Psychological Disturbances and Associated Factors Among Professionals and General Public During COVID-19 Pandemic in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Globally, the growing prevalence of COVID-19 is a major public health concern. This pandemic has made numerous psychological disturbances among professionals and general public in the whole world, including Sri Lanka. This study was conducted to identify the psychological disturbances (i.e., depression and anxiety) among the general public and professionals, including healthcare professionals and military personnel during the COVID-19 pandemic in Sri Lanka. Materials and methods: A cross-sectional descriptive study was conducted in selected three districts with 367 participants (general public n=134, healthcare professionals n=128, military personnel n=102) during the 1st to 4th waves of COVID-19. Depression and anxiety were assessed using the Peradeniya Depression Scale (PDS) and Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7 scale (GAD-7) respectively. Binary logistic regression was used to determine the factors associated with depression and anxiety. Results: Mean age (+SD) of the study population was 35.02 (+10.63) years and 51.8% were females. Higher level of depression and anxiety were observed among 39.2% and 55.3% participants respectively, and they were predominant among military personnel (73.5% vs 89.2%). Gender, professional engagement and level of education are associated with both depression and anxiety (p>0.05) further explaining that males, military personnel, and those who educated below A/L had higher levels of depression and anxiety (p<0.05). Those who educated below A/L (OR=2.92, 95% CI) and professional engagement (i.e., military and healthcare) (OR=4.4, 95%CI) emerged as the associated factors for higher level depression while the similar factors associate with the anxiety as well (those who educated below A/L; OR=3.44, 95% CI and professional engagement; OR=3.9, 95% CI). Conclusions: A reasonable proportion of general public exhibited higher level of depression and anxiety during the pandemic of COVID-19 in Sri Lanka. Frontline workers, including healthcare professionals and military personnel and those who educated below are more likely to exhibit depression and anxiety compared to the general public and those who had tertiary education respectively.

Keywords: *COVID 19, Depression, Anxiety, Professional, General public*