

Nursing Students' Knowledge and Attitudes on Examination Anxiety in a Private University in Jordan

Nisser Mohammad AL-Hroub*, Sherwin C. Ycaza

Al-Ghad International Colleges for Applied Medical Sciences

*Corresponding author: nisserjo@yahoo.com

Received: 22-4-2017
Revised: 25-4-2017
Published: 28-4-2017

Keywords:

*Anxiety,
Students,
Examination*

Abstract: This study aimed to assess the knowledge and attitudes of nursing students regarding anxiety related to examination.

Research methods: Descriptive cross-sectional study, which included 81 nursing students (male and female) in level five, six, seven, and eight who are studying at a private university in Jordan, the respondents were selected according to the criteria of inclusion and exclusion, a survey-questionnaire was developed and it was used as instrument for data collection. The questionnaire includes the demographic data and the students' knowledge and attitudes on examination anxiety followed by analysis of data.

Results: The results showed that among the total number of students who participated in the study, majority are female (75.3%), most of their age were between 20 – 22 years old which represented (90.1%) and also majority of respondents know the definition of anxiety which represented (70.4%).

Conclusion: This study concluded that nursing students have good knowledge regarding anxiety which represented (65.7%) this study concluded that nursing students have a positive attitude with regard to anxiety on examination which represented (74%). In addition, it was found out that some students have anxiety during examination which represented (8.7%), while other have some signs of anxiety on examination that was represented (75.3%), and 16% of the other respondents have not experienced anxiety during examination.

Cite this article as: AL-Hroub, N.M and Ycaza, S.C. (2017).Nursing Students' Knowledge and Attitudes on Examination Anxiety in a Private University in Jordan. . Journal of basic and applied Research,3(2): 71-76

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INTRODUCTION

Anxiety is one of the most common problems that faces people in the society and even in the world. In America anxiety is the most common illness and approximately 40 million of adult with age 18 years old and above, accounting around 18% of the total population (National Institute of Mental Health) have anxiety disorders and a common cause of poor academic performance among student in every part of the globe.

Individuals face anxiety on a daily basis. However, anxiety provides motivation for achievement, which is a necessary force for survival. The term anxiety is often used interchangeably with the word stress; however, they are not the same. Stress, or more properly, a stressor, is an external pressure that is brought to bear on the individual.

Anxiety maybe distinguished from fear in that the former is an emotional process, whereas fear is a cognitive one. Fear involves the intellectual appraisal of a threatening stimulus; anxiety involves the emotional response to that appraisal. Anxiety is the psycho-physiological state characterized by physical, psychological and social symptoms.

Anxiety is an emotional response (e.g., apprehension, tension, uneasiness) in an

anticipation of danger, the source of which is largely unknown or unrecognized. It maybe regarded as pathologic when it interferes with the activities of daily living, achievement of desired goals or satisfaction, or reasonable emotional comfort.

Predisposing factors that have been implicated in the etiology of anxiety disorders provide a framework for studying the dynamics of phobias, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and other anxiety related disorders.

Different theories of causation are presented, although it is most likely that a combination of factors contribute to the etiology of anxiety disorders (Mary C. Townsend, 2009).

Anxiety experienced during examination is the psychological conditions concerned with fear and expectation. It is also an impulsive conditions that affect some students during examinations associated with irritability and severe impulsiveness and negative obsession in mind that interfere with the concentration during examination which can lead to negative impact on the mind during examination.

There are some possible causes that leads to anxiety during examination (fear of failure, previous poor exam performance, characteristic of examination environment, nature of task, atmosphere, time constrain, and examiner characteristic).

When anxiety is in its severe form, it may lead to serious problem which affects the school performance. During anxiety, students experiences mental block, tremors, feeling of numbness, and suffers a number of sudden disabilities. Academic performance is the outcome of education which refers to the extent to which students, teachers or institution has achieved their educational goals which is influenced by anxiety. Some reported that anxiety can occur as a result of stress, affecting learning and memory and also affecting academic performance negatively (Afolayanet, J.A. 2013).

This study aimed to assess the Nursing Students' Knowledge and Attitudes on Examination Anxiety. Specific objectives includes: Assessment of knowledge of nursing students regarding anxiety, predisposing factors of anxiety, levels of anxiety, causes of anxiety, symptoms of anxiety, management of anxiety, prevention of anxiety; To assess attitude of nursing students regarding: management of anxiety on examination, prevention of anxiety on examination; To assess the presence of anxiety during examination in nursing students. Research questions: What is the knowledge of nursing students regarding anxiety, What is the attitude of nursing students regarding anxiety during examination? What is the percent of anxiety during examination among study participants?

METHODOLOGY

Study Design: Observational descriptive cross-sectional study – aimed to assess the Nursing Students' Knowledge and Attitudes on Examination Anxiety. Simple random method is being utilized in data collection. Sample size for plus or minus 10% precision levels where confidences level is 95% and $p= 0.5$ size of population is 405.

The actual sample size is 81.

Study Area: The study was conducted in a private university in Jordan that offers bachelor of Science in Nursing program.

Target Population: male and female students in Bachelor of Science in Nursing program in the level five, six, seven, eight.

Data Collection: Questionnaire was used to assess the knowledge and attitude of anxiety and assess the presence of anxiety during examinations. The questionnaire contains different parts. Part one includes the demographic data, part two assessing the knowledge regarding anxiety, part three assessing the attitudes regarding anxiety, and part four contains the standardized scale to measure the

presence of anxiety during examination of students who participated in study.

Ethical Consideration: The request letter was approved by the university administration. Consent was given by the respondents. The purpose of the study was explained to the respondents and was informed that they can withdraw from the study anytime. Safety and confidentiality of the respondents is strictly observed during the entire research process.

Statistical analysis: To analyze the demographic data of the respondents, frequency and percentage were being used. To assess the knowledge of nursing students regarding anxiety frequency and percentage is being used. To assess the attitude of nursing students regarding anxiety during examination frequency and percentage is being used. To assess the percent of anxiety during examination among study participants, frequency and percentage is being used.

RESULTS

Table 1: Distribution of study participants according to their age: (n=81).

Age	Frequency	Percent
20-22	73	90.1%
22-24	7	8.7%
25 and above	1	1.2%
Total	81	100%

The table shows that majority of the respondents were in the age group of 20-22 years old (90.1%), 22-24 years old is only 8.7% followed by age group of greater than 25 years old (1.2%).

Table 2: Distribution of study participants according to their gender: (n=81).

Gender distribution	Frequency	Percent
Male	20	24.7%
Female	61	75.3%
Total	81	100%

The above table shows that 75.3% of study participants were female and the minority of them were male (24.7%).

Table 3: Distribution of study participants according to their knowledge regarding definition of anxiety: (n=81)

Items	Frequency	Percent
Know	57	70.4%
Don't know	24	29.6%
Total	81	100%

The above table shows that majority of study participants knows the definition of anxiety which represent (70.4%). Only 29.6% don't know the concept of anxiety.

Table 4: Distribution of study participants according to their knowledge on predisposing factors of anxiety: (n=81).

Items	Frequency	Percent
Knows five factors	2	2.4%
Knows four factors	22	27%
Knows three factors	16	19.7%
Knows two factors	16	19.7%
Knows one factor	25	30.8
Don't know at all	0	0%
Total	81	100%

The above table shows that majority of study participants knows only one predisposing factors of anxiety which represent 30.8% of the total samples, followed by some participants knows four factors (27%).

Table 5: Distribution of study participants according to their knowledge regarding the levels of anxiety: (n=81).

Items	Frequency	Percent
Knows four levels	13	16%
Knows three levels	14	17.2%
Knows two levels	13	16%
Knows one level	41	50.6%
Total	81	100%

The above table shows that majority of study participants knows one level which represented 50.6% from the total samples

Table 6: Distribution of study participant according to their knowledge regarding the causes of anxiety during examination: (n=81).

Items	Frequency	Percent
Knows four causes	5	6%
Knows three causes	19	23.4%
Knows two causes	32	39.5%
Knows one cause	25	30%
Don't know at all	0	0%
Total	81	100%

The above table shows that majority of study participants knows two causes of anxiety during examination which represented 39.5% from the samples.

Table 7: Distribution of study participants according to their knowledge regarding the symptoms of anxiety during examination: (n=81).

Items	Frequency	Percent
Knows 10 symptoms	1	1.2%
Knows 9 symptoms	6	7.4%
Knows 8 symptoms	7	8.6%
Knows 7 symptoms	11	13.5%
Knows 6 symptoms	10	12.3%
Knows 5 symptoms	12	14.8%
Knows 4 symptoms	14	17.2%
Knows 3 symptoms	12	14.8%
Knows 2 symptoms	8	9.8%
Knows 1 symptom	0	0%
Don't know at all	0	0%
Total	81	100%

The above table shows that majority of study participants knows the four symptoms of anxiety on examination which represent (17.2%).

Table 8: Distribution of study participants according to their knowledge regarding the management of anxiety in general: (n=81).

Items	Frequency	Percent
Knows 5 methods	5	16%
Knows 4 methods	4	25.9%
Knows 3 methods	8	9.8%
Knows 2 methods	10	36%
Knows 1 method	10	12.3%
Don't know at all	0	0%
Total	81	100%

The table above shows the majority of study participants knows two methods (36%) and four methods of management of anxiety which represented (25.9%).

Table 9: Distribution of study participants according to their knowledge regarding the prevention of anxiety during examination: (n=81).

Items	Frequency	Percent
Knows 4 methods	13	16%
Knows 3 methods	34	26%
Knows 2 methods	21	42%
Knows 1 method	13	16%
Don't know at all	0	0%
Total	81	100%

The above table shows that the majority of study participants knows two methods of prevention of anxiety on examination which represented (42%) followed by three methods (26%).

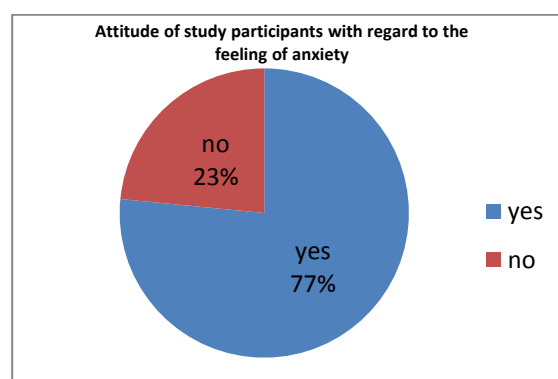


Figure 1: (n=81)

The above figure shows that the majority of study participants (77%) feel anxious and minority of them does not feel anxious (23%) during examination.

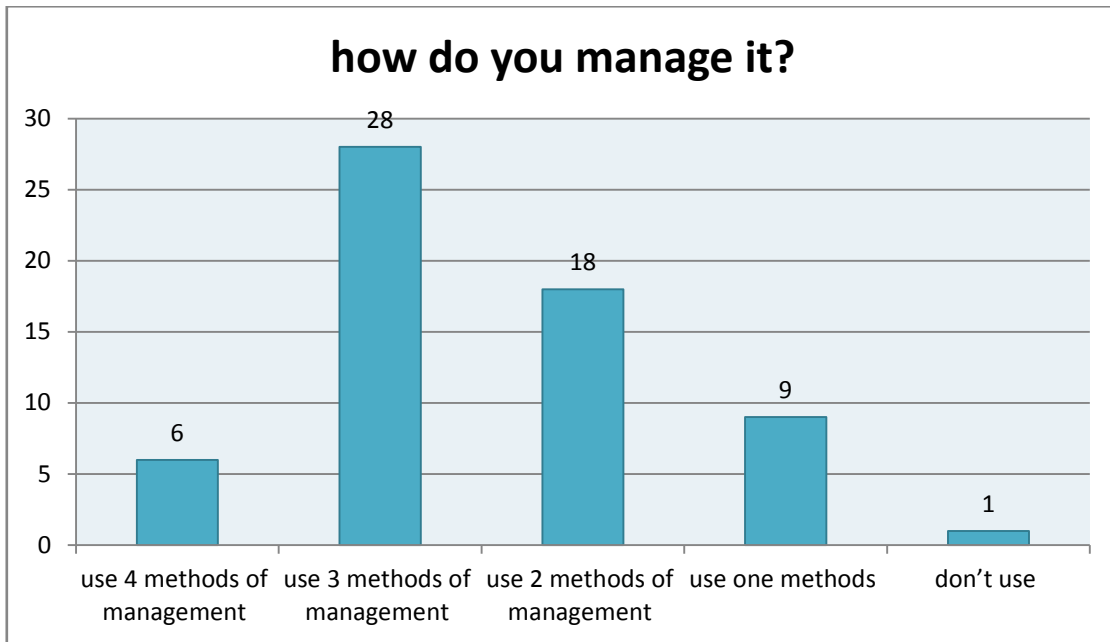


Figure 2: (n=81)

The above figure shows that majority of study participants used three methods of management of anxiety on examination which represented (28%), followed by only one method (18%). Only 1% of the participants don't use any methods in reducing anxiety.

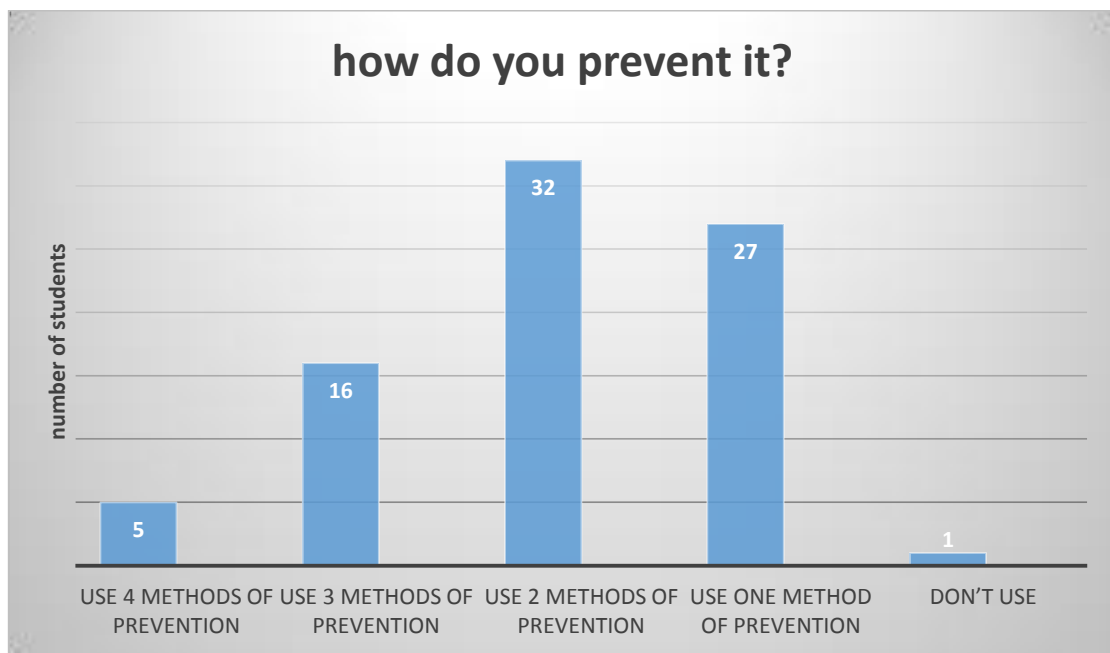


Figure 3: (n=81)

The above figure shows that the majority of study participants uses two methods of preventions which represent (32%) followed by one method of prevention (27%).

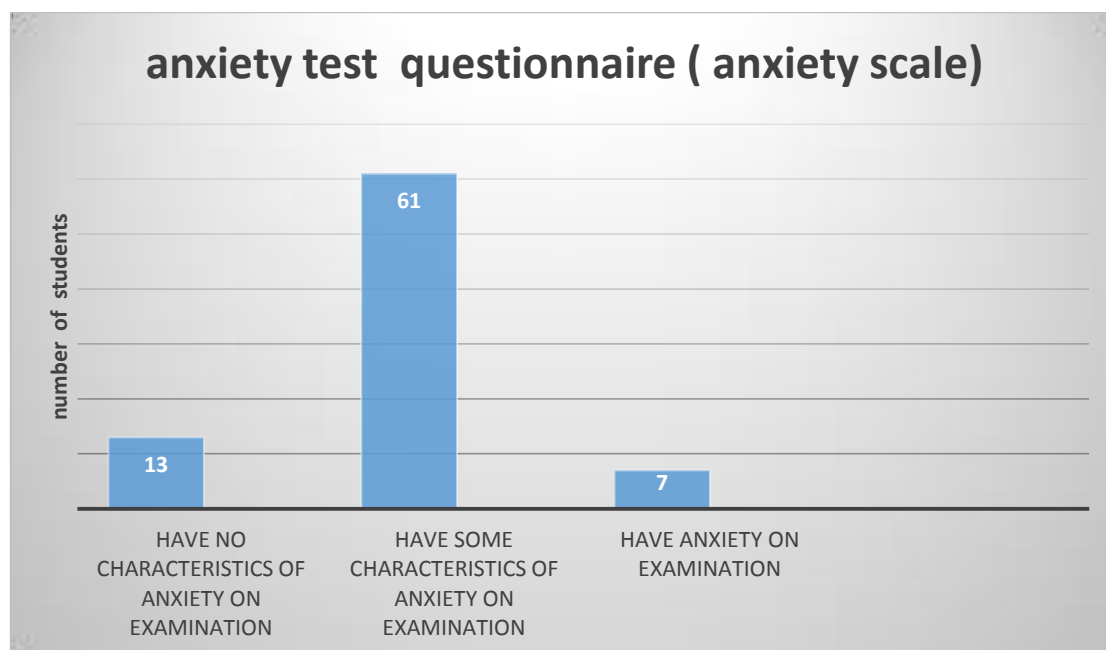


Figure 4: (n=81)

The above figure shows that (61) of students which represent (75.3%) have some characteristics of anxiety during examination, (13) students which represent (16%) have no characteristics of anxiety on examination and (7) students represent (8.6%) have anxiety on examination.

DISCUSSION

This descriptive cross sectional study aimed to assess knowledge and attitude of nursing students regard anxiety and the presence of anxiety during examination at a private university in Jordan.

The total number of participants in this study were 81 students, majority of their age were between 20-22 years old represented (90.1%) as shown in table 1, there were (75.3%) female and (24.7%) male (Table 2). And this result similar to result of another study in medical student which they found that (74.2%) were female and (25.8%) of them were male.

In order to answer research question 1: What is the knowledge of nursing students regarding anxiety?The majority of study participants knows the meaning of anxiety which represented (70.4%) as shown in table 3.(49.1%) of study participants knows the predisposing factors of anxiety (table 4) and levels of anxiety (50.6%) as shown in table 5.Most of the study participants knew the causes of anxiety on examination represented (68.9%) in table 6.(43%) of study participants knew the symptoms of anxiety on examination (Table 7).(47.1%) of study participants knew the management of anxiety in general (Table 8).(82.9%) of study participants knew the prevention of anxiety on examination as shown in Table 9.

Percent of knowledge regarding anxiety were represent (65.7%).There were similar study which found factors causing exam anxiety in medical students (April 2004):A total of 120 student out of 200 (60%) filled in the questionnaire. Among these samples, 25.8% male and 74.2 % female student. The average maximum exam anxiety marked on a VAS (visual analogue scale) was 64+or -.28, among different factors contributed to exam anxiety, extensive course loads (90.8%) long duration of exam (77.5%), were the most important factors reported by the students.This result have difference with the present study, because it found other causes of anxiety on examination such as fear of failure and little time of sleep before exam day.The result of the study rejected the research hypothesis which stated: the knowledge of nursing students regarding anxiety is poor.

In order to answer research question 2: What is the attitude of nursing students regarding anxiety?Majority of study participants responded they were feeling anxious (77%) as shown in Figure 1. (64%) of study participants can do management of anxiety on examination as shown in Figure 2. (84%) of study participants do prevention of anxiety on examination (Figure 3).(74%) of study participants have a positive attitude regarding management and prevention of anxiety.This result supported the research hypothesis which considered the attitude of nursing students regarding anxiety on examination to be positive.

In order to answer research question 3: What is the percent of anxiety on examination among study participants? The test anxiety questionnaire (anxiety scale), showed that the majority of nursing

students have some characteristics of anxiety on examination (75.3%), and the minority have no characteristics of anxiety on examination was (16%), the test also showed that some students have anxiety on examination which they represent (8.7%) as shown in figure 4, a similar to this study was conducted previously, which a total of 110 undergraduate students from university of Isfahan (11.8%) have high level of on examination anxiety level, while (73.6%) of students have moderate level of anxiety on examination and (14.5%) of them have low level of anxiety on examination. This result support the hypothesis which considered the anxiety on examination is present among nursing students.

Determined by standard score of anxiety (10-19) degree have no anxiety on examination and from (20-35) degree have a some characteristic of anxiety on examination, (35-50) degree have anxiety on examination, calculated from (never=1, rarely=2, sometimes=3, often=4, always=5) which are known test anxiety questionnaire.

CONCLUSION

This study concluded that nursing students have good knowledge regarding anxiety which represented (65.7%). This study concluded that nursing students have positive attitude regarding anxiety on examination which represented (74%). In addition the result showed that some students have anxiety on examination which represented (8.7%) , while other have some characteristic of exam anxiety that was represented (75.3%), other have no characteristic of exam anxiety that was represented(16%).

It is therefore recommended from the result of this study that: it is important to increase the knowledge of the students regarding anxiety on examination; Increasing the level of awareness among students are also recommended by reading more literature about anxiety in the library and websites specifically about anxiety on examination; A psyche-educational training program is also important for the students; Provide scientific courses to teach the student how to deal with anxiety and its prevent. Further study is also recommended that includes large number of students; and finally the stakeholder of university must focus on anxiety management program to help students overcome this problem especially during examination.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors would like to acknowledge Dr. Hassan Daghriiri, Dean, AL-Ghad International Colleges for Applied Medical Sciences, Najran for the support and motivation to conduct research.

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