

Prevalence of Social Phobia among Nursing Undergraduates

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Abstract

The aim of the study was to assess the prevalence of social phobia among nursing undergraduates and its association with their socio demographic variables. The descriptive survey research design included the students pursuing bachelor's degree in nursing from different states of India. The data was collected through web-based survey by using Google forms. The instrument used for collecting data was a questionnaire to ascertain the socio demographic characteristics and the social phobia inventory scale (SPIN) which was a 17-item self-rating scale to diagnose prevalence of social phobia among nursing students. Out of 1006 participants, majority (31.6%) had very mild social phobia, 24.6 percent had mild social phobia, 14.1 percent had moderate social phobia, 5.6 percent were with severe social phobia and 2.4 percent had very severe social phobia; 21.6 percent did not have any symptoms of social phobia. The socio demographic attribute (education of father) was found to have a significant association with mean social phobia scores of nursing graduates. The study concluded that there was a significant prevalence of very mild to moderate social phobia and the socio demographic attribute which showed a significant association with prevalence of social phobia among nursing undergraduates was education of father.

Social phobia is a pervasive and debilitating disorder, with relatively high prevalence among the adolescents resulting in impairment of social, educational and vocational functions. Social phobia also known as Social anxiety disorder is characterised by the fear of being observed or evaluated by others. Nursing is a profession where nurses have greater opportunities for unique and productive interactions with the patients, families and people around them. If nurses are well adjusted and emotionally stable, the quality of care and services they render in the health care setting will be optimum and productive.

The quality of academic performance, the care provided the effective communication and interpersonal skills that students have, are influenced by many factors, where social phobia is one of the most important factors. In nursing profession, nurses need to have effective communication and interpersonal skills with all members of the health care team and the patients they care for. The foundation for developing those skills should start in student time. Studies on nursing students show that fear of society has been the most important factor for poor academic performance, ineffective communication and interpersonal skills, low levels of self-confidence and self-esteem. Social phobia is characterised by

anxiety caused by certain social or work conditions, which often lead to avoidance behaviours. They fear not to have necessary skills to form relationships or work well with others, or that they will expose the flawed behaviour of a degraded social environment. Social phobia is most common in ages 18 to 29 years. Because of onset in early age, the disorder greatly affects mental development, relationship formation, academic choice and career ideas.

Objectives

The study is aimed to:

1. Find the prevalence of social phobia among nursing undergraduates, and
2. Establish the association between demographic variables and social phobia among nursing undergraduates

Need for the study: A person with social phobia has a great fear of being judged by others and humiliated by his or her actions and has led to excessive social avoidance and severe social or work disability. This disorder usually begins early in childhood and adolescence.

Reghuram et al (2014) conducted a study to assess the detection of social anxiety among nursing students and its correlation with their professional adjustments in selected nursing institutions in Mangalore. Through purposive sampling technique, 1000 students were taken into study. The results showed that 27.4 percent of samples had moderate

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anxiety and 76.8 percent had average professional adjustment. The study concluded that there was no form of correlation between social anxiety and professional adjustment. Demographic variables like gender and year of study showed significant association with social anxiety.

Social phobia is an important factor that contributes to student academic performance, patient care, professionalism and self-esteem. The investigator felt the need to assess the prevalence of social phobia among nursing undergraduates.

Review of Literature

Bitaraf S, et al (2010) studied the relationship between social phobia, parenting styles and perfectionism and found that social phobia is a form of anxiety characterised by obvious and persistent fear, which is a major concern in social situations and can interfere with one's daily activities.

Thomas A Richards, at Social Anxiety Institute, after his extensive research on social anxiety concluded that social phobia is a much more common problem than noted in previous studies. Millions of people in the world over feel that they are living in a world that is experiencing some of the most difficult and tragic times in human history. Direct social anxiety can be the fear of speaking in front of groups (only), while people with a common social problem are anxious, scared and not feeling well in all social situations.

American Psychiatric Association (2000) in their Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, the fifth programme (DSM-5) quoted that the prevalence of social phobia in young people is reported to be 1 percent to 3 percent, with approximately 27 percent to 47 percent of adolescents reporting at least one symptom of this disease.

Deena Jothy R et al (2018) conducted a study to assess social phobia among nursing students at SRM College (Tamilnadu). The study was done on 100 nursing students. The results showed that 66 percent had mild social phobia, 30 percent had moderate social phobia and 4 percent of nursing students had severe social phobia. The study concluded that there was no significant relationship between social phobia and demographic variables

Sirwan Kamel Ali et al (2016) conducted a study on assessment of social phobia among students of nursing college in Hawler Medical University at

Erbil city-Iraq. The results showed that most of the study sample was between 17-22 years old, female, single, of fair economic status, and from rural area (59.8%). Most of the students had social phobia. There was significant relation between students' academic years with the severity of social phobia

Social phobia involves a strong, persistent fear of being judged by others and of being embarrassed or humiliated by one's own actions. This fear may be triggered by the perceived or imagined actions of others. Fear exceeds the usual "shame" as it leads to extreme social abstinence and severe social or work disability. While the emphasis of medical science has shifted from treating disease to general care, the role of nursing has become more complex. It puts nurses in need of more social interactions.

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was used in the present study phobia among nursing undergraduates. The study population for this descriptive study consisted all the students pursuing Bachelor's in nursing from different states of India. Data was collected from a total of 1006 samples through total enumeration using a web-based survey of Google form. Online informed consent was obtained from the participants. Purpose of the study was to complete the questionnaire and self-reporting rating scale. Confidentiality of the information was explained to the participants.

The study instrument consisted of two parts: Part A, Questionnaire to ascertain the demographic characteristics, and Part B, the Social phobia inventory scale (SPIN) designed by Jonathan Davidson 1995, 2019 was used to study the prevalence of social phobia among participants. Necessary permission to use the tool was obtained. Reliability was calculated by Cronbach's alpha and the value obtained was 0.81.

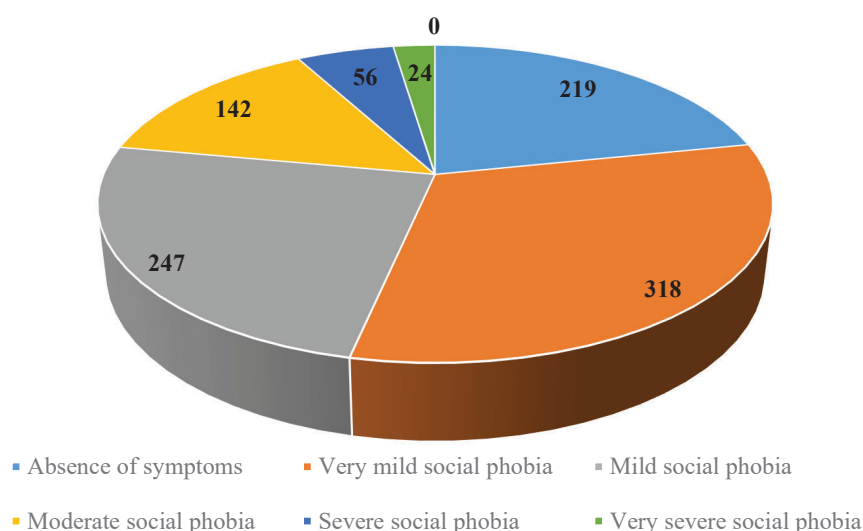


Fig 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of social phobia among nursing graduates (N=1006).

Table 1: Differences in mean social phobia scores in relation to gender (N=1006)

Gender	N	Mean	Std deviation	t-value	df	p value
Male	82	22.26	13.448	1.102	1004	0.271
Female	924	20.63	12.717			

Table 2: Differences in mean social phobia scores in relation to type of institution (N=1006)

Type of institution	N	Mean	Std deviation	t-value	df	p value
Government	461	20.28	12.630	1.099	1004	0.272
Private	545	21.17	12.902			

Table 3: Differences in mean social phobia scores in relation to Age (N=1006)

Age group	N	Mean	Std deviation	f-value	df	p value
< 20	340	20.51	12.696	0.134	(2,1003)	0.875
20-25	615	20.93	12.748			
> 25	51	20.47	13.899			
Total	1006	20.77	12.779			

Social phobia Inventory: The SPIN designed by Jonathan Davidson. 1995, 2019 is a 17-item self-rating scale which covers three dimensions-fears, avoidance and physical signs of social anxiety. Each item can be scored as 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4 which ranges between Not at all, A little bit, Somewhat, Very much, and Extremely. The total score for the SPIN ranges from 0 to 68. Lower scores correspond to less distress and higher scores correspond to greater distress from symptoms of social phobia

Ethical considerations: Formal approval was obtained from the Institutional Research and Ethical committee of All India Institute of Medical Sciences Patna (Bihar).

Results

Statistical analysis was done using software SPSS-16 version. Descriptive statistics were used to find the frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. Independent t test was used to find the differences in mean social phobia scores in relation to variables such as Gender and Type of institution. ANOVA was used to find the differences in mean social phobia scores in relation to the variables age, birth order, previous pattern of education, year of study, place of residence, education of father, education of mother and lodging. Non-parametric chi-square was used to find the

association between levels of social phobia with variable place of study (state).

In the present study, out of 1006 participants, major portion (31.6%) of nursing students were having very mild social phobia (15.36 ± 2.82), followed by 24.6 percent of nursing students having mild social phobia (25.15 ± 2.92), 14.1 percent had moderate social phobia (34.65 ± 2.75), 5.6 percent were experiencing severe social phobia (44.39 ± 2.54) and only few of nursing students (2.4%) were having very severe social phobia (54.54 ± 4.64); 21.6 percent of the participants were not having any type of social phobia (4.92 ± 3.421) (Fig 1).

Table 1 shows that, there was no significant difference in the mean social phobia scores between male and female as obtained by the t value 1.102 (df=1004, p=0.271) at 0.05 level of significance.

As for type of institution there was no significant difference between the mean social phobia scores between the nursing students studying in government and private institutions as obtained by the t value 1.099 (df=1004, p=0.272) at 0.05 level of significance (Table 2).

Table 3 shows that the mean social phobia scores of nursing students in relation to age, there was no

Table 4: Differences in mean social phobia scores in relation to birth order (N=1006)

Birth order	N	Mean	Std deviation	f-value	df	p value
First child	480	21.11	12.707	0.619	(2,1003)	0.539
Middle child	244	20.90	12.907			
Last child	282	20.06	12.809			
Total	1006	20.77	12.779			

Table 5: Differences in mean social phobia scores in relation to previous pattern of education (N=1006)

Previous pattern of education	N	Mean	Std deviation	f-value	df	p value
ICSE	59	21.37	13.159	0.188	(2,1003)	0.829
CBSE	299	21.02	13.129			
STATE	648	20.59	12.596			
Total	1006	20.77	12.779			

Table 6: Differences in mean social phobia scores in relation to year of study (N=1006)

Year of study	N	Mean	Std deviation	f-value	df	p value
First Year	174	19.83	12.916	1.693	(3,1002)	0.167
Second Year	206	20.49	13.187			
Third Year	355	20.27	12.563			
Fourth Year	271	22.22	12.608			
Total	1006	20.77	12.779			

significant difference in the mean social phobia scores of nursing students with regard to education of mother as obtained by the f value 0.477 (df=6999, p=0.826) at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 10 shows that there was no significant difference in the mean social phobia scores of nursing students related to lodging as obtained by the f value 1.195 (df=21003, p=0.826) at 0.05 level of significance. Fig 2 depicts that there was no significant association between level of mean social phobia scores with place of study (state) as obtained by the chi square value 94.333 (df=105, p=0.763) at 0.05 level of significance

Table 7: Differences in mean social phobia scores in relation to place of residence (N=1006)

Place of residence	N	Mean	Std deviation	f-value	df	p value
Urban	497	20.87	12.912	0.168	(2,1003)	0.845
Rural	326	20.44	12.923			
Semi Urban	183	21.05	12.204			
Total	1006	20.77	12.779			

significant difference between the age groups as depicted by the F value 0.134 (df=21003, p=0.875) at 0.05 level of significance.

There was no significant difference in the mean social phobia scores in the birth order as obtained by the f value 0.619 (df =21003, p=0.539) at 0.05 level of significance (Table 4).

Table 5 shows that, there was no significant difference in the mean social phobia scores in relation to previous pattern of education as obtained by the f value 0.188 (df =21003, p=0.829) at 0.05 level of significance.

No significant difference was found in the mean social phobia scores of nursing students related to year of study as obtained by the f value 1.693 (df=31002, p=0.167) at 0.05 level of significance (Table 6).

Table 7 shows that there was no significant difference in the mean social phobia scores of nursing students with regard to place of residence as obtained by the f value 0.168 (df=21003, p=0.845) at 0.05 level of significance.

There was a significant difference in the mean social phobia scores of nursing students in relation to education of father as obtained by the f value 4.581 (df=6999, p>0.001) at 0.05 level of significance (Table 8).

Table 9 shows that there was no

moderate social phobia, 5.6 percent with severe so-

Discussion

In this present study, 31.6 percent had very mild social phobia, 24.6 percent of nursing undergraduates had mild social phobia, 14.1 percent had

Table 8: Differences in mean social phobia scores in relation to education of father (N=1006)

Education of father	N	Mean	Std deviation	f-value	df	p value
Professional degree	92	16.93	11.797	4.581	(6,999)	0.000
Graduate	248	21.58	12.784			
Inter/Diploma	122	21.16	12.391			
High school	267	20.04	12.629			
Middle school	115	19.92	12.633			
Primary school	70	26.89	12.974			
Illiterate	92	20.36	13.215			
Total	1006	20.77	12.779			

Table 9: Differences in mean social phobia scores in relation to education of mother (N=1006)

Education of mother	N	Mean	Std deviation	f-value	df	p value
Professional degree	56	19.02	11.821	0.477	(6,999)	0.826
Graduate	156	20.44	12.770			
Intern / Diploma	106	21.96	13.876			
High school	270	20.31	12.299			
Middle school	163	20.99	12.358			
Primary school	104	21.52	13.956			
Illiterate	151	20.97	12.908			
Total	1006	20.77	12.779			

Table 10: Differences in mean social phobia scores in relation to lodging (N=1006)

Lodging	N	Mean	Std deviation	f-value	df	p value
With parent	618	20.43	12.640	1.195	(2.1003)	0.303
Institutionalised	69	19.72	13.555			
With guardian	319	21.64	12.869			
Total	1006	20.77	12.779			

cial phobia and 2.4 percent of nursing students had very severe social phobia; 21.6 percent of nursing students were not having social phobia. The mean scores of male and female was not significant with a t value of 1.102 which was found to be consistent with the findings of studies conducted by Momeni M (2015), Ghaedi GH (2010), Chan VW-Sh (2010), and Salina M (2008).

The mean social phobia scores related to students studying either in government or private institution (type of institution) did not show any significant difference as obtained by the t value 1.009. The social phobia was found more in students belonging to the age group 20-25 years (61%) but it was not statistically significant as obtained by the f value 0.134 at 0.05 percent level of significance. Also, there was no significant difference between the mean social phobia scores of nursing students in relation to place of residence as depicted by its f value 0.168. These results were found to be similar to the study conducted by Upadhyaya SK (2016), where the results showed no statistically

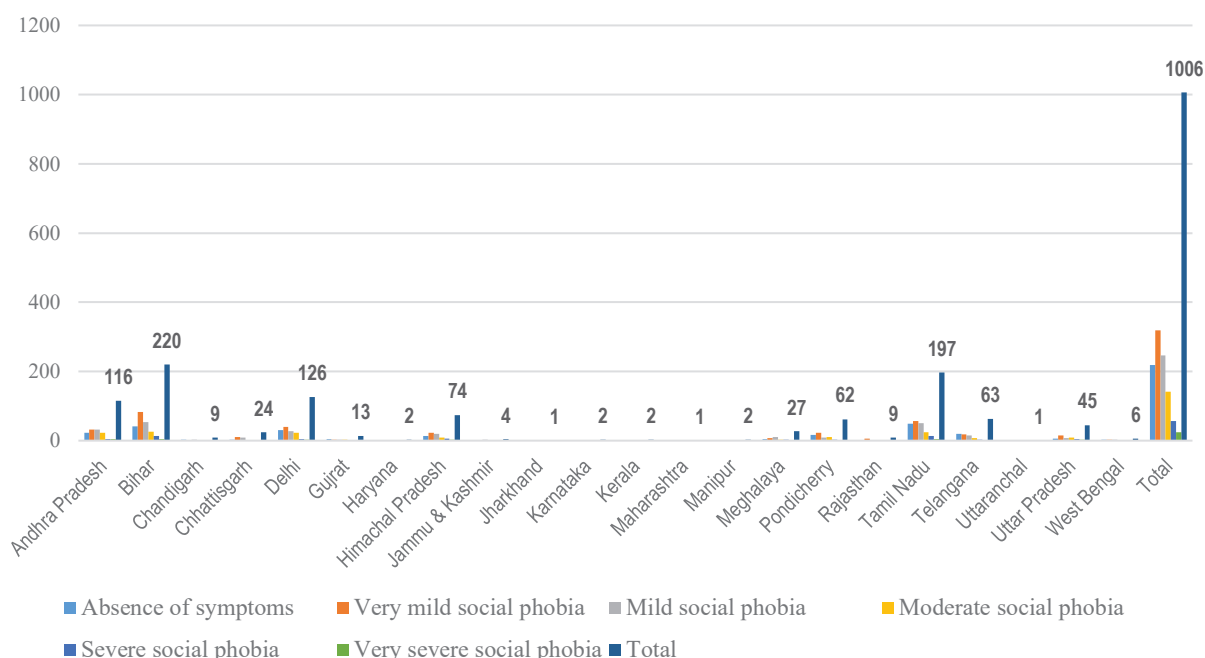
significant difference in the social phobia levels with regard to age and place of residence

Regarding the education of father, the mean social phobia of nursing students showed a significant difference as shown by the f value 4.581 at 0.05 percent level of significance, whereas there was no significant difference in the mean social phobia scores related to education of mother as obtained by the corresponding f value 0.477.

There was no significant difference between the mean social phobia scores with regard to lodging, as contradictory to the study conducted by Shah P et al (2009) showing significant levels of social phobia in students residing in hostel. The birth order, previous pattern of education and place of study (state) did not show any statistically significant difference in the mean social phobia scores of nursing students.

Recommendations

1. A comparative study can be conducted between the students pursuing diploma and graduation in nursing to assess prevalence of social phobia.
2. An exploratory study can be conducted to find the various factors associated with social phobias in nursing students.
3. Counselling sessions to the students can be planned at the college level to eliminate any kind of phobias in them.



Chi-square value = 94.333, d.f = 105

Fig 2: Differences in mean social phobia scores in relation to place of study (state) (N=1006)

Study implications

Nursing Education

The study emphasises the need for curriculum reviews and provides the importance of psychological development for students so that they can adapt to a variety of coping strategies and become professionally prepared and mentally stable.

Nursing Practice

When nurses are emotionally stable, the quality of care they provide to patients and their satisfaction with work will improve. This will help to improve professional standards. Necessary measures can be taken to eliminate pressures and student nurses should be enabled to effectively deal with professional adjustments.

Nursing Management

The nurse administrators can take the necessary steps to identify stressors and rehabilitation of nursing students and thus create the necessary student guidance and counselling sessions that will help students get out of their professional adjustment issues and can develop a more balanced and emotional personality.

Nursing Research

The study indicated a great need for similar studies to be done to help identify the various pressures that increase stress and anxiety for nursing students so that necessary actions can be planned to eliminate them early for better emotional well-being.

Conclusion

Social phobia with one of the factors was found to be the leading causes of poor academic performance, improper communication skills and interpersonal skills among nurses. Since social phobia is an important factor affecting students' academic performance, patient care, professional preparation and self-confidence, they need proper guidance and counselling to be free from all forms of social phobias. When student nurses are well-prepared and emotionally stable, not only academic performance but also their confidence and quality of care they provide will improve. This will help improve, their

communication skills and relationships between health care team members. Parents and teachers should also be aware of the role they play in the encouragement and support that will enhance students' self-esteem and confidence.

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