

# Study of mental health status among medical post graduate aspirants

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## Abstract

**Background:** After completing graduation students has to prepare for post graduate entrance exam. The pursuit of higher medical education is expected to be stressful, which may be hazardous to physical and mental health status among these students. **Objectives:** To assess prevalence of psychological disorders (anxiety and depression) among post graduate aspirants and to determine if there is any gender difference. **Materials and methods:** General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-28), a self-administered instrument, rated on a four point Likert-type scale (0-1-2-3) giving a potential score of 0-84, participations with higher scores representing greater distress. **Results:** Among 300 students responded to questionnaire, 125 were females and 175 were males. 36.12 % (110) had psychological disorder among these 48% were females (60) and 28% were males (50). The gender difference was significant. **Conclusion:** In present study, there was high prevalence of psychological disorder among students preparing for post graduate entrance examination. Factors like exercise, sports and yoga should be encouraged to practice regularly for releasing stress and reducing depression.

**Keywords:** Mental Health Status, Aspirants.

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## INTRODUCTION

After completing graduation students has to prepare for post graduate entrance exam. The pursuit of higher medical education is expected to be stressful, which may be hazardous to physical and mental health status among these students. Just as all young adults, these students need to cope not only with psychosocial changes that are connected to the development of an autonomous personal life. They also had the academic and social demands that they encounter in university studies in their preparation for professional competitive exam. High levels of competition and limited post graduate seats are major stressors for them. Therefore, this period of preparation is a sensitive period in an individual's life span. Evidence

suggests that university students are vulnerable to mental health problems has generated increased public concern in many societies. An optimal level of stress, referred earlier as 'favourable stress', can enhance learning ability. However, excessive stress can lead to physical and mental health problems reduce self-esteem and may affect academic achievement, personal and professional development of undergraduate those preparing for entrance examination. Therefore, understanding the nature of stressors of these students may help medical teachers find ways to reduce the unwanted consequences of the stressors on the students' wellbeing in the future. Thus, the purpose of this small scale study was to gather initial data on prevalence among postgraduate aspirants.

## OBJECTIVES

- 1) To assess prevalence of psychological disorders (anxiety and depression) among post graduate aspirants.
- 2) To determine if there is any gender difference.

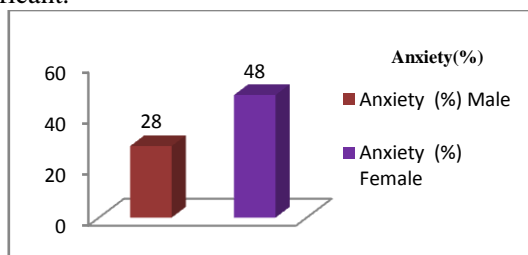
## MATERIALS AND METHODS

A cross sectional study of, 300 medical students preparing for post graduate entrance exam was done. Study was conducted during the month of August. Participation in the study was on a voluntary basis. In order to maintain confidentiality data was collected

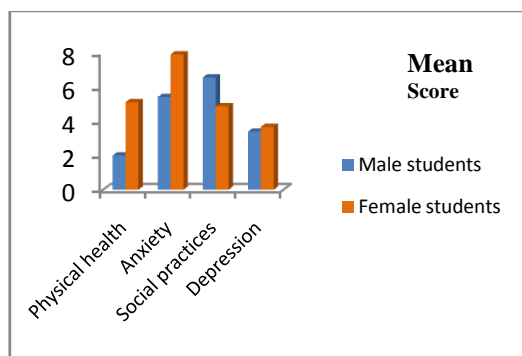
anonymously. The students completed the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-28), it is a self-administered instrument with well-established psychometric properties in clinical and community samples and has been shown to differentiate between the four dimensions (Physical health, Anxiety, Social practices and Depression) of psychological disorder. Each item can be rated on a four point Likert-type scale (0-1-2-3) giving a potential score of 0-84, participations with higher scores representing greater distress. Using the recommended GHQ-28, cut-off point (more than 23) was set as a screening threshold. They were given General Health Questionnaire 28 (GHQ), consisting of 4 subscales was used for screening mental health status. Statistical analysis was conducted by Chi square Test.

### RESULTS

Among 300 students responded to questionnaire, 125 were females and 175 were males. 36.12 % (110) had psychological disorder among these 48% were females (60) and 28% were males (50). The gender difference was significant.



Mean Score differences of GHQ questionnaire and its dimensions in male and female



Gender	Male students	Female students
GHQ Score	17.40	21.60
Physical health	2.00	5.12
Anxiety	5.42	7.92
Social practices	6.57	4.88
Depression	3.4	3.68

### CONCLUSION

In present study, there was high prevalence of psychological disorder among students preparing for post graduate entrance examination. Prevalence was high among female students as compared to male students as the gender difference was significant. High level of stress may be attributed to tough competition because of for limited post graduate seats. Appropriate attempts should be made to prevent anxiety before it could lead to serious psychological hazards. The aim should be to make the students aware of stress and its management. It is suggested that to prevent psychological disorder, students need to be oriented about learning skills, time management skills in order to meet academic requirement, arrange their time effectively for learning and leisure activities, and overcome difficulty in working in new environment through foundation workshop at the beginning of medical course. Maintaining and enhancing support system from friends, parents, peers and seniors should be promoted. The other factors like exercise, sports and yoga should be encouraged to practice regularly for releasing stress and reducing depression.

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