Investigation of anxiety and its associations with self-esteem among dental school students.

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Abstract

It was investigated the level of anxiety among students of the undergraduate course in Dentistry of FOP-Unicamp and verified its association with self-esteem. Most students who had high levels of self-esteem (76.3%) had low levels of anxiety and those with low levels of self-esteem were 3.93 times more likely to have increased levels of anxiety. Female undergraduate students were 2.85 times more likely to present high levels of anxiety than the male participants.

Key words: Anxiety, Self image, Dental Students.

Introduction

Anxiety can be characterized as an unpleasant feeling of difficult definition that may resemble fear or apprehension, which comes from the anticipation of something unknown, dangerous or even strange.

Studies of the increase in their prevalence among university students are increasingly frequent, and may be associated with low levels of self-esteem among students.

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Results and Discussion

The participants answered two research instruments: the Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, already validated in Brazil, as well as a socioeconomic and demographic questionnaire.

In addition to the descriptive statistics, a bivariate analysis (chi-square test) at the significance level of 5% was used to test the association between anxiety and independent variables (socioeconomic, demographic and self-esteem).

Most of the students were over 21 years of age and 76.7% were female. When the level of anxiety was analyzed, 40.4% of the sample had high levels and students with low self-esteem presented 3.93 times higher chances of having high anxiety levels, with women being more likely to have anxiety (p = 0.0033) than men. The third year of undergraduates was the period where low levels of self-esteem were obtained, which reflected the increase in anxiety (p <0.001).


Large numbers of survey evasion were obtained, being more increasing in the last years of the graduation. It is believed that this evasion results from the rejection of being evaluated for psychological issues, since within the observed sample, it was evident the decrease of the self-esteem as the student stayed longer in the graduation, as well as increasing levels of anxiety.

Conclusions

Anxiety was associated with the female gender and levels of self-esteem were related to high anxiety on the part of undergraduates.

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