

Prevalence of General Anxiety Disorder Among Patients Consulting General Physicians

Ansarullah Tantry

Assistant Professor

School of Humanities,

Lovely Professional University, Phagwara, Punjab, India

Tanmy Painyuli

Student of M. A. Psychology,

School of Humanities,

Lovely Professional University, Phagwara, Punjab, India

Abstract

Objectives: The aim of the present research is observe the prevalence of general anxiety disorder among patients consulting general physicians at Pal Hospital, Jalandhar, Punjab. **Methods:** A sample of 100 patients (male=49 and female=51) consulting general physicians. General Anxiety Disorder Scale (GADS-7), designed by Spritzer, Kroenke, Williams, and Lowe (2006) was applied to quantify the prevalence of anxiety disorder among the sample. Data was analysed by using Mean, SD, Percentage and Independent Sample's t-test. **Results:** Findings of this study explained that there are a significant number of patients consulting general physicians and are co-morbid with general anxiety disorder. Moreover, there is a significant difference in the levels and severity of general anxiety disorder. **Conclusion:** It can be concluded that the levels and severity of general anxiety disorder differs among patients consulting general physicians with reference to their organisation. Gender has a significant role in influencing the levels and severity of general anxiety disorder among patients consulting general physicians.

Keywords: General anxiety disorder, stress, fear, and anxiety.

INTRODUCTION

Anxiety Disorder: Anxiety is a natural stress reaction and in some situation can be beneficial. It is a normal to have anxiety in our day to day activities. It can notify us, prepare and be careful to prevent dangers. Anxiety disorders differ from normal feelings of uneasiness or anxiousness, and include intense fear or worry. It is the uncertainty of the future concern which is causing emotional and physical, tension, worry and avoidance of situation. Anxiety disorders are a group of mental disorders characterized by significant feelings of anxiety and fear (DSM, 2013). Anxiety is a worry about future events, and fear is a reaction to current events (DSM, 2013). Sometimes people with anxiety are not able to differentiate between the real stress and harmless circumstances. People with the anxiety disorder have the understanding that the thoughts are irrational but they are not able to stop them (Hill, 2016).

Objectives: 1). to explore the prevalence of general anxiety disorder among patients consulting general physicians. 2). to study the significance of difference in the prevalence of general anxiety disorder among patients consulting general physicians with reference to their gender and marital status.

Hypotheses: H_{01} : There is no significant difference in the prevalence of general anxiety disorder between male and female patients consulting general physicians. H_{02} : There is no significant difference in the prevalence of general anxiety disorder between married and unmarried patients consulting general physicians.

Sample: The sample of the study consists of 100 patients including 49 male and 51 female with age limit 20-40 yrs. The participants consulting general physicians during the month of September, 2019, were taken from Pal Hospital, Jalandhar, Punjab. The sample was selected by using deliberate sampling method.

Tools: General Anxiety Disorder Scale (GADS-7), designed by Spritzer, Kroenke, Williams, and Lowe (2006) was applied to quantify the prevalence of anxiety disorder among the sample. The scale consists of 7 questions and each of which is consist of scoring from 0 to 3, providing 0 to 21 score. The severity can be examined after the total score. The last two weeks frequency of anxiety symptoms are asked from responders. The assigning score is 0,1,2,3 and the responses are “not at all”, “several days”, “more than half the days”, and “nearly every day”. Interpretation of the scoring is No general anxiety disorder is 1-4, Mild is 5-9, Moderate is 10-14 and severe is 15-21.

Statistical Analysis: Descriptive statistics, such as Mean and Standard deviation, and percentage were calculated to observe the prevalence of general anxiety disorder among participants of the study. Independent sample's t-test was applied to measure the significance of difference with reference to socio-demography of the sample.

Result and Discussion

Table 1: Showing the prevalence percentage of general anxiety disorder according to severity among patients consulting general physicians

Level of Anxiety Disorder	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No Anxiety Disorder (1)	48	48
Moderate (2)	37	37
Severe (3)	15	15
Total	100	100

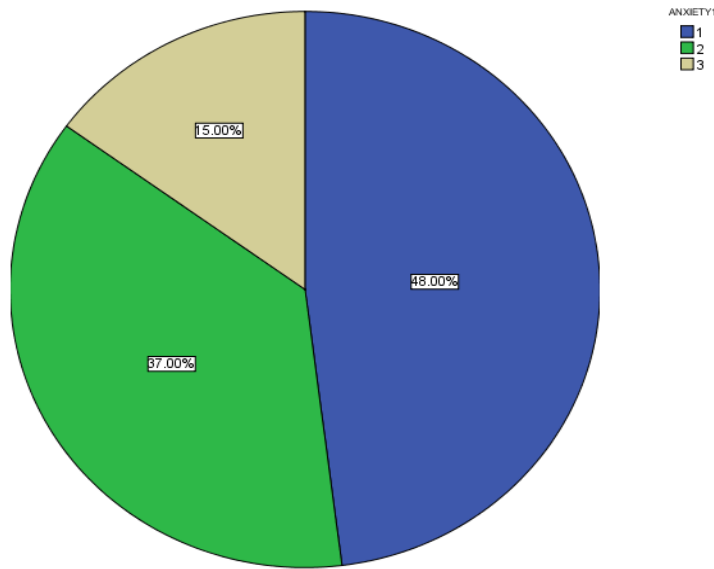


Figure 1: The percentage of general anxiety disorder as per severity among the patients consulting general physicians (1=No anxiety disorder, 2=moderate and 3=severe).

The observations presented in the table 1 display that the most of the patients didn't show any sign of general anxiety disorder and covers 48% of the total population of patients consulting general physicians, 37% of the cases are found to have moderate levels of general anxiety disorder and 15% of the patients are found to have symptoms of severity of general anxiety disorder. Thus it can be said that patients consulting general physicians are co-morbid with general anxiety disorder. It can be suggested that there is a special need to take care of the patients getting consultations for general physicians to overcome the burden of general anxiety disorder as well. Otherwise, it can worsen their severity of the medical problems. It is a well known fact that psychological well-being is important for the physical well-being of an individual.

Table 2: Comparison of mean scores of general anxiety disorder between male and female patients consulting general physicians

Variable	Gender	N	M	SD	t-value	df	Sig. (2-Tailed)
General Anxiety Disorder	Male	49	5.14	3.266	-.555	98	.020*
	Female	51	5.53	3.679			
Total N=		100					

*. Significant difference at the 0.05 level of significance

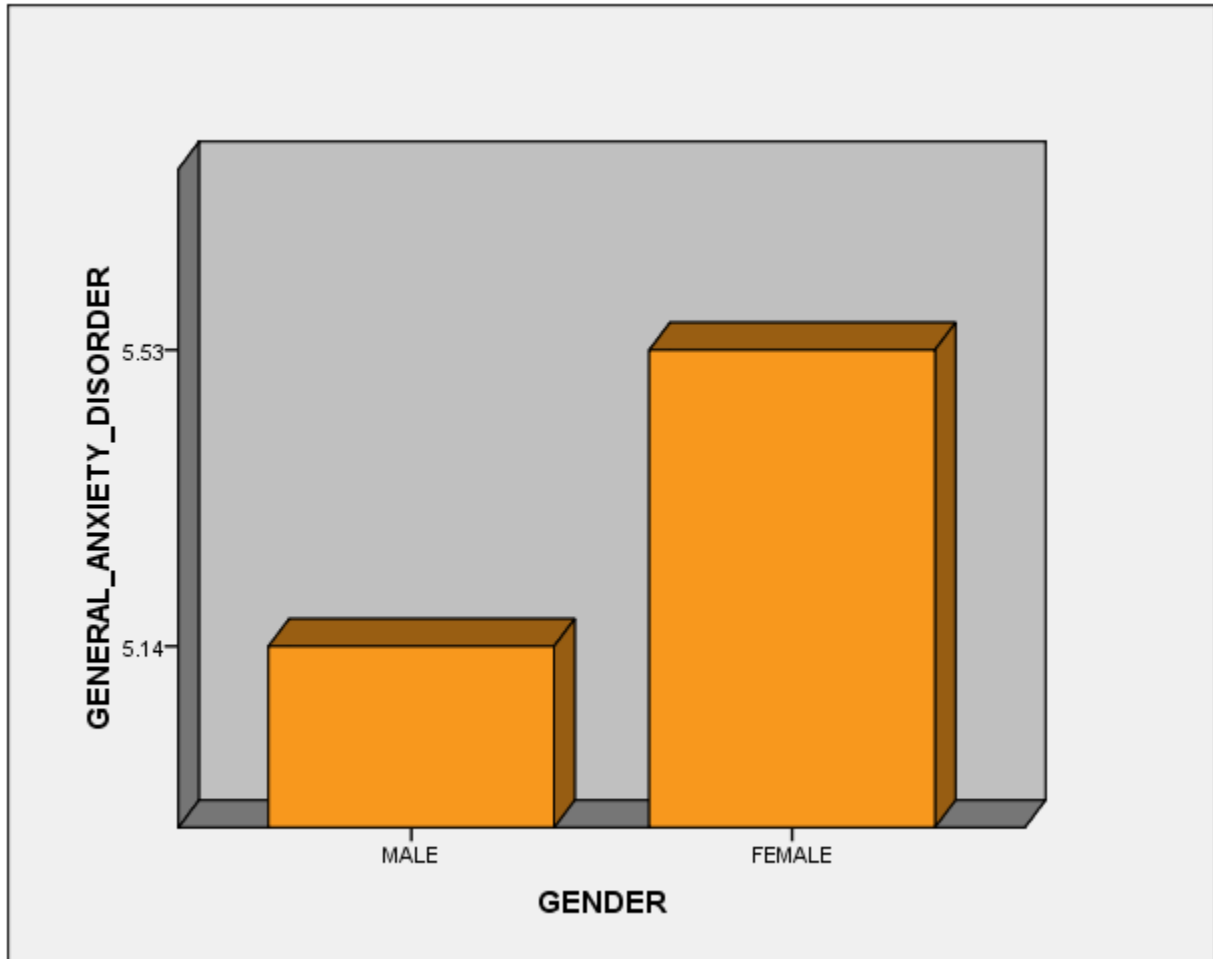


Figure 2: Showing mean scores of male and female patients on general anxiety disorder

The results presented in the table 2 shows that there is a significant difference in the mean scores of general anxiety among the males and females patient consulting general physicians. The mean score of male patients is 5.14 and female mean score is 5.53. The SD score of male is 3.266 and SD score of female is 3.679. The mean score of female patients on general anxiety disorder is higher than the mean score of male patients ($t = -.555$, with $df = 98$, $p < .05$ level of significance). Hence the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the prevalence of general anxiety disorder between male and female patients consulting general physicians is rejected. Thus it can be concluded that there is a significant difference in the percentage and severity of general anxiety disorder between male and female patients consulting general physicians. The observations of the study are supported by numerous findings such as Ritchie and Roser (2018) in a study found that females have more prevalence in experiencing anxiety disorder than males in all the countries.

Table 3: Showing mean scores of general anxiety disorder between married and unmarried patients consulting general physicians

Variable	Marital Status	N	M	SD	t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
General Anxiety Disorder	Married	60	5.02	3.610	-1.143	98	.256
	Unmarried	40	5.82	3.234			

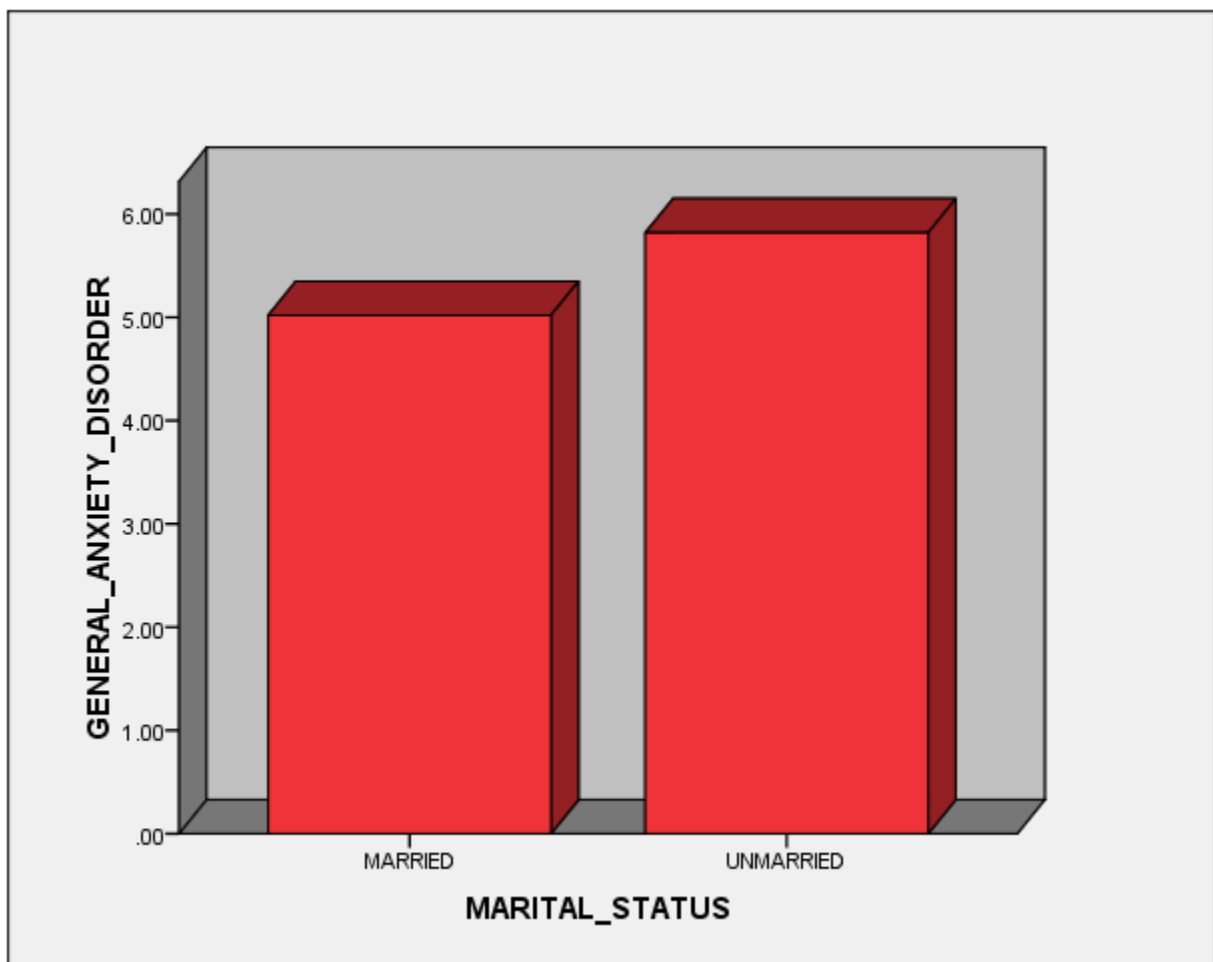


Figure 3: Mean scores of general anxiety disorder between married and unmarried patients consulting general physicians

The observations presented in the above table 3 shows that there is no significant difference in the mean score of general anxiety disorder between the married and unmarried patients consulting general physicians. The mean score of married patients is 5.14 with SD of 3.266 and mean score of unmarried patients is 5.53 with SD of 3.679. The mean scores of married and unmarried patients do not differ significantly ($t = -.556$, with $df = 98$, $p > .05$ level of significance). Hence the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the prevalence of general anxiety disorder between married and unmarried patients consulting general physicians is accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that marital status does not have any significant role in developing the general anxiety disorder among patients consulting general physicians.

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