

The Prevalence and Impact of Anxiety Among Medical Students in the MENA Region: A Systematic Review, Meta-Analysis, and Meta-Regression

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Abstract : Several studies have found that medical students have a significant prevalence of anxiety. The purpose of this review paper is to carefully evaluate the current research on anxiety among medical students in the MENA region and, as a result, estimate the prevalence of these disturbances. Multiple databases, including the CINAHL (Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature), Cochrane Library, Embase, MEDLINE (Medical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System Online), PubMed, PsycINFO (Psychological Information Database), Scopus, Web of Science, UpToDate, ClinicalTrials.gov, WHO Global Health Library, EbscoHost, ProQuest, JAMA Network, and ScienceDirect, were searched. The retrieved article reference lists were rigorously searched and rated for quality. A random effects meta-analysis was performed to compute estimates. The current meta-analysis revealed an alarming estimated pooled prevalence of anxiety ($K = 46$, $N = 27023$) of 52.5% [95%CI: 43.3%-61.6%]. A total of 62.0% [95% CI 42.9%; 78.0%] of the students ($K = 18$, $N = 16466$) suffered from anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic, while 52.5% [95% CI 43.3%; 61.6%] had anxiety before COVID-19. Based on the GAD-7 measure, a total of 55.7% [95%CI 30.5%; 78.3%] of the students ($K = 10$, $N = 5830$) had anxiety, and a total of 54.7% of the students ($K = 18$, $N = 12154$) [95%CI 42.8%; 66.0%] had anxiety using the DASS-21 or 42 measure. Anxiety is a common issue among medical students, making it a genuine problem. Further research should be conducted post-COVID 19, with a focus on anxiety prevention and intervention initiatives for medical students.

Keywords : anxiety, medical students, MENA, meta-analysis, prevalence

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