



EXTENT OF BODY SHAMING AMONG STUDENTS OF HEALTH PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION COURSES

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Abstract

Body shaming increases the personal insecurities of individuals as it highlights the weaknesses, especially when it happens in public setting and this may be the greatest fear as it brings out negative emotions. Objectives of the study were to identify the extent of body shaming among students of health professional education and to create awareness among students of health professional educational institutions on harmful effects of body shaming. The study was conducted among 57 randomly selected nursing and Allied health sciences students of an institute, affiliated to the Kerala University of Health Sciences. Present study, the participants who experienced body shaming felt sad, anger, depression and even felt to rebuke the sadist who had done body shaming direct to the need for further studies and implement measures to protect the social integrity and psychological well-being of those exposed to shaming. 35.7% were careless about body shaming, 33.9% were not worried, 16.1% were worried, 8.9% resort to medical help and treatment and 5.6% rebuke the person who humiliate or a sadist. 71.4% felt that they have no issues on physique still experienced body shaming. While expressing the feelings about body shaming, 26.8% had expressed being sad, 30.4% expressed anger, 14.3% were depressed and 28.6% were not able to say their feelings on body shaming. This study had unveiled the need for initiating awareness programmes for professional students to curtail the harmful effects of body shaming and to prevent the untoward physical and mental health issues of the young generation

Index terms: Body shaming, negative emotions, individual insecurities

INTRODUCTION

Body shaming is one of the most common ways of exploiting an individual's insecurities. It is an act of humiliating an individual by mocking based on the body shape and size. It is a targeted bullying that taps a person's capabilities to create negativity and also reduce their potential knowingly with intention or unknowingly as a pleasure seeking measure by the sadist. Body image is an important physical feature that affects any individual young or old, sick or well. As far as health care professions are concerned, they are taught to respect body image and also consider as an important issue to maintain wellness of an individual.

Body shaming in any form can have negative emotional effects, leading to low self-esteem, low self-confidence and other issues such as eating disorders, anxiety, body image disturbance, body dysmorphic disorders and depression¹.

Body shaming increases the personal insecurities of individuals as it highlights the weaknesses, especially when it happens in public setting and this may be the greatest fear as it brings out negative emotions such as:

- Anxiety
- Anger
- Embarrassment
- Fear
- Low self esteem
- Low self-image
- Low self-worth
- Sadness etc.

Since it is a form of bullying in which a person's physical appearance is targeted and can be shameful and ignorant. Image and appearance are particularly sensitive subject matter to everyone. Bullying on physical features ranges from weight, height, shape, size, clothing, hair style and make up etc. Though body shaming was prevalent from time immemorial, present day, celebrity trends are adopted by many and public consider this as the norm for life style. This creates more issues for being popular and to have cool image. Health

professionals are indebted to promote wellness and they should refrain from creating negativity, it is imperative to find out whether the students of health profession are aware of the harmful effects and also to find out whether they are involved in body shaming, this study was attempted. The findings of the study can be utilized to develop preventive strategies and implement such strategies to curtail the habits of body shaming among health professional students.

OBJECTIVES

To identify the extent of body shaming among students of health professional education

To create awareness among students of health professional educational institutions on harmful effects of body shaming

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted among the nursing and Allied health sciences students of an academy affiliated to Kerala University of Health Sciences in Kerala. A survey was conducted among randomly selected students of the institute. A total of 57 samples were selected by random from a total of 300 hundred students. A questionnaire was given to the selected students through google forms and the responses were collected. The analysis was done using descriptive statistics.

Ethical consideration.

Permission for the study was obtained from ethics committee at Aster MIMS Hospital, Kozhikode Informed consent was obtained from the participants. Confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents were maintained.

DATA COLLECTION

The data were collected through a structured questionnaire prepared in the google forms for period of 3 weeks. There were no mortality and the 57 responses obtained were analysed. But for certain questions, responses were not obtained one of the samples.

RESULTS

The findings showed that majority of the participants were females (91.1%) and 10.9% (6) were males. 37.5% of the participants were belong to the third year of their course. 98.2% of the participants were from middle class families. 96.4% (54)of the participants were aware of the term body shaming. 67.9%(38) had experienced body shaming in their life. Out of this 46.4%(26) had experienced body shaming from the family members itself. 53.6% (30) had body shaming from people outside the family. 71.4% (40) had felt sad when they were subjected to bullying. 32.1%(18) were able to withstand bullying.

While expressing the feelings about body shaming, 26.8% had expressed being sad, 30.4% expressed anger, 14.3% were depressed and 28.6% were not able to say their feelings on body shaming. Out of 56 responses on their view about their physique,28.6%(18) had the feeling that they are not up to the mark on their physique with public norms. 71.4% felt that they have no issues on physique still experienced body shaming. 37.5% () felt dejected because of body shaming. 35.7% were careless about body shaming, 33.9% were not worried, 16.1% were worried, 8.9% resort to medical help and treatment and 5.6% rebuke the person who humiliate or a sadist. 92.9%(52) participants felt that body shaming need to be curtailed as it affect individuals in all facets of life.

DISCUSSION

In the present study, 67.9% of the participants experienced body shaming which is higher than the findings by Gam RT et al², and Bucchianeri et al³ where they found the prevalence of appearance based shaming to be 44.9 percent and 38.2 percent. In this study the majority of the participants were females and the findings are similar to the study conducted by Gam RT et al². Present study, the participants who experienced body shaming felt sad, anger, depression and even felt to rebuke the sadist who had done body shaming direct to the need for further studies and implement measures to protect the social integrity and psychological well-being of those exposed to shaming. This shows that there is there is also an emotional dimension to body shaming. This finding is similar to the study conducted by Durante C et al⁴ where they found that there is increasing evidence of the central role of negativity, self-criticism, and negative social comparison in a wide range of psychopathological conditions.

CONCLUSION

This study is conducted only in a health professional educational institute among students. This is done as preliminary study to find out the extent of the problem in a health science institute. Since the use of social media is so prevalent and trolls and harassments through social media is too high in the present day, the study need to be elaborately done in many settings to formulate protective measures for preventing emotional and social trauma of students in the professional educational institutions. This study had unveiled the need for initiating awareness programmes for professional students to curtail the harmful effects of body shaming and to prevent the untoward physical and mental health issues of the young generation. So to conclude this study had thrown light to gas lighting behavior among health professional students.

References

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