

The Level of Test Anxiety among Final Year Bsc. Nursing Students

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Abstract

Background: Test anxiety has been a problem for many individuals not only in the workforce, but also in many schools and colleges (Driscoll, Evans, Ramsey and Wheeler 2009). According to Driscoll et al., when compared to high school students and the general public (17%), nursing students have shown to have over double (55-60%) the rate of moderately high to high test anxiety.

Aim: The main purpose of the study is to assess the level of test anxiety among nursing students and to associate test anxiety with selected demographic variables.

Methodology: A quantitative descriptive design was used. A sample of 30 final year B. Sc. nursing students in MTPG & RIHS, Puducherry were selected by using Purposive sampling technique who fulfilled the inclusion criteria. The Data collected through Email using standardized test anxiety questionnaire.

Result: Among 30 participants, the majority 28 (93.33 %) of subjects were females, only 2 (6.67%) are males. Majority 16 (53.4%) of them were 21 years, 12 belongs to age 20yrs (40%), and only one subject in age 19 years (3.3%), and one in age 22 (3.3%). In the study it was found that 23.3% of students do not suffer from test anxiety and 3.3% have unhealthy level of anxiety and majority of subjects 22 (73.3 %) exhibit some of the characteristics of test anxiety.

Conclusion: The study conducted among 30 final year B.Sc. nursing student. There was a high prevalence of test anxiety among nursing students. Majority of subjects, 73.3 % exhibit some of the characteristics of test anxiety which is healthy and only 3.3 % of subjects have an unhealthy level of test anxiety. The researcher concluded that the association between the selected demographic variables of students and test anxiety is not significant statistically.

Key words: Test anxiety, nursing students, test anxiety scale.

Introduction

Anxiety is a normal phenomenon, which is characterized by a state of apprehension or uneasiness arising out of anticipation of danger. Normal anxiety becomes pathological when it causes significant subject distress and impairment of functioning of the individual.¹

Feelings of anxiety are so common in our society that they are almost considered universal. Anxiety arises from the chaos and confusion that exists in the world today. Fears of the unknown and conditions of ambiguity offer a perfect breeding ground for anxiety to take root and grow. Low levels of anxiety are adaptive and can provide the motivation required for survival. Anxiety becomes problematic when the individual is

unable to prevent the anxiety from escalating to a level that interferes with the ability to meet basic needs.²

Narrowing on a specific source, test anxiety is a subcategory of anxiety defined as “a set of phenomenological, physiological and behavioural responses that accompany concern about possible negative consequences of failure on an exam or similar evaluative situation”³.

The ^{anxiety} typically stems from the concern about failing an exam. Test anxiety is situational and dispositional, meaning it is a type of state anxiety, though it can be influenced if a person experiences trait anxiety as well⁴. In other words, if a person is nervous about an exam, the anxiety is situational or a type of state anxiety, but if the person has other personality characteristics that make them worry more frequently, the person may be more likely to develop test anxiety. It has been estimated that 25-40% of the United States population suffers from test anxiety⁴

Anxiety disorders affect an estimated 25 percent of 13- to 18-year-olds. Untreated childhood anxiety can cause children to perform poorly in school and on tests. According to a 2010 study, test anxiety can affect anywhere between 10 to 40 percent of all students. That percentage has seemed to increase alongside the increase in standardized testing.⁵

Students preparing to take their exam can become over anxious because of their thoughts regarding passing or failing their exam. Indeed, this fear and anxiety among students though it prepares their minds and bodies for automatic action, they are also at risk; for some it will lead to very serious, negative consequences. The experience of fear or anxiety may at times unpleasant and may lead to loss of physical and psychological balance. It is a proven fact that anxiety causing autonomic changes such as increase heart rate, blood pressure and changes in breathing pattern disturbs homeostasis of the body changes HPA activity with increased serum cortisol. In one of the literature studies it has been observed increased level of cortisol from relaxed state to stress state on the day of viva examination⁶.

A recent systematic review explores test anxiety among nursing students. Test anxiety affects 30% of nursing students and has detrimental effects on academic

performance and student success. Significant effects of treatment are discussed, including hypnotherapy, aromatherapy, and relaxation. Test anxiety has multiple ramifications and is a determining factor in student success among this population. Nurse educators can have a significant impact on student outcomes by recognizing test anxiety, intervening early, and implementing effective, supportive strategies⁷

Nursing students are going through highly stressful curriculum and they are under pressure for taking various tests during their theory sessions and practical block. Exam anxiety can also make you worry during the exam, for example you may feel that other people are managing the exam better than you or that they will be finding it really easy whereas you are struggling. This can cause you to feel that your mind has “gone blank” on information that you know that you have revised or that you know well. Nursing students have been found to be more test anxious than other students in general (Evans et al.). Nursing students had a combined moderately high to high test anxiety scores 56 % using the westside test anxiety scale which is comparable to other scales used for test anxiety (Driscoll et al., 2009).⁸

Test anxiety is the emotional reaction when students’ need to cope with examination. However, it varies among students depends on their preparedness and certainty to facing the exam. One of the past researches identified test anxiety emotional reaction that experienced by some students that they faced before exams; this emotional reaction consists of two components; “worry” identified as cognitive expression students concern about performance and “emotional” identified as an autonomic reactions which tend to occur examination stress⁹. Test anxiety specifically mentions to the effects of anxiety on student concentration and performance prior to the examination, when preparing for the examination and while completing examination^{10,11}. The purpose of the study is to find the prevalence and the levels of test anxiety among the final year B.Sc. Nursing students.

Materials and Methods

A quantitative descriptive research design was used. 30 final year BSc nursing students were selected by using purposive sampling technique who fulfilled the inclusion criteria and who were using smart phone

with internet connection during the period of data collection at Mtpgi&Rihs nursing college, Puducherry. Data was collected by using a standardized test anxiety questionnaire send through Email. The tools used for data collection were divided into two sections. Section A includes demographic variables and section B comprised of standardized 10 questions with score ranging from 10 to 50. The total score above 35 indicates that there is an unhealthy level of test anxiety while a score below 19 points no test anxiety at all. A score between 19 to 35 refers students are having healthy level of exam anxiety.

The data was collected after obtaining permission from the concerned authority. Informed consent was obtained from each sample prior to data collection. The data was collected by using Standardized Questionnaire schedule to all population who fulfilled the inclusion criteria and available at the time of data collection in MTPGI RIHS Puducherry.

Data Analysis

Plan for data analysis were done using Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16.0 software for Windows. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the frequencies, percentage and mean

Results

Table1. shows the demographic characteristics of all participants involved in this study. Majority 16(53.4%) of students, were 21 years, 28 (93.33%) were come under female gender, 29 (96.67%) students were belongs to Hindu religion, 19 (63.33%) students' father and 23 (76.67%) students' mother were completed up to secondary level education. 30 (100%) father,2 (6.67%) mothers of study participants were government employees. ,16 (53.4%) of student's family income ranges between 10000-15000.

Table 1: Distribution of subjects based on Sociodemographic variables. (N = 30).

S. No	Demographic Variable	frequency	Percentage
1.	Age group		
	19	1	3.3
	20	12	40
	21	16	53.4
	22	1	3.3
2.	Gender		
	Male	2	6.67
	Female	28	93.33
3.	Religion		
	Hindu	29	96.67
	Muslim	1	3.33
4.	Father's education		
	Uneducated	1	3.33
	Primary level	4	13.34
	Secondary level	19	63.33
	College level	6	20
5.	Mother's education		
	Uneducated	1	3.33
	Primary level	1	3.33
	Secondary level	23	76.67
	College level	5	16.67
6.	Father's occupation		
	Employed	30	100
	Unemployed	0	0

Cont... Table 1: Distribution of subjects based on Sociodemographic variables. (N = 30).

7.	Mother's occupation		
	Employed	2	6.67
	Unemployed	28	93.33
8.	Family income		
	<5000	0	0
	5000-10000	9	30
	10000-15000	16	53.4
	>15000	5	16.6

Table 2: Distribution of subjects based on Area of Residence N=30

Area of Residence	Frequency	Percentage
Urban	22	73.4
Rural	8	26.6

The above table 2 describes the distribution of subjects based on Area of Residence. Majority 22 (73.4%) of them were belongs to Urban area and 8 (26.6%) of them were belongs to Rural area.

Table 3: Distribution of subjects based on level of difficulty in college N=30

Level of difficulty in college		
yes	12	40
no	18	60

The above table 3 describes the distribution of subjects based on Level of difficulty in college Majority 18 (60%) of them did not felt difficulty while ,12 (40%) students felt difficulty in studying in mtpgi&rihs college Puducherry.

Table 4: Frequency and level of test anxiety among nursing students N=30

Level of test anxiety	Frequency	percentage
No test anxiety	7	23.3
Moderate (exhibit some of the characteristics of test anxiety)	22	74
Unhealthy	1	3.3

With respect to table 4, which depicts the level test anxiety, Majority of subject 22 (73.3 %) exhibit some of the characteristics of test anxiety, 7 (23.3 %) do not suffer from test anxiety and only 1 (3.3 %) has unhealthy level of test anxiety

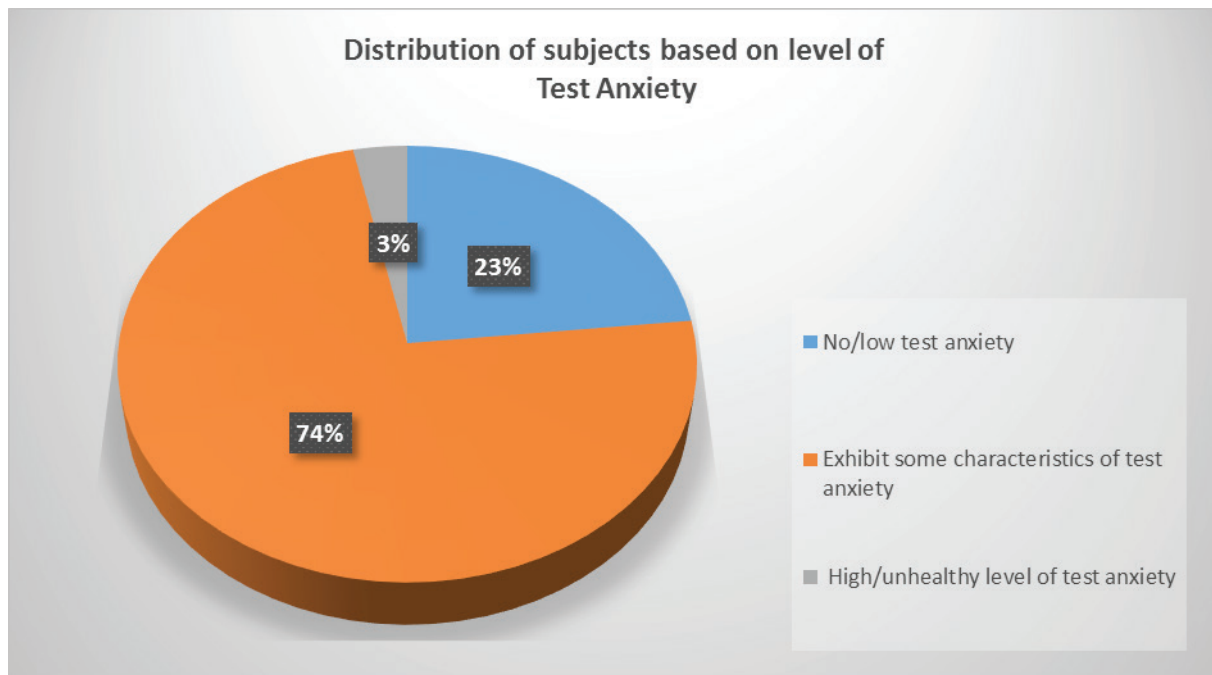


Fig 1; distribution of subject based on level of test anxiety

Discussion

The study result findings showed that there is no significant association between the selected demographic variables and test anxiety among nursing student. Majority of subject 22 (73.3 %) exhibit some of the characteristics of test anxiety, 7 (23.3 %) do not suffer from test anxiety and only 1 (3.3 %) has unhealthy level of test anxiety.

The present study was supported by Brad Edward Moore (2013) conducted a primary descriptive analysis of test anxiety among nursing students in east Tennessee state university, US, using a cross-sectional survey. The findings of study shown that more than half of nursing students who were surveyed shown moderate to high cognitive test anxiety and that intervention is needed to reduce the numbers and increase grade point averages. Similar studies show that when test anxiety scales are given to high school students and the general populations, as well as nursing students, nursing students have higher test anxiety levels.¹²

The present study was supported by the study conducted by Charlet J Vaz (2018) Factors Influencing Examination Anxiety among Undergraduate Nursing Students: An Exploratory Factor Analysis in selected

universities, Karnataka. the level of text anxiety was found 209 (61%) students being normal or no test anxiety, 87 (25%) with mild test anxiety, 40 (12%) show moderate test anxiety and 5 (2%) have severe test anxiety¹³.

The present study was supported by the study conducted by Farrahdilla Hamzah (2018) Assessing Test Anxiety among the First Year Nursing Students' a cross sectional study at University of Sultan Zainal Abidin, Terengganu, Malaysia. The study results revealed that only 1.7% respondents no anxiety, 36.7% respondents experienced of mild anxiety, more than half 58.3% respondents had moderate anxiety and 3.3% respondents experienced of severe anxiety.¹⁴

The present study was supported by Mohammed G Qutishat (2018) Extent of Test Anxiety among Nursing Students and impact on academic performance in Sultan Qaboos University, Oman. A descriptive correlational study. The findings of the study shown that majority of the students have moderate test anxiety or worry 66 (43%), impairment 85 (56%) and overall, 85 (55.6%)¹⁵

The present study was supported by Husam Al Khatib (2019) A descriptive analytical study to assess the Exam Anxiety among Nursing Students and Its Relationship

with Some Variables at Al-Ahliyya Amman University, Jordan. Results of the study indicated that more than half of the participants were suffering from medium levels of exam anxiety. Whereas one-third of the participants were suffering from high levels of exam anxiety.¹⁶

The present study was supported by a study conducted by Hamid Reza Miri (2013). A descriptive cross-sectional study, that Determining the Level of Test Anxiety and Some of Its Contributing Factors among the Freshmen Students at Hormozgan University of Medical Sciences, Iran. Findings of the study revealed 47.85 % of students suffered from low level of test anxiety, 40.3 % from moderate level and 11.95% from severe level.¹⁷

Conclusion

The study conducted among 30 final year BSc nursing students. The present study concluded that there was high prevalence of test anxiety among nursing students. Majority of them have moderate anxiety showing only some characteristics of test anxiety and the level of stress and tension that they have is probably healthy. We provide opportunities for nursing students to get an understanding of their level of test anxiety.

Recommendation

Based on findings of the present study, the following recommendations have been made

- Similar study can be conducted in large sample size.
- Similar study can be conducted at different settings.
- Similar study can be conducted with interventional strategies

Ethical Clearance- Taken from the Principal and Dean, Mother Theresa College of Nursing, Puducherry.

Source of Funding- Self.

Conflict of Interest – Nil.

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