

Frequency of Generalized Anxiety Disorder in the Population of East Azerbaijan Province and Its Association with Demographic Factors

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: While generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) has been extensively researched on a global scale, it is necessary to conduct regional studies in order to gain a holistic understanding of the epidemiology of this disorder. The distinctive traits of East Azerbaijan, such as its cultural variety and socio-economic circumstances, provide valuable insights for studying GAD epidemiology and enriching our understanding of these factors. This research investigated the frequency of GAD within the population of East Azerbaijan, Iran, and explored its correlation with demographic factors.

Methods and Materials: In total, 150 clusters of 10 households each, totaling 1,500 households, residing in Tabriz, Marand, Bonab, Osku, Varzeqan, and Khoda Afarin were included in this cross-sectional study conducted from May to November 2018. A general questionnaire was utilized to investigate key risk factors, including age, gender, marital status, education level, and employment status among participants. The GAD-7 questionnaire was used to assess the symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder. Data were analyzed using the SPSS software (v 18; SPSS, Inc., Chicago, IL). A chi-square test with a 95% confidence interval was used for the analysis.

Results: This study involved a total of 2,816 participants. Approximately 40% of the surveyed individuals exhibited different levels of anxiety. The prevalence of generalized anxiety in Tabriz and other cities stood at 39.8%. Tabriz city manifested a notably higher prevalence of generalized anxiety compared to other cities in the province (43.2% in Tabriz vs 36.8% in other cities; $p = 0.04$). Generalized anxiety was found to be remarkably ($p = 0.05$) more prevalent in women (46.6% in women vs. 32.4% in men). As individuals grew older, the occurrence of generalized anxiety tended to rise until reaching the age of 55, after which it gradually decreased. However, the age group between 45 and 55 years exhibited the highest rates of generalized anxiety (43% in the age group 45-55). The GAD levels did not vary considerably according to marital status ($p = 0.05$).

Conclusion and Discussion: The findings of this study align with worldwide patterns showing a rise in the prevalence of anxiety disorders, the impact of age on anxiety prevalence, and inequalities between genders. Further exploration is needed to investigate the variation in anxiety rates and their decline after the age of 55 within different regions. To effectively meet the mental health needs of East Azerbaijan's population, future studies should focus on identifying the particular factors influencing these trends.

Citation:

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