A cross sectional study of relationship between perfectionism and social anxiety amongst undergraduate students in tertiary health care center in Marathwada

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Abstract

Background: Social anxiety is one of the very common mental health problems especially in young adolescent and adult age group. The constant fear of being judged often comes out from the fact that we often try to be perfect in terms of our actions, social appearances and interactions or for that matter any task. This often has resulted in setting high standard for ourselves, attributing to fear of being scrutinized by the people around. The present study aims to examine the correlation between perfectionism and social anxiety as well as evaluate the prevalence of social anxiety disorder amongst undergraduate medical students of Marathwada region.

Aim and objective: To study the relationship between perfectionism and social anxiety and if it has any role in developing social anxiety amongst undergraduate medical students.

Material and Methods: This is a cross sectional study conducted online at tertiary health care center in Marathwada region. The study included 155 subjects. Sample size was calculated using Cochran's Formula. The participants were undergraduate students from first to final year who were willing to participate. It included 96 males and 59 females, who were aged between 19and 25 years old mean (M)= 19.90; with Standard Deviation (SD)=1.06. This study was approved by ethics committee of authors' institution. To assess perfectionism Frost Multidimensional Scale was applied along with social interaction anxiety scale for social anxiety and Social Phobia Inventory Scale for social anxiety disorder.

Significance: The model constructed in this study explains to some extent the impact of perfectionism on social anxiety. Also, the current study makes some

important contributions on clinical perfectionism which is defined as "the overdependence of self-evaluation on the determined pursuit of personally demanding, self-imposed standards in atleast one highly salient domain, despite adverse consequences", is associated with psychopathology, such as social anxiety disorder (SAD).

Results: A total of 155 respondents who satisfied inclusion and exclusion criteria were included in the study. Out of 155 respondents, 80(51.61%) were males and 75(48.39%) were females. Out of total 155 respondents, 106(68.38%) had age between 18-20 years, 40(25.80%) had age between 21-23 years, 7 (4.51%) had age between 24-26 years and 2 (1.29%) had age above 26 years in the study. In the domains of Perfectionism, Doubts of Actions was found to show highest responses amongst undergraduate students i.e (27.74%) followed by concern over mistakes showing (20.56%). Also, the data showed that around 7.74% of the total number of residents showed a positive response on Social Phobia Inventory scale.

Conclusion: The prevalence of social anxiety disorder amongst undergraduate students was found to be around 7.74 %, Domains like concern over mistakes and doubts about actions showed maximum association. Overestimating social standards and underestimating their ability to meet social standards are two important factors that lead to social anxiety.

Keywords: Perfectionism, Social anxiety, Social Anxiety Disorder

Introduction: Social anxiety is one of the mental health problems associated with perfectionism as per some research (1). Social anxiety disorder as per ICD11 also referred to as social phobia often starts in adolescence and are Centered around a center of fear of scrutiny by other people in comparatively small groups (as opposed to Crowds) usually leading to avoidance of social situations (2). It is equally common in both men and women. Social anxiety is usually associated with low self-esteem and fear of criticism. DSM V defines it as fear of being judged or scrutinized in social situation, also avoidance behavior of the feared social situations, where the fear is out of proportion to the social risk (3). The constant fear of being judged often comes out from the fact we often try being perfect in terms of our actions, our social appearances, the task that is being scrutinized by the people around (4). Perfectionism might be a risk factor for social anxiety or exacerbate it and, individuals with social anxiety may display perfectionism by holding unreasonably high standards for performance in social settings, interpretation any deviations from those standards as failure.

Perfectionist individuals tend to aim for high standards at different social stages (e.g., social expectations, in social situations, and other aspects).

However, due to the high level of these standards, it is difficult for individuals to achieve them, and the pressure to reach their goals is likely to bring anxiety to individuals (1). Medical schools have always been considered competitive in terms of academics, career, work load, schedules and timelines. The culture in medical schools often demands that medical students be faultless and flawless. Characteristics, such as impeccable performance, high competency in the medical field and awareness of details, are generally expected of medical students. Therefore, medical students may set too perfect standards for academic tasks that can meet their high standards. Also, research's show that people who have been diagnosed as social phobia were given CBT'S of about 12 sessions followed by which with respect to perfectionism, significant

reductions were seen on total perfectionism scores and scores on particular dimensions (CM, DA, organization), but not on other dimensions (personal standards, parental expectations, parental criticism) (6).

Our study aims to investigate if there is any co relation between perfectionism and social phobia or social anxiety in medical undergraduate students studying at a tertiary care center in Maharashtra, India, and to estimate the prevalence of social anxiety disorder among them, which in itself is lacking in data. The purpose of this study is to draw attention towards issues faced by students themselves and whether being a perfectionist in every aspect makes them more prone to social anxiety.

Aim

1. To study the relationship between perfectionism and social anxiety amongst undergraduate students.

Objectives

1. To study the relationship between perfectionism and social anxiety amongst undergraduate students.
2. To estimate the prevalence of social anxiety disorder in undergraduate medical students.

Material and Methods

Study design: Cross sectional observational study

Study Setting: at Government medical college and hospital.

Study Population: Undergraduate medical students of Ist and IInd year willing to participate for the study.

Sample Size Using Cochrane's formula, sample size has been calculated between 160-180.

Inclusion Criteria: Undergraduate students from first to final year giving consent for participation in study.

Exclusion criteria: Students not willing for participation.

Sampling technique: Online Google forms were made to fill by the undergraduate students.

Approval for the study

Written approval from Institutional Ethics committee was obtained beforehand. Written approval of Psychiatry department was obtained. After obtaining informed consent from students, such subjects were included in the study.

Methods of Data Collection and Questionnaire

Predesigned and semi structured questionnaire was used to record the necessary information. Questionnaires included general information, sociodemographic details such as sex, age, address, education, occupation etc. Questionnaire also included h/o psychiatric illness in the past &/ family, marital history.

Analysis

Data was entered in Microsoft Excel and the statistical Analysis was done using the trial version of SPSS software.

Results and Observations

Total 155 students were included who fulfilled the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Average age of the subjects in the study is

Of 155 respondents, 106 (68.38%) had age between 18 – 20 years, 40 (25.80) had age between 21 – 23 years, 7 (4.51%) had age between 24– 26 years and 2 (1.29%) had age above 26 years in the study group

Table 1: Age wise distribution of participants

Age Group	Number	Percentage
18-20	106	68.38%
21-23	40	25.80%
24-26	7	4.51%
26 & above	2	1.29%

Out of all the participants 43.41% were 1st year students whereas the rest were second year students.

Out of 155 respondents, 32(20.64%) were only child to their parents, 19 (12.26%) had the family history of

psychiatry illness, 73 (47.09%) had no substance abuse, 48(30.96%) had Alcohol use, 19(12.25%) had smoking use, 2 (1.29%) had alcohol dependence and 13(8.38%) had both alcohol and smoking habit in the study group.

Table 2: Domains of Perfectionism and its distribution

Perfectionism domains	Response	%
COM	32	20.65
DOA	43	27.74
Excessive concern with parents expectations and evaluations	30	19.36
HPS	21	13.54
Concern with precision, order &organization	29	18.71

SPINS is 17-item self-rating scale for social anxiety disorder (social phobia). The scale is rated over the past week and it includes items assessing each of the symptom domains of social anxiety disorder (fear, avoidance, and physiological arousal).

Table 3: Age wise distribution of students and score of SPINS

		Spins Score		
		21-30	31-40	41-50
Age	<20	5	2	1
	>/=20	3	1	-

Table 4: Gender distribution with SPINS score

		Spins Score >20
Gender	Male	4
	Female	8

Table 5: Association b/w various factors and social anxiety using IAS

Factors	Mean	SD	Maximum
Gender Male	14.78	3.84	18
Female	14.75	3.25	
Family history Positive	4.63	1.37	6
Negative	3.71	1.29	
Year of M.B.BS Ist year	8.89	2.11	11
IInd year	8.09	2.91	
FMPS score High score	7.38	1.62	
Low score	6.24	1.76	8

Discussion

The aim of the study is to assess the correlation of Perfectionism and social anxiety in undergraduate students. In the study, it was found that out of 155 students who participated, 7.74%% had social anxiety disorder. There has also been a positive correlation between perfectionism and social anxiety with p value >0.05

Conclusion

The prevalence of social anxiety disorder amongst undergraduate students was found to be around 7.74 %, Domains like concern over mistakes and doubts about actions showed maximum association. Overestimating social standards and underestimating their ability to meet social standards are two important factors that lead to social anxiety. Hence, from the above statistical analysis, it is evident that perfectionistic individuals were more likely to have an increased level of social anxiety, Perfectionism showed a positive correlation with social anxiety in this study.

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