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Effect of Dysmenorrhea on Psychological Distress in a Group of Sri Lankan Females

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Abstract

Background:- Dysmenorrhea is a commonplace experience of many females . It is reported in as many as 70% of Sri Lankan females. Previous research suggest pain conditions as leading to future mental health conditions.

Objectives:-The present study aimed to investigate the relationship of psychological distress with dysmenorrhea and its changes across menstrual phase and non-menstrual phase.

Methods: A cross-sectional survey was conducted among 15 unmarried (n=15) and 15 married (n=15) Sri Lankan females of age 23 to 47 years. Present pain intensity of dysmenorrhea was scored using self-administered McGill Pain questionnaire. Psychological distress, level and sources of stress were measured during menstrual and non-menstrual phases using self-administered Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K-10) and an investigator designed stress scale respectively.

Results:- Spearman rank order correlation revealed a significant positive correlation between present pain intensity and psychological distress ($\rho= 0.785$, $n= 30$, $p< .0001$). Dysmenorrhea explained 61.62% of variance in respondents' scores on the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale. Significant positive correlations were observed in sensory ($\rho= 0.773$, $n= 30$, $p< .0001$) and affective dimensions of present pain intensity and psychological distress ($\rho= 0.635$, $n= 30$, $p< .0001$). Wilcoxon signed rank test revealed a statistically significant reduction in psychological distress in the non-menstrual phase of the menstrual cycle ($z= -2.869$, $p< .001$) with a larger effect size ($r=0.37$).

Conclusion:- Dysmenorrhea is strongly linked with positive scores of psychological distress. Thus findings of the present study indicate the need for appropriate intervention through change in life style and mental health screening to decrease future mental health problems.

Key Words: *Psychological Distress, Dysmenorrhea, Stress*