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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.

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.

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 ($p < 0.0001$).

Chart 1. Association between age, sex, city of origin, self-esteem and anxiety among students of the Odontology graduation of the Faculty of Dentistry of Piracicaba (FOP-Unicamp). Piracicaba, SP, 2016.

Variáveis	Categoria	N= 245	Nível de ansiedade				p
			Baixo	Alto	OR	IC (95%)	
Idade	≤ 21	91 (37,1%)	56 (61,5%)	35 (38,6%)	1,00		
	> 21	154 (62,9%)	90 (58,4%)	64 (41,6%)	1,1378	0,67-1,93	0,7319
Sexo	Feminino	188 (76,7%)	102 (54,2%)	86 (45,8%)	2,8537	1,44-5,64	0,0033
	Masculino	57 (23,3%)	44 (77,2%)	13 (22,8%)	1,00		
Cidade de Origem	Piracicaba	19 (7,7%)	10 (52,6%)	9 (47,4%)	1,00		
	Outra	226 (92,3%)	136 (60,2%)	90 (39,8%)	0,7353	0,28-1,88	0,6889
Nível de auto-estima	Baixo	131 (53,4%)	59 (45,0%)	72 (55,0%)	3,9322	2,26-6,83	<0,0001
	Alto	114 (46,6%)	87 (76,3%)	27 (23,7%)	1,00		

Chart 2. Association between self-esteem and anxiety among students of the Odontology graduation of the School of Dentistry of Piracicaba (FOP-Unicamp) divided by years of the course. Piracicaba, SP, 2016.

Variáveis	Categoria	N= 64	Nível de ansiedade			OR	IC (95%)	p
			Baixo	Alto	OR			
Nível de auto-estima 1º ano	Baixo	33 (51,5%)	20 (60,6%)	13 (39,4%)	1,365	0,48-3,81	0,7384	
	Alto	31 (48,5%)	21 (67,7%)	10 (32,3%)	1,00			
Nível de auto-estima 2º ano	Baixo	25 (69,4%)	10 (40,0%)	15 (60,0%)	2,625	0,60-11,37	0,344	
	Alto	11 (30,6%)	7 (63,6%)	4 (36,4%)	1,00			
Nível de auto-estima 3º ano	Baixo	36 (56,2%)	10 (27,7%)	26 (72,3%)	11,96	3,56-40,16	<0,0001	
	Alto	28 (43,8%)	23 (82,1%)	5 (17,9%)	1,00			
Nível de auto-estima 4º ano	Baixo	26 (54,2%)	11 (42,3%)	15 (57,7%)	3,6364	1,07-12,3	0,068	
	Alto	22 (45,8%)	16 (72,7%)	6 (27,3%)	1,00			
Nível de auto-estima 5º ano	Baixo	11 (33,3%)	8 (72,7%)	3 (27,3%)	3,75	0,52-26,8	0,3907	
	Alto	22 (66,6%)	20 (90,9%)	2 (9,1%)	1,00			

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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