



# GENERALIZED ANXIETY AMONG YOUNG ADULTS DURING SECOND WAVE COVID INFECTION

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## Abstract

Covid second wave infections are reported in the country and it is having a super spread. Kerala alone have a number of cases. Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) is characterized by persistent and excessive worry about a number of different things. People with GAD may anticipate disaster and may be overly concerned about money, health, family, work, or other issues. **Purpose of the study:** To study about Generalized Anxiety among Young Adults during Covid Second Wave infection. **Method:** Survey Method is used to collect the data. **Sample:** study was conducted on 120 young adults which include 60 males and 60 females from various districts of Kerala and random sampling is used. **Measures:** Generalized Anxiety disorder Screener (GAD-7) by Spitzer et.al (2006). **Statistical Analysis:** t Test to statistically analyse the data.

**Keywords:** Covid, Covid Second Wave, Generalized Anxiety, Anxiety, Infection

## INTRODUCTION

Covid pandemic started a second phase of contaminations around the world. The World Health Organization is warning governments that things could get worse. Countries even with the lowest population find this as a challenging period. And those high populated countries are struggling hard. Coronavirus pandemic began at the very end of 2019. On the 31 December 2019, the World Health Organisation (WHO) was informed of a group of pneumonia patients that warranted greater monitoring in Wuhan City in Hubei Province in China. And it was the Chinese Government, on 7 January 2020, alerted the WHO about a novel type of coronavirus had been identified. And this was found as the underlying cause of the pneumonia. In January, world's COVID-19 cases were concentrated in China. And then number of cases were also confirmed in other East Asian countries. That includes South Korea and Japan. The epidemic was declared a public health crisis on 30 January 2020. Finally, on 11 March 2020, the transmission of COVID-19 was sufficiently widespread throughout the world for the Director General of the WHO to pronounce that it was a pandemic.

India have recorded 26 million Covid 19 cases according to the BBC news. It has overwhelmed the healthcare systems, struggling in short supply of oxygen and critical drugs. Cases were high in Delhi, Maharashtra and is on a rise in Tamilnadu and Kerala. In Kerala according to the reports made by THE HINDU newspaper, active case pool has increased to 93,686 cases.

Covid second wave wreaks havoc on mental health as there are people who grieve over deaths. Anxiety and panic attacks were reported during the first wave. But second wave is way more complex as many young people have either a close family member infected. Due to lack of grieving process people are now affected by a series of mental health issues and disorders. This includes insomnia, Generalized anxiety disorder, Panic attacks and Depression. Many approach psychologists for grief counselling, restlessness and more.

Getting anxious is common, but if your worries and fears interfere with your daily life and functioning, that can be a generalized anxiety disorder (GAD). GAD is a common anxiety disorder that involves constant and chronic worrying which is followed by nervousness. It is a general feeling of dread or unease that colors whole life. Generalized anxiety disorder is mentally and physically very exhausting. It drains energy, interferes with sleep. And the reports show, many individuals go through general anxiety and that is also linked with the pandemic. Some of the Behavioral symptoms of GAD include: Inability to relax, Difficulty concentrating or focusing on things and avoiding situations that make you anxious. Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) is classified in the 5th edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) as chronic (lasting at least six months) which includes excessive anxiety and worry about a number of events or activities that is difficult to control. GAD is one of the most common anxiety disorders, with lifetime prevalence rates estimated at 5.7% (National Comorbidity Survey-Replication, 2011) GAD has been linked as a risk factor for the development of comorbid conditions. Severe GAD pathology has been related to disability in areas of self-care, interpersonal functioning, and health care utilization (Ruiz et al., 2011). Increasing early recognition and providing appropriate treatment referrals could have wide-ranging benefits including reducing individual distress, disability status, overall healthcare usage, and the associated cost of GAD to society (Kertz, Bigda-Peyton, & Björvinsson, 2013).

Studies, reports and articles make it so evident that young adults face more difficulties due to the pandemic. In early adulthood (ages 20–40), physical abilities are at their peak, including muscle strength and cardiac functioning. Studies suggest young adults are experiencing the highest levels of loneliness and also suicidal thoughts since pandemic started and restrictions were made uncompromising. Eighty percent of the students surveyed and reported they were experiencing loneliness and isolation. And which that putting it among the top three most common problems (stress/anxiety and disappointment/sadness).

## NEED OF THE STUDY

As there is a huge increase in Covid cases, people are exhausted, experiencing different mental health issues and trying hard to cope with and manage the situation, it is necessary to find out how second wave of Covid have affected young adults and how generalized anxiety is linked.

## OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

Generalized Anxiety can be defined as excessive anxiety or worry about many aspects of life including minor events and that occur more days than not for at least 6 months.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Hossain.T, Ahammed.b, Chanda K.S, Ela,M.J, Islam.N in their study on ‘Social and electronic media exposure and generalized anxiety disorder among people during COVID-19 outbreak in Bangladesh: A preliminary observation’(2020) stated that around half of the surveyed population experienced a spike of anxiety (49.1%). The participants with an increased SME of over four hours per day experienced a higher level of anxiety than individuals with  $\leq 2$  hours exposure to social media. Data were collected from 880 participants by a self-administered online-based questionnaire relating personal characteristics, self-rate health (SRH), SME, and EME with anxiety. They recommends to develop active surveillance and effective monitoring systems to reduce the spread of misinformation from both social and electronic media to improve the state of mental health conditions during the pandemic.

A study by Hossain.J, Hridoy.A,Rahman.A and Ahmed.F on ‘Major Depressive and Generalized Anxiety disorders among university students during the second wave of Covid 19 outbreak in Bangladesh’ (2021) concludes that losing way of income influenced GAD. And it was found university students experienced both GAD and MDD. Patient health questionnaire (PHQ-6) and Generalized anxiety scale (GAD7) was used as tools. Among 568 of total participants they have analyzed 465 individuals of mean age 20-23.

Study by Chodkiewicz.J,Miniszewska.J, Krajewska.E and Biliński.P on ‘Mental Health during the Second Wave of the COVID-19 Pandemic’ (2021) stated that respondents reported having experienced suicidal thoughts since the start of the pandemic. Almost 16% drank alcohol in a harmful way. The average value of perceived stress indicated its high. Over 20% had symptoms of anxiety disorders. 19% had anxiety and depression symptoms. More women, younger people, and those with disorders prior to the onset of the pandemic were among those who manifested these disorders. The second wave of the pandemic negatively affected the mental health of the respondents. 618 individuals participated in the research. A specially prepared survey, Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS), Perceived Stress Scale (PSS 10), MINI-COPE Questionnaire (Brief COPE Inventory), Alcohol Use Disorder Identification Test (AUDIT), Scale of Death Anxiety (SDA), The Fear of COVID-19 Scale (FCV-19S) were used as tools.

## METHOD

### AIM

To study about Generalized Anxiety among Young Adults during Covid Second Wave infection.

### OBJECTIVES

- To find gender difference in Generalized Anxiety among Young adults.

### HYPOTHESES

- There is no significant gender difference in Generalized anxiety among young adults.

## SAMPLE

Sample size consist of 120 individuals. (60 male and 60 females). Among them 64 individuals were found with Generalized anxiety.

## SAMPLING METHOD

Random Sampling was used.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

Survey method is used.

## INCLUSIVE CRTITERIA

- Individuals from both rural and urban areas were included.
- Sample was taken from Kerala and Tamilnadu Regions.

## EXCLUSIVE CRITERIA

- Older adults and middle aged were excluded.
- States other than Kerala and Tamilnadu were excluded.

## TOOLS

Generalized Anxiety Disorder Scale-7 (GAD-7) is a 7-item, self-rated scale developed by Spitzer and colleagues (2006). It is used as a screening tool and severity indicator for GAD. It is easily scored.

## Validity

The original validation of the GAD-7 in a large primary care sample revealed that the measure has good criterion, factorial, and procedural (Spitzer et al., 2006).

## Reliability

Good reliability (Cronbach's alpha=0.89).

## Scoring

A cutoff score of 10 was identified as the optimal point for sensitivity (89%) and specificity (82%).5, 10,15 might be interpreted as mild, moderate and severe levels of anxiety.

## ADMINISTRATION

Data was collected from Kerala and Tamilnadu regions through Google forms. The samples were selected using random sampling method. Questionnaires were distributed and asked them to fill in. Instructions were provided correctly and consent was also obtained. Questionnaire included socio demographic details like name, age, gender, place, occupation and relationship status. Sample included 120 (60 males and 60 females). Among them 64 individuals with Generalized anxiety was taken for the study.

### STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Independent t Test was used to statistically analyze the data.

### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

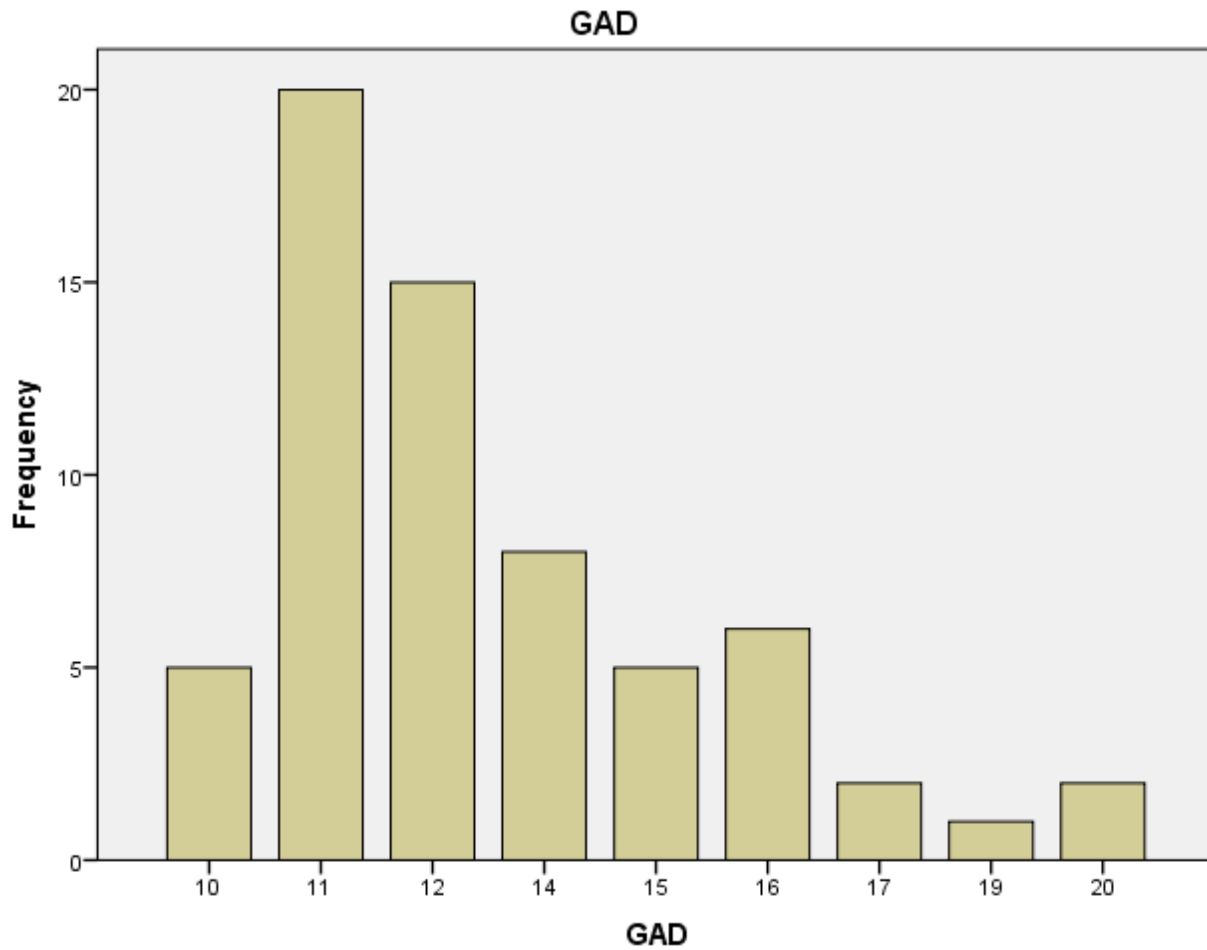


Figure shows frequency of Generalized Anxiety. Cut of points above 9 shows presence of Generalized anxiety and when the values increase this indicates severity.

TABLE 1.1

**Gender difference in Generalized anxiety**

**Group Statistics**

	GENDER	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
GAD	1	32	13.19	2.481
	2	32	12.63	2.485

**Independent Samples Test**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean
GAD	Equal variances assumed	1.093	.300	.906	62	.368	.563
	Equal variances not assumed			.906	62.000	.368	.563

TABLE 1.1 indicates that there is no significant gender in Generalized Anxiety among young adults. ( $t=.906$ ) this shows that generalized anxiety is seen common in both males and females. So that the hypotheses is accepted.

Reviews stated that around half of the surveyed population experienced a spike of Anxiety. And it was found university students experienced both GAD and MDD. Studies reported experiencing suicidal thoughts since the start of the pandemic. Over 20% had symptoms of anxiety disorders. 19% had anxiety and depression symptoms. More women, younger people, and those with disorders prior to the onset of the pandemic were among those who manifested these disorders. And this study proves young adults experience Generalized anxiety even though no gender difference is found.

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

**SUMMARY**

Aim of the research was to study Generalized anxiety among young adults during the Covid second wave infection. GAD 7 was used to assess Generalized anxiety. Among 120 individuals 64 of them is found with Generalized Anxiety. Random sampling was used for the study. Survey method is the design and statistical analysis was done using independent sample t Test. Results indicated that there is no significant gender difference found among young adults those who experience Generalized Anxiety.

**CONCLUSION**

- There is no significant gender difference in Generalized anxiety among young adults.

## LIMITATION

- Accuracy of the study depend upon fair and honest response from the participants.

## DELIMITATION

- Sample size taken was small so that results obtained cannot be generalized.
- Data was collected from only Kerala and Tamilnadu Regions.
- Older adults and middle aged were excluded.

## IMPLICATION

- As the results indicated presence of Generalized Anxiety, awareness about the mental health issues is very essential.
- Psychologists and mental health professionals can provide awareness about mental health and disorders through possible means, like digital platforms and make young generation aware of importance of consultation.
- Yoga and meditation is found effective in management of generalized anxiety so that professionals can provide idea about management and coping.
- Organisations and professionals can provide telecounselling opportunities for people.

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