

“Prevalence of Menstrual Problems among Female University Students”

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1. INTRODUCTION

Menstrual problems are the most common gynecological illness and are most prevalent among females who are 20-24 years of age.

A study conducted in Saudi Arabia showed that 91% of Saudi students had some sort of menstrual problem.¹ However, those problems are still not well investigated as public health setup.

The implications of menstrual problems are not only limited to females but can also affect the community and the economy. Therefore, It is essential to know the prevalence of these problems in the UAE.

2. OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study is to determine the prevalence of menstrual problems among female university students in the UAE.

The study also aims to find out the association between stress and menstrual problems.

3. METHODS

Design: Cross-sectional study.

Sample: Structured online questionnaires were distributed among female university students across the UAE.

Instrument: The questionnaire had a total of 26 questions in 4 different sections titled as: Demographics, Characteristics, Attitudes, and Lifestyle. Stress levels were measured using Perceived Stress Scale 4 (PSS-4). Premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD) was diagnosed using the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5).

Data Analysis: SPSS-23 was used to enter and analyze the data. Means and percentages were used to report univariate analysis. Chi-square test was used for bivariate analysis.

5. DISCUSSION

The prevalence of menstrual problems was high unhidden 66.7% of undiagnosed cases. Furthermore, most of the participants did not seek professional health care.

Some of the possible explanations include cost of health care, stigma, lack of awareness, and underestimation of the problem.²

PMDD prevalence was much higher than expected. The results were consistent with a previous study.³ A possible explanation could be the difference in the sociodemographic characteristics of the sample.

Correlations of caffeine intake and stress with the presence of PMDD were found as expected.⁴

Limitations:

The data was collected through a self-reported questionnaire which is subject to bias. Therefore, further studies with more comprehensive elements are warranted.

Due to the cross-sectional design of the study, it was not possible to infer causation between some factors and PMDD prevalence.

6. CONCLUSION

The presence of menstrual problems among female university students was highly prevalent; however, diagnosis rates were low and seeking professional help was not common.

Therefore, we recommend implementing awareness programs as well as providing psychological and gynecological counseling in universities.

4. RESULTS

- Out of 390 participants; 74.9% were non-UAE citizens. 98.7% were single. 13.3% of the participants were underweight, 63.6% had normal BMI, and 22.3% were overweight or obese.
- 81.3% (n=317) were found to have at least one menstrual problem; however, only 14.6% had a previous menstrual related problem diagnosis.
- Using PSS-4 scale, 87.7% (342 participants) had high stress levels (score >=6), while 12.3% (47 participants) had low stress levels (score <=5).
- Significant associations between PMDD and stress levels (p-value=0.003), as well as PMDD and caffeine intake (p-value=0.008), were found.

Most common Menstrual-related Problems among participants

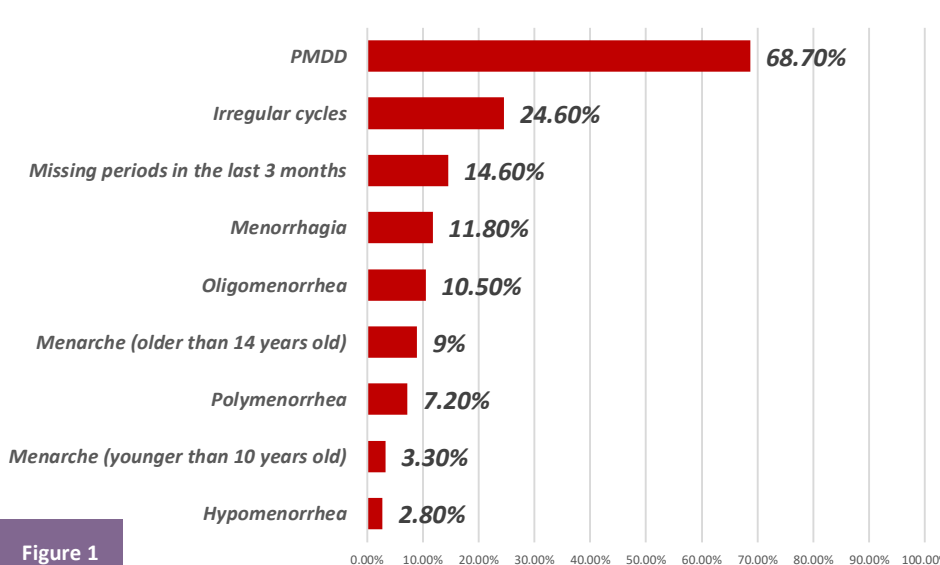


Figure 1

Distribution of Health Care Professionals Visited by Study Participants

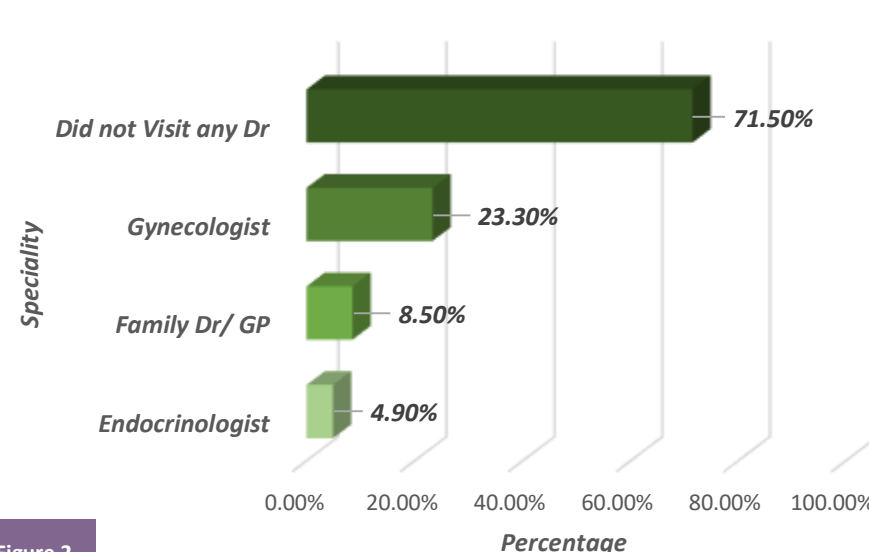


Figure 2

Distribution of Symptoms Experienced by Study Participants 10 Days Before Menstruation

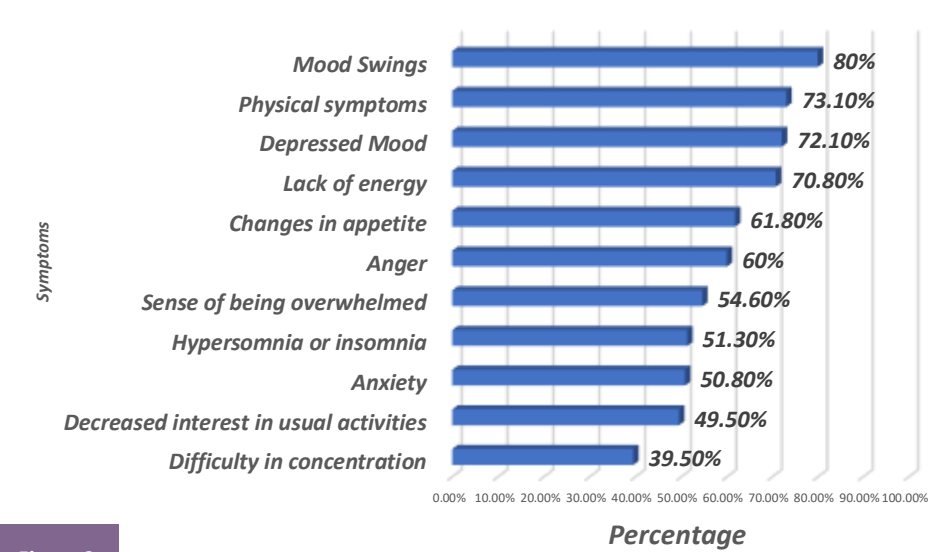


Figure 3

Disitribution of Study Participants by Lifestyle

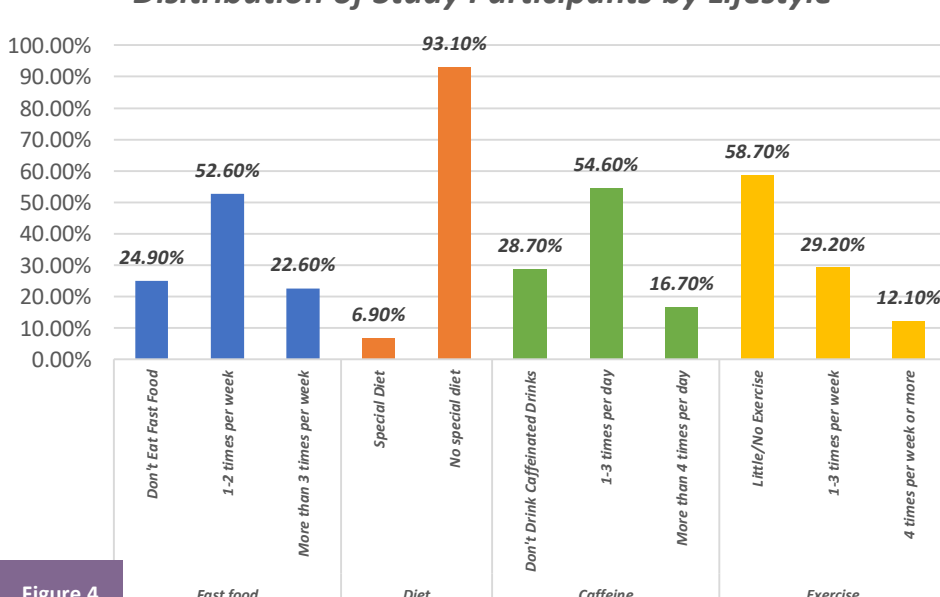


Figure 4

Prevalence of PMDD by Stress level & Caffeine Intake

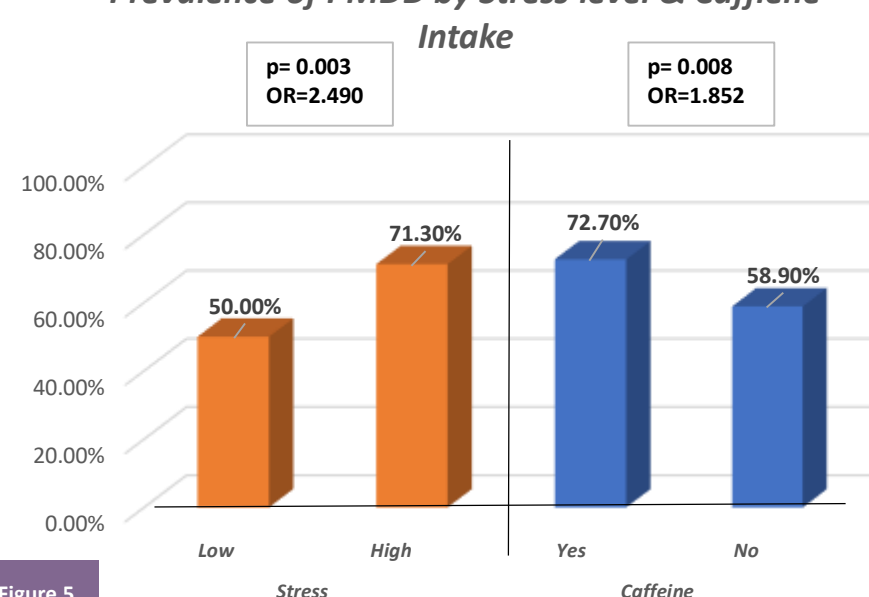


Figure 5

Distribution of Study Participants by Stress Levels

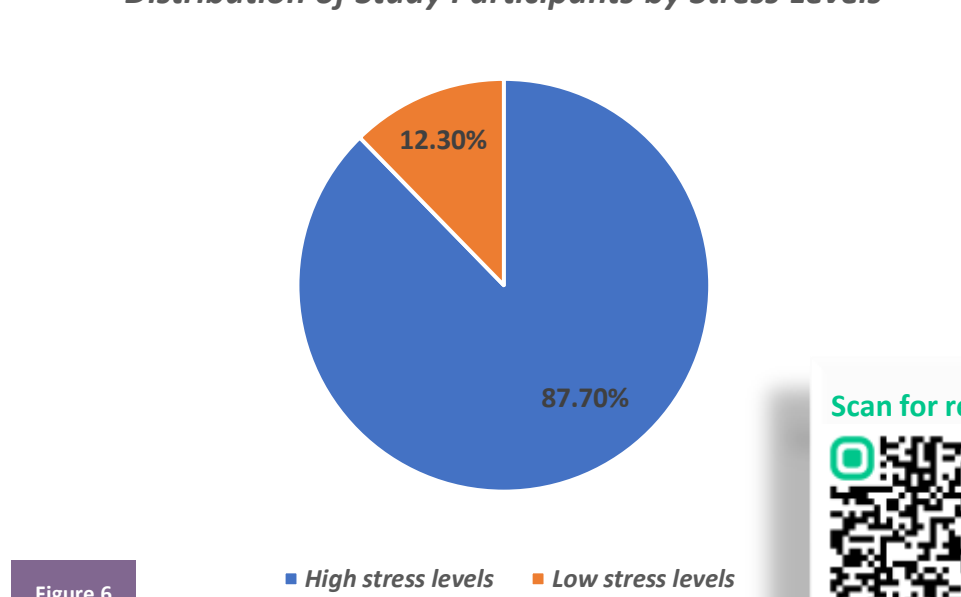


Figure 6

Scan for references

