DEPRESSION, ANXIETY AND USE OF MEDICINES IN PSYCHOLOGY STUDENTS

DEPRESSÃO, ANSIEDADE E USO DE MEDICAMENTOS EM ACADÊMICOS DE PSICOLOGIA

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ABSTRACT
Anxiety and depression are emotional disorders that can be caused by stressful factors in the academic as well as in the professional sphere. The objective was evaluating the prevalence of depression, anxiety and medication use in psychology students. This is a quantitative, cross-sectional and comparative research. The students of the Psychology of a private institution of higher education in the city of Montes Claros – MG, were the target audience. Thirty-three night-time students of both genders, aged 18 or older, were randomly selected. Three questionnaires were used, Beck Depression Inventory, Anxiety Beck Inventory and Morisky-Green Test that aimed to contribute to the identification of issues related to anxiety and depression and medication use. The results showed a higher prevalence of female students (81.8%). Through the data it was possible to reveal that by joining the moderate and severe anxieties we have almost one third of the group surveyed (30.4%). As for depression, it was evidenced that (54.5%) they do not present a depressive condition, and that the researched public is less adherent to the use of medications (72.7%). The results found allow us to conclude that there is a higher prevalence of anxiety symptoms among students and, consequently, the use of medications, so as not to leave it aside even at times when it is feeling well, and a lower prevalence referring to symptoms of depression.
Keywords: Academics. Anxiety. Depression. Medicines.

RESUMO
A ansiedade e a depressão são distúrbios emocionais que podem ser acarretados por fatores estressantes no âmbito acadêmico bem como no profissional. O objetivo foi avaliar a prevalência de depressão, ansiedade e uso de medicamentos em acadêmicos de Psicologia. Trata-se de uma pesquisa de caráter quantitativo, corte transversal e comparativo. Os acadêmicos do curso de Psicologia de uma instituição privada de ensino superior da cidade de Montes Claros – MG, foram o público alvo. Participaram da pesquisa 33 acadêmicos do período noturno, de ambos os sexos, com idade igual ou superior a dezoito anos, selecionados de forma aleatória. Como instrumentos foram utilizados três questionários, Inventário de Depressão de Beck, Inventário de Beck de Ansiedade e Teste de Morisky-Green que visaram contribuir na identificação de questões relacionadas a ansiedade e depressão e uso de medicamentos. Os resultados demonstraram maior prevalência de acadêmicos do sexo feminino (81,8%). Através dos dados pôde-se revelar que ao juntar as ansiedades moderada e grave temos quase um terço do grupo pesquisado (30,4%). Quanto a depressão, ficou evidenciado que (54,5%) não apresentam quadro depressivo, e que o público pesquisado é menos aderente ao uso medicamentos (72,7%). Os resultados encontrados nos permitem concluir que há uma maior prevalência de sintomas de ansiedade entre os estudantes e em consequência disso o uso de medicamentos, de forma a não o deixar de lado mesmo em momentos em que está se sentindo bem, e sendo uma menor prevalência referente aos sintomas de depressão.
Palavras-chave: Acadêmicos. Ansiedade. Depressão. Medicamentos.

INTRODUCTION

Due to stressful factors in the academic environment as well as in professional practice, it is important to look at the mental health status among academics and health professionals, since this stressful environment can lead to emotional disorders (CARVALHO *et al.,* 2017).

Upon entering the university this individual is due to changes that are determinant in his new routine, such as long hours of studies, new interpersonal relationships, possible frustrations related to the intended career, new responsibilities and this recent means that is part of stress and anxieties, which makes it a theme explained by scholars (LANTYER *et al.,* 2016).

Because of certain experiences in practice, health students in higher education tend to develop a level of anxiety that is not seen in other areas. Because they experience since college direct contact with human suffering, this dealing with the human being, fear of committing something wrong and not being prepared to deal with it at that moment (COSTA *et al.*, 2019).

In addition to anxiety factors in academics, depression also occurs, being a common chronic mood disorder, based on studies conducted, occupies the place of the second largest responsible for social disability, with a probability of becoming the second largest cause in future years (LEÃO *et al.*, 2018). As a form of treatment for individuals who are diagnosed with psychic disorders, psychotherapy is found, which in more severe cases is associated with medications (OLIVA *et al*., 2015).

Depression is a syndrome and is characterized by a variation of both emotional and physical symptoms, in which it influences and changes the individual's ability to perform their normal day-to-day activities. The individual presents mood swings, emptiness, anguish, irritation, agitation or slowness, has crying crises, memory deficit, drowsiness or insomnia, loss or gain of appetite, isolation from society and various other symptoms (ISTILLI *et al.*, 2010).

Anxiety can be considered as a psychiatric symptom or as a non-pathological emotional feeling correlated with many aspects of the individual's life. It characterizes an alarm indictment to some stimulus that was perceived by the individual as danger. In general, it is formed by a variation of physical symptoms, bad thoughts and behavior changes (BARCELLOS *et al.*, 2017).

Since self-medication without the use of a prescription, guidance and/or follow-up of a qualified professional is increasingly frequent, with adoptions of strategies aimed at raising awareness throughout the graduation about rational use of medicines, considering the risks pertinent to the use and indications of indiscriminate and/or abusive medications (OLIVEIRA *et al.*, 2018).

Health students constitute a differentiated population, as they tend to have a greater knowledge about medicines. Thus, it is expected that such knowledge will be determinant for a more conscious and appropriate attitude to its formation, favoring a rational use of medicines, including psychology (PITOMBEIRA *et al.*, 2016).

In this context, this objective was to analyze the prevalence of anxiety and depression, as well as the use of medications in psychology students of a private higher education institution in the city of Montes Claros – MG.

Therefore, it becomes relevant to carry out this research by the possibility of identifying possible causes related to depression, anxiety and medication use among the students of the Psychology course, precisely because these students, who, in the future, should treat people with these possible disorders. It is important to identify early possible mental disorders in these future professionals.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was submitted and approved by the Research Ethics Committee – CEP of the Federal University of The Valleys of Jequitinhonha and Mucuri – UFVJM under Opinion 3.779.140/2019. This is a quantitative, cross-sectional and comparative research.

The sample consisted of 33 students, both genders, randomly selected, enrolled in the Psychology course of a private higher education institution located in the city of Montes Claros, in the north of Minas Gerais. We included the students duly enrolled in the Psychology course of the researched institution, aged 18 years or older, and willing to participate voluntarily in the research, and excluded those who filled out the questionnaires incompletely.

The instruments used in the research to contribute to the identification of issues related to anxiety and depression and medication use were: Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), Anxiety Beck Inventory (BAI) and Morisky-Green Test.

The Beck Depression Inventory consists of a depression scale, composed of 21 questions, containing items related to depressive symptoms as well as physical symptoms, each item can be classified from 0 to 3, presenting four possibilities of answers related to how it has been felt in the last week, including the day on which it is answering the questionnaire.

The second questionnaire used is the Anxiety Beck Inventory (BAI) has a scale on anxiety, brings questions related to how individuals have felt in the last week, focuses on evaluating the level of anxiety of the individual, containing four possible answers each: not, slightly (did not worry me too much), moderately (it was very unpleasant, but I could bear), severely (difficult to bear). As for the results, it can be classified as, minimum degree, mild anxiety, moderate anxiety and severe anxiety.

The Morisky, Green and Levine test (1986) consists of analyzing the degree of adhering to treatment with medication, also evaluating the behavior of this individual. It contains questions such as: "Do you ever forget to take your medicine?"; "Are you sometimes careless about the time of your medicine?"; "When you feel good, do you ever stop taking your medicine?"; "When you feel bad, with the medicine, sometimes, stop taking it?" with these questions it is possible to make the evaluation.

To evaluate the answers, the value 0 was assigned for responses considered negative, 1, for positive responses. When the scores were added, the individuals who had 4 points were considered as more adherent, and who obtained a score referring to 3 points or lower, less adherent.

For data collection, authorization was requested from the board of the researched institution, and having this authorization was prepared a small statement and sent electronically to the students, in which information related to the research was passed and if there was interest in participating, making room for clarification of possible doubts. Those who agreed to participate voluntarily answered the questionnaires that, consequently, when they answered already authorized participation in the research, and it was not necessary to sign a free and informed consent form. All questionnaires were applied by the researchers in March and April 2020, through Google Forms preserving the confidentiality of the data and the identity of the evaluated.

After data collection, a descriptive analysis was performed with values in real and absolute percentage through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, version 22.0 for Windows.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The sample consisted of 33 students with predominance of females (81.8%). Regarding the variables searched, the results are expressed in the table 1.

Analyzing the results of the table above, it was possible to verify that most of the evaluated (36.4%) have mild anxiety symptoms, but if we join moderate and severe anxiety, we have almost a third (30.4%) of the group surveyed. For depression levels, a positive fact was that most of the respondents (54.5%) does not present depression.

Regarding the treatment of medication use, it was found that most of the evaluated (72.7%) are less adherent to the use of medications, presenting as adherent scans to the use of medications (27.3%).

Table 1 - It presents the results regarding the levels of anxiety and depression, with values in real and absolute percentage (N = 33)

Variable	Options	N – %
Anxiety	Absence	11 – 33.3
	Light	12 – 36.4
	Moderate	5 – 15.2
	Serious	5 – 15.2
Depression	Absence	18 – 54.5
	Light	7 – 21.2
	Moderate	6 – 18.2
	Serious	2 – 6.1
Use of medicines	Yes	9 – 27.3
	No	24 – 72.7

Source: the authors.

In the assessment of anxiety levels, it was verified that most of the evaluated have intensity levels (mild, moderate or severe). These findings are consistent with the studies of Arino and Bardagi (2018) in which they point out that the academic environment tends to generate anxiety disorder and depression in university students, associated with their personal/emotional experiences, that is, the emotional of the academic related to his autonomy is affected in a certain way, when he/she cannot perform activities of the academic environment, he/she feels insufficient, questions about course choice, intended career, which triggers a situation of psychological vulnerability.

Also in the study by Bonafé, Carvalho and Campos (2016) that aimed to evaluate medication consumption, self-medication and level of depression, anxiety and stress of dental patients and the combination with demographic variables, with as sample 209 adult individuals attended at a dental school, the results found show that differently from our study, the use of medication obtained a higher prevalence, it was also observed that the highest scores of anxiety and depression were with individuals who frequently consume some psychotropic medication, which is not similar to our research since only 27.3% use some type of medication, and 72.7% do not use it.

Regarding the use of medication, in the present study presents a lower adhering to this use, consolidating with Fontanella, Galato and Remor (2013) which says that, once health students have a knowledge of the most related medications, these should make the use consciously, also suiting the one they are preparing professionally. However, what their studies show, which differs from the present study, is that precisely because health students have a greater knowledge about medication, in these there is a higher frequency of self-medication even knowing the risks that this can cause.

Observing that the results related to anxiety make up 36.4% of those evaluated with mild anxiety, 15.2% moderate anxiety and 15.2% severe anxiety, which demonstrates that mild anxiety prevails among psychology students, a fact that when compared to the studies by Leão *et al.* (2018) shows a similar percentage among the students, according to studies of these authors, the higher prevalence of anxiety among students may be linked to a poor relationship with their family members, friends, teachers, which may lead to psychological distress and low performance in the academy, besides generating insecurity, concerns, low concentration, and sleep difficulties, because of studies, generating low academic performance and consequently anxiety.

Our results regarding depression rates in psychology students demonstrated the absence of depressive symptoms in most of the evaluated, corroborating the studies by Andrade *et al.* (2016), psychic suffering may be linked to the difficulties of adapting to the course, highlighting for the area of humanities and health a prevalence of minor mental disorders. The fact that students in the area, specifically Psychology, deal with psychic suffering and human subjectivity ends up causing vulnerability causing it to trigger some mental disorder.

In the research conducted by Santos Júnior *et al.* (2019) with the objective of evaluating the prevalence of anxiety in medical students in Alagoas, it brings in its results, contradictory to the results of this research, low occurrence of anxiety symptoms among those surveyed, putting on the agenda that anxiety symptoms among students are related to the academic demands of the moment, such as seminars, evidence, public speaking.

On anxiety, which had a higher prevalence in this study, according to Medeiros and Bittencourt (2017) anxiety is a kind of escape mechanism in the face of difficulties in adapting something new, in the case of university students, higher education. Noting that there are explicit changes, about the context that was inserted and the new context, and the adaptation should be rapid, in this sense, the analysis made by these authors demonstrate that, like the present study, it is notorious, a large part of the sample contains some indication of anxiety, which reveals as being something common in the academic environment.

The present study presents as a limitation the non-obtaining of a larger sample due to the covid-19 pandemic, a virus that was installed precisely during the period of data collection for the research. In addition to the limitations inherent in cross-sectional studies, the impossibility of the cause-effect relationship.

CONCLUSION

The results found allow us to conclude that there is a higher prevalence of anxiety symptoms among students and, consequently, the use of medications, so as not to leave it aside even at times when it is feeling well, and a lower prevalence referring to symptoms of depression.

The study also brings an important reflection, which can lead to these disorders and consequently the use of medications, is the fact that dealing daily with human pain, subjectivity and this object of study in all its snoot, in addition to the academic phase that overloads the student in which he often cannot distinguish his personal moments, emotional, from the moments when he is acquiring knowledge within a classroom or a practice.

Considering the results as a way of verifying the health of psychology students, as well as a warning to future professionals in the area, that to deal with their object of study, in this case the human being himself, and his internal afflictions it is necessary that he is first healthy and well with himself.

Finally, we recommend that further studies be conducted that may or may not support the results found here.

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