A Correlational Study to assess the Level of Anxiety and Social Media Exposure during COVID Outbreak Among Middle Aged Adults in Selected Area at Tirupati

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ABSTRACT

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The outbreak of COVID-19 in China has affected the lives of many. It has not only affected the people economically/ professionally but even mentally and emotionally. Level of anxiety and its association with social media exposure among middle-aged adults was assessed during this outbreak, there was excess use of social media which can increase the anxiety. Objectives of the study were: To assess the levels of anxiety and social media exposure, to identify the co-relation between levels of anxiety and social media exposure and to associate the levels of anxiety and the social media exposure with selected demographic variables during COVID outbreak among middle aged adults. A correlational study design was employed on 35 middle aged adults at rural area of Tirupati by using Nonprobability Convenient Sampling technique. The level of anxiety was assessed using a standard GAD-7 scale and social media exposure was assessed by using a structured questionnaire. The results were out of 35 sample 11.40% had mild anxiety, 40% had moderate anxiety, 42.90% had moderate severe anxiety and 5.70% had severe anxiety (31.9 ± 3.03) and 91.40% had average social media exposure and 8.60% had above average social media exposure (10.2 ± 3.54). Based on the obtained findings this study demonstrated that there is moderate positive correlation between the level of anxiety and social media exposure. There is correlation between the level of anxiety and social media exposure with the demographic variables. There is significant association between the health status with level of anxiety and with social media exposure at $p < 0.05$ level.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization has declared the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) a pandemic. On 31 December 2019, a cluster of cases of pneumonia of unknown cause, in the city of Wuhan, Hubei province in China.³ In India, total cases recorded were 9.9 million and in Andhra Pradesh 876000. Currently, all of us are experiencing thoughts, and situations we have never experienced before. The outbreak of COVID has caused mental health problems among the public. Adults already have many issues and anxiety, and the symptoms get increased more in these situations where the official departments strive to improve the public's awareness of prevention and intervention strategies by providing daily updates about surveillance and active cases on websites and social media. WHO pointed out that identifying the underlying drivers of fear, anxiety, stigma that fuel misinformation and rumor, particularly through social media. Among middle-aged adults the symptoms of anxiety being prevailed because of many conditions like lockdown leading to unemployment, financial crisis mainly by the social media exposure.¹ Junling Gao's³ study findings suggest that there is high prevalence of mental health problems, which positively associated with frequent social media exposure during the COVID outbreak. These findings implicated the government need to

pay more attention on mental health problems, especially depression and anxiety among general population and combating with "infodemic" while combating during public health emergency. Hong-Juan Jiang's⁸ study indicated that in-directed exposure to mass trauma through the media can increase the initial rates of post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms. But there was no study to examine the association between social media exposure and mental health problems among middle aged adults specifically. So, the current study aims to examine the association between the anxiety levels and the social media exposure during COVID outbreak by rapid assessment among the middle-aged adults.

II. METHODS AND MATERIAL

RESEARCH APPROACH: Quantitative Non-experimental research approach was adopted which is most appropriate in the field of education for its practicability in real life situations. It has the advantage of feasibility and to some extent generalization.⁴

RESEARCH DESIGN: Correlational research design was selected to examine the relationship between anxiety and social media exposure during COVID outbreak.⁵

VARIABLES OF THE STUDY:

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE: Social media exposure during COVID outbreak, Age, Gender, Educational Status, Occupation, Type of family and Health Status
DEPENDENT VARIABLE: Level of Anxiety

SETTING OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted in Nennuru, Ramachandrapuram, rural area of Tirupati. The setting was chosen based on researcher's feasibility in terms of availability and cooperation of required sample. The investigators were familiar with the setting and language of middle-aged adults in that area.

POPULATION

The population chosen for this study was the middle-aged adults who are falling under the inclusion criteria.

SAMPLE

Middle aged adults aging from 45-60 years of age beyond young adulthood but before the onset of old age.

SAMPLE SIZE

Sample size consists of 35 middle-aged adults who are falling under the inclusion criteria.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

Non-Probability Convenience Sampling Technique was adopted to select the sample randomly.

CRITERIA FOR SAMPLE SELECTION:

a) Inclusion Criteria:

- Middle-aged adults who are available in the area selected during the time of study
- Cooperative to participate in the study
- Middle aged adults exposed to social media like watching news from TV, WhatsApp, YouTube for more than 3-5 hours.
- Middle adults aged 45-60 years

b) Exclusion Criteria: Who are

- not interested and not co-operative
- not understanding Telugu and English
- not exposed to social media

DEVELOPMENT AND DESCRIPTION OF THE TOOL:

The tool was developed with the help of related literatures from journals, websites, discussions, and guidance from experts.

The tool consists of 3 sections:

Section-I: It consists of details on demographic data, such as age, gender, education, occupation, type of family and health status.

Section-II It consists of total questions of 15 where each question carries the scoring from 0-4 based on the exposure time and effect.

Scoring Interpretation:

0-20 → Below Average

21-40 → Average

41-60 → Above Average

Section-III: A generalized anxiety disorder scale-7 (GAD-7) is a 7- item, self-rated scale developed by Spitzer and colleagues (2006) as a screening tool and severity indicator of GAD. It consists of 7 items.

Scoring Interpretation: Each question has four options (Not at all, Several days, More than half the days, Nearly every day) with scoring 0-3. Higher the score indicates severe anxiety, lower the score indicates mild anxiety.

PROCEDURE FOR DATA COLLECTION

Prior permission was taken from the Village Secretary, Nennuru, Ramachandrapuram, rural area of Tirupati to conduct the study. Samples of 35 middle-aged adults were selected. A brief introduction of researchers and the purpose of the study was explained, consent was obtained from participants.

III. RESULTS

SECTION-I

Table-1. Frequency and percentage distribution of demographic variables among middle aged adults. (n=35)

Demographic Variables n=35		Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Age in years	45-48 years	10	28.6
	49-52 years	9	25.7
	53-56 years	13	37.1
	57-60 years	3	8.6
Gender	Male	13	37.1
	Female	22	62.9
Education	Illiterate	17	48.6
	Primary education	11	31.4
	Secondary education	2	5.7
	Graduation	5	14.3
Occupation	Govt employee	-	-
	Private employee	5	14.3
	Labor	21	60
	Housewife	9	25.7
Type of family	Nuclear family	20	57.1
	Joint family	15	42.9
Health Status	Excellent	1	2.9
	Good	22	62.9
	Average	11	31.4
	Poor	1	2.9

Table 1: Shows that out of 35 middle aged adults, 28.6% were of 45-48 years age group, 25.7% were of 49-52 years age group, 37.1% were of 53-56 years age group, 8.6% were 57-60 years age group. Regarding gender, 37.1% were male and 62.9% were female. Regarding

education, 48.6% were illiterate, 31.4% have primary education, 5.7% have secondary education, 14.3% have graduation. Regarding occupation, 14.3% were private employee, 60% were labour, 25.7% were housewife. Regarding type of family, 57.1% are of nuclear family, 42.9% are of joint family. Regarding health status, 2.9% was excellent, 62.9% was good, 31.4% was average, 2.9% was poor.

SECTION-II

Table 2. Frequency and percentage distribution of level of social media exposure among middle aged adults (n=35)

Level of social media exposure	Frequency(f)	Percentage (%)
Below Average	Nil	Nil
Average	32	91.4%
Above Average	3	8.6%

Table 2: Shows that out of 35 sample, 91.4% had average and 8.6% had above average social media exposure with a mean and standard deviation of 31.9 ± 3.03 .

Figure 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of level of anxiety among middle aged adults. (n=35)

Figure 1: Shows that out of 35 sample, 11.4% had mild anxiety, 40% had moderate anxiety, 42.9% had moderate severe anxiety and 5.7% severe anxiety with a mean and standard deviation of 10.2 ± 3.54 .

SECTION-III

Table-3 Correlation between level of social media exposure and anxiety among middle aged adults(n=35)

Variables	Correlation coefficient	Significance
Social media exposure	0.20	Positive Correlation
Level of anxiety		

Table 3 : Shows that, there is moderate positive correlation (0.20) between the social media exposure and level of anxiety among middle aged adults.

SECTION-IV

Table 4: Correlations: Demographic Variables Vs Anxiety and Social Media Exposure

n=35	Anxiety	P Value	Social Media Exposure	P Value
Age	0.075	0.67	0.033	0.851
Gender	-0.017	0.922	0.04	0.818
Education	-0.231	0.183	-0.1	0.568
Occupation	0.261	0.13	0.194	0.263
Type of family	0.042	0.811	0.126	0.47
Health Status	0.225	0.193	0.302	0.077
Social media exposure	0.186	0.186	1	1
Anxiety	1	1	0.186	0.285

Table 4: Shows that, there is positive correlation between anxiety and age, occupation, type of family, health status and negative relation with gender and education. Social media exposure has positive relation with age, gender, occupation, type of family, health status whereas education is in negative relation and there is no significance.

There is statistically significant association between the level of social media exposure and anxiety with health status at 0.05 level.

IV. DISCUSSION

The first objective of the study was to assess the levels of anxiety and social media exposure during COVID outbreak among middle aged adults. Among 35 middle aged adults, 91.4% had average and 8.6% had above average social media exposure. 11.4% had mild anxiety, 40% had moderate anxiety, 42.9% had moderate severe anxiety and 5.7% severe anxiety. The present study supported by Junling Gao (2020) where the findings revealed that the prevalence of anxiety was 22.6% and more than 80% of participants

reported above average exposure to social media during COVID outbreak in Wuhan, China.³ The second objective of the study was to assess the correlation between levels of anxiety and social media exposure during COVID outbreak among middle aged adults. The study revealed that the correlation coefficient value 0.20 and have moderate positive correlation. Mean and standard deviation of social media exposure are 31.9 ± 3.03 and of level of anxiety is 10.2 ± 3.54 . The present study supported by Alasousi L where the findings revealed that there is positive correlation between media exposure and anxiety

during COVID-19 outbreak in Kuwait ($p < 0.001$), furthermore it revealed that there is significant relationship between the frequency of exposure and anxiety ($p < 0.001$)⁶ The third objective of the study was to associate the levels of anxiety and social media exposure with selected demographic variables during COVID outbreak among middle aged adults. The study reveals there is significant association between the health status and the social media exposure with 0.011 probability ($\chi^2 = 11.219$). And even there is significant association between the health status and the level of anxiety with 0.011 probability ($\chi^2 = 21.390$) at 0.05 level of significance. The present study supported by Ebrahim AH where the findings revealed that the frequency of exposure to COVID-19 information was significantly associated with GAD ($r [304] = 0.25$, $p < 0.001$). 75% of participants were satisfied with the current possibilities of acquiring COVID-19 information.⁷

V. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that out of 35, 15(42.90%) had moderate anxiety and 91.40% (32) had average social media exposure. Mean and standard deviation of social media exposure are 31.9 ± 3.03 and of level of anxiety is 10.2 ± 3.54 . In relation to the findings most of the middle-aged adults had anxiety associated with the social media exposure. Conducting mental health camps to assess the mental health of an individual need for organizing health education session,

volunteering, helping, supporting regarding level of anxiety during COVID outbreak and social media exposure is needed by nurses because their field of work is related to humanity that helps the individuals who had health problems in community level. Awareness programmes should be conducted to the public regarding the impact of social media among middle aged adults during COVID outbreak on mental health and prevention of mental health disorders.

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