Prevalence, associated factors and predictors of anxiety: a community survey in Selangor, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

Background: Anxiety is the most common mental health disorders in the general population. This study aimed to determine the prevalence of anxiety, its associated factors and the predictors of anxiety among adults in the community of Selangor, Malaysia.

Methods: A cross sectional study was carried out in three districts in Selangor, Malaysia. The inclusion criteria of this study were Malaysian citizens, adults aged 18 years and above, and living in the selected living quarters based on the list provided by the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOS). Participants completed a set of questionnaires, including the validated Malay version of Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7 (GAD 7) to detect anxiety.

Results: Of the 2512 participants who were approached, 1556 of them participated in the study (61.90 %). Based on the cut-off point of 8 and above in the GAD-7, the prevalence of anxiety was 8.2 %. Based on the initial multiple logistic regression analysis, the predictors of anxiety were depression, serious problems at work, domestic violence and high perceived stress. When reanalyzed again after removing depression, low self-esteem and high perceived stress, six predictors that were identified are cancer, serious problems at work, domestic violence, unhappy relationship with family, non-organizational religious activity and intrinsic religiosity.

Conclusion: This study reports the prevalence of anxiety among adults in the community of Selangor, Malaysia and also the magnitude of the associations between various factors and anxiety.