Original Article

A Survey-based, Observational Study to Determine the Levels of Anxiety among Corporate Employees

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Abstract

Background: Anxiety is the sixth-largest global contributor to non-fatal health loss. Anxiety and stress at work have an impact on employees' attitudes towards their job and management. The current study aimed to determine the prevalence of anxiety among corporate employees.

Methodology: The prospective cross-sectional, questionnaire-based study was conducted between March 2023 and May 2023 through an online platform among corporate employees to determine the level of anxiety, and explored the influence of age on anxiety. The Generalized Anxiety Disorder Questionnaire (GAD-7) was used to assess the prevalence of anxiety among corporate sector.

Results: A total of 150 responses were included in the final analysis, 76.6% of the responders were aged between 21 and 40 years. Among corporate sectors, 41.33% belongs to health sector, followed by IT sector (40%) and Banking (18.66%). Most of the participants had mild anxiety (n = 55, 36.66%), and severity of anxiety was significantly higher among young people than adults (p = 0.015 respectively). The young adults (age 21 – 40 years) were 1.205 times more likely (95% Confidence Interval [CI] 1.976 - 2.459), to have anxiety than adults, likewise, females were 1.952 times more likely (95% CI: 2.007 - 2.655) to have anxiety than their counterparts.

Conclusion: An increase in the mental health problems among the corporate employees might have been precipitated by the uncertainty of earning amidst an environment where people were already losing jobs and business.

Key words: Anxiety, Corporate employee, Generalized anxiety disorder-7

INTRODUCTION

Stress, anxiety, and depression are increasing among corporate employees these days. However, if that stress is constant, overwhelming, and prevents us from living our life; it could be an anxiety disorder.

In the corporate environment, the challenges today are growing in size and scope can be VUCA, which becomes trendy managerial acronym for volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity in the corporate world.[1] Working in such an environment can cause stress, anxiety, and depression in employees, managers, and even the top brass. There exists a complicated relationship between the workplace and employees' mental health. Due to the complexity and frequent change of the environment, resilience is crucial. Resilience, which is defined as a capacity to retain organizational activities, is relevant in their case since organizations play a significant role in the market. Digitalization has a positive correlation with all developments, and it has merged people's concern over losing their jobs.[2] Job security, social interaction, time structure, and organizational skills can frequently improve a person's state of well-being at work. Work itself can frequently have a greater effect on a person's mental health.[3] Perhaps, poor employee mental health can also interfere with productivity. An employer's

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financial sustainability is impacted by factors such as rising absenteeism, declining productivity, and profitability, as well as expenditures associated with addressing the issue.[4] Patients with depression and anxiety may experience occupational role dysfunction, and stress at work contributes to an unfavorable workplace culture. High levels of productivity, efficiency, and tolerance for conversations about mental health issues are all signs of a mentally healthy workplace.[5]

The burden of mental illness is heavy as it affects employee productivity and efficiency, and it is particularly common in the working sector, which makes up a sizable share of society. Employees who have mental health issues not only place a heavy financial burden on society but also suffer negative impacts in their personal, social, and professional lives. This is therefore a top concern for public health. Therefore, it is important to determine the prevalence and levels of depression, anxiety, and stress among corporate employees to identify any connected factors that may have an impact on how well the businesses run. This will reveal the incapacitating state of the company staff, which may then be treated and identified. In light of this, the present study was conducted to determine the prevalence of anxiety among corporate employees.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The prospective and cross-sectional survey was conducted between March 2023 and May 2023 through an online platform among corporate employees to determine the level of anxiety and explore the influence of age on anxiety. The online-based survey was preferred to ensure timely, extensive, and high-yield data acquisition and analysis. Before the conduct of the study, the ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Ethical Committee (AMH-DNB-070/10-22), Apollo Hospitals.

A questionnaire was prepared using Google Forms and was shared through various social media platforms. Corporate sector employees who understand the contents of the questionnaire and willing to participate in the study were included in the study. All the participants were well-informed concern the study objectives, duration of participation, declaration of confidentiality, and voluntary participation before administration of the questionnaire. We deployed a snowball sampling technique, a non-probability sampling method that yields a suitable sample.

The participants aged 21–60 years were included in the study and were representing different sectors of corporate offices, sociodemographic variables such as age, gender, and marital status were recorded. Descriptive statistics was used. A total of 167 responses were received perhaps certain responses were excluded as they are duplicate and invalid entries, and the final data includes were 150 responses.

The questionnaire consisted of the following sections: The first section comprised demographic details which included age, gender, marital status, and company/ organization; years being in the corporate sector were recorded accordingly. The second section consisted of the generalized anxiety disorder (GAD-7)[6] questionnaire; it is validated questionnaire to access the anxiety. The response options were as follows: 0 – "not at all," 1 – "several days," 2 – "more than half the days," and 3 – "nearly every day" for 2 weeks. The total score ranged from 0 to 21, with a highest score referring severe anxiety disorder. For the GAD-7, a total score of 0–4 indicates minimal anxiety, 5–9 indicates mild anxiety, 10–14 indicates moderate anxiety, and 15–22 indicates serious anxiety. The baseline attribute of the participants was presented as frequency and percentages. ANOVA was employed to compare the continuous variable between two or more categories. Univariate and multivariate logistic regression models were built to see the association of bard variables with outcome. The data were analyzed using SPSS version 22.0 (IBM). $P \leq 0.05$ was considered statistically notable for all analyses.

RESULTS

Among the total 150 responses included in the final analysis, 76.6% of the responders were aged between 21 and 40 years. Most of the participants were female (n=88; 58.66%) and more than 50% of the participants were married. Among corporate sectors, 41.33% belongs to

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the study population

Characteristic	n (%)
Age	
21–40	115 (76.66)
41–60	35 (23.33)
Gender	
Male	62 (41.34)
Female	88 (58.66)
Marital status	
Married	79 (52.66)
Single	23 (15.33)
Unmarried	48 (32)
Organization	
Banking	28 (18.66)
IT sector	60 (40)
Health industry	62 (41.33)
Years being in the corporate sector	
<5	68 (45.33)
5–10	49 (32.66)
10–15	18 (12)
>15	15 (10)

Table 2: Generalized anxiety of corporate employee based on occupation group

GAD severity	Banking, *n* (%)	IT, *n* (%)	Health, *n* (%)	Overall, *n* (%)
Minimal anxiety (0–4)	8 (28.57)	22 (36.66)	12 (19.35)	42 (28)
Mild anxiety (5–9)	13 (46.42)	20 (33.33)	22 (35.48)	55 (36.66)
Moderate anxiety (10–14)	5 (7.14)	14 (23.33)	17 (27.41)	36 (24)
Severer anxiety (15–21)	2 (7.14)	4 (6.66)	11 (17.72)	17 (11.33)

GAD: Generalized anxiety disorder

health sector, followed by IT sector (40%) and banking (18.66%) sector. Majority of the participants were being with the corporate sector for less than 5 years (45.33%), followed by 5 to 10 yrs (32.26%), 10 to 15 years (12%) and more than 15 yrs (10%) respectively [Table 1].

Among the IT sector, the majority of the participants has minimal anxiety (36.6%), among the health sector and banking sector majority of the participants had mild anxiety (35.48% and 46.42%, respectively) [Table 2].

Most of the participants had mild anxiety (*n* = 55, 36.66%), and the severity of anxiety was significantly higher among young people than adults (*P* = 0.015, respectively) [Table 3]. In the univariable logistic regression analysis, ages 21–40 years and females associated with anxiety. The young adults (ages 21–40 years) were 1.205 times more likely (95% confidence interval [CI] 1.976–2.459), to have anxiety than adults, likewise, females were 1.952 times more likely (95% CI: 2.007–2.655) to have anxiety than their counterparts. On multilevel analysis, no independent variable could make a unique statistical significance to the model regarding anxiety.

DISCUSSION

The prevalence rate of anxiety among the industrial workers showed about 18–36%,[7] similarly the present study finding highlighted that the about 36.66 % of the corporate sector employees had mild anxiety. In spite of such a high prevalence, we were unable to find an independent variable that could make a unique statistical significance to the model regarding anxiety. It was found that the level of anxiety was significantly higher amidst the younger group in comparison to the adults. Young workers in both employment sectors are more likely to develop sickness absence due to anxiety, although long-term absence seems to be more common in the private sector than the public sector.[8] The corporate employees aged between 21 and 40 years and female were highly associated with anxiety. The young adults were 1.205 times more likely and females were 1.952 times more likely to have anxiety than their counterparts. Workplace stress considerably and negatively affected employees' attitudes toward management. When compared to their male counterparts, female employees' attitudes toward management were found to be more

Table 3: Generalized anxiety of corporate employees based on age group

Severity	Overall	21–40	41–60	*P*
Minimal anxiety (0–4)	42 (28)	7 (20)	35 (30.43)	0.015
Mild anxiety (5–9)	55 (36.66)	15 (42.85)	40 (34.78)	
Moderate anxiety (10–14)	36 (24)	10 (28.57)	26 (22.61)	
Severer anxiety (15–21)	17 (11.33)	3 (8.57)	14 (12.17)	
Mean GAD-7 score (mean±SD)	8.27±4.83	8.15±5.1	8.65±4.1	0.025

GAD: Generalized anxiety disorder

significantly and negatively connected to occupational stress and job anxiety, respectively.[9]

The outcomes of the current study is in line with the those of earlier study findings which touch based on high prevalence rate of anxiety among women.[10,11] Further, workplace anxiety affects an employee's perspective on and thinking about his or her job.[12,13] Gender is a significant factor of mental health and sickness.[14] This clearly indicates an increase in the mental health problems among the corporate employees might have been precipitated by the uncertainty of earning amidst an environment where people were already losing jobs and business.

CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to examine the levels of anxiety among corporate employees. The prevalence of mental health issues among the corporate sector showed that the majority of the health sector and banking sector had mild anxiety and the IT sector had minimal anxiety. Further, severity of anxiety was notably higher among young people than adults. Only long-term research can show whether a causal influence is genuinely present. As closely connected and important as research on how an employee's health is impacted by their employment, studies on how employee's health is impacted by their work are also needed. Lack of industry and occupational health oversight in developing nations can result in conditions that are harmful to employees' health if left unresolved.

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