

The Effect of Stressful Life Events On Generalized Anxiety Disorder

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Introduction and objectives: Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) is a common psychiatric disorder which may cause significant distress and disability. This study was done to estimate the effect of stressful life events on GAD in Erbil city.

Methods: A cross sectional descriptive study, was done on patients consulted a private psychiatric clinic from March 2012 to March 2014. A convenient sample of 123 patients, 86 females & 37 males, having GAD were taken after giving their informed verbal consent. The diagnoses were done clinically, and then checked according to DSM-5.

Results: Mean age of patients was 31.2 years. Female to male ratio was 2.3/1. Mean age at onset was 26.9 years. Mean duration of illness was 4.4 years.

History of childhood separation from one or both parents was 15.3%. Regarding the stressful life events in last year prior to onset; in males, the changes in financial status was the most frequent (34%), followed by occupational problems (26%). In females, parenting stress was the most frequent 35%, followed by interpersonal problems (27%). As a whole, parenting stress formed the highest percent (31.1%), followed by changes in financial status (24.6%). Patients who faced two stressful life events formed 37%, while 25.2% of patients faced three, & only 2.4% of patients did not face any stressful life events in the last year prior to onset.

Conclusion: History of childhood separation from one or both parents & stressful life events in the last year prior to onset were an important factors in the development of GAD.