according to the research conducted by Dr. Jignesh H. Tapariya, the anxiety levels among students were categorized as follows: 35 (4.2%) students exhibited mild anxiety, 80 (4.2%) displayed moderate anxiety, and 5 (10.0%) showed severe anxiety. Consequently, the researcher's conclusion was that the highest proportion of students fell into the category of moderate anxiety.¹⁶

The result of present study indicates a noteworthy relationship between examination anxiety and CGPA, as evidenced by the Fisher exact test. So students with elevated levels of test anxiety tend to attain lower CGPA in comparison to their counterparts with lower test anxiety. It is observed that undergraduates experiencing high test anxiety generally attain poor academic performance than those who exhibit lower levels of test anxiety. These results are consistent by the research conducted by Eman Dawood and colleagues, which demonstrated a statistically noteworthy inverse relationship ($r = -0.144$, $p = 0.01$) between test anxiety scores and nursing undergraduate academic standing. This suggests that as nursing undergraduate progress to advanced educational level, they tend to experience lower levels of test anxiety.¹⁷ The consistent findings align with Samina Shahab's research, where she discussed that the Spearman Rank Correlation (ρ) value indicated a substantial correlation between examination anxiety and academic success, with a p-value below .05.¹⁸ The same results support Shafiq ur Rehman's study, which shows a negative correlation between test anxiety and academic success.¹⁹

So this is determined that exam-related anxiety undeniably exists and significantly hampers students' overall academic performance. Fear of exams is prevalent among medical students, and it is widely recognized as a substantial issue within this

group as it profoundly influences their mental well-being and intense anxiety levels pose a threat to an individual's mental and physical well-being, while also exerting adverse impacts on their academic, professional, interpersonal, family related, and individual achievements. As previous research has indicated, a certain level of exam-related anxiety can be beneficial as it serves to motivate students and enhance their learning. However, excessive anxiety can have detrimental effects on a student's academic performance, contrary to the notion that it helps.

This study is of a cross-sectional nature, which hinders the establishment of causal relationships. Furthermore, it was conducted exclusively within a single Nursing College, making it challenging to generalize the findings to other state, universities or the entire nursing student population. Exploring the factors that influence examination anxiety is crucial, as this exploration can prompt educational institutions to take necessary measures to identify and address anxiety-inducing factors. This, in turn, can help in reducing exam anxiety among students. As Özbiçakçi et al. recommended that nursing educators integrate participatory approaches into their teaching methods as a means to alleviate anxiety. Furthermore, they underscored the significance of lecturers in effectively implementing participatory and active instructional techniques.²⁰

5. CONCLUSION

It is concluded that those students experienced high levels of test anxiety, emphasizing the importance of offering them adequate guidance and mentoring. It is imperative to identify and address this anxiety early on to enhance their academic performance in subsequent years. Mentorship programs should be designed to detect these students at an early stage, providing them

with tailored training and counseling. For the remaining students, continuous monitoring of their academic progress and the provision of appropriate guidance are essential to support their academic excellence.

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