

Psychoneurotic Profile in Iraqi Medical Students: Three Decades Comparison

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Abstract: To compare the neurotic characteristics of two samples of Iraqi medical students previously assessed in BAGHDAD at 1980, 1990, respectively with a similar study carried out at 2001 using the same CCEI instrument, The three decades representing different socioeconomic era revealed decline of total mean scores than that of the previous two studies and that males scored higher than females in all scales, the findings were discussed.

Keywords: Psychoneurosis, Medical students, three decades

Introduction:

Epidemiological studies in psychiatry are used to examine the rate of psychiatric disorders in general population. To identify risk factors and to evaluate treatment and preventive measures. Psychoneurotic rating scales are widely used for this purpose, and one of which the CCEI, was found to be a valid and reliable instrument to assess the psychoneurotic status^[1, 2].

The Crown-Crisp Experiential Index (CCEI), previously known as the Middlesex Hospital Questionnaire, is a self-rating inventory which provides scores (0-16) on six scales measuring clinical aspects of psychoneurotic status namely Anxiety (A), phobic experiences (P), obsessional symptoms and traits (O), depression (D), sommatization (S) and hysterical trait (H)^[3]. It was designed as a measure for psychoneurotic traits and implemented as a screening instrument in community surveys and was translated to Arabic language by an Iraqi psychiatrist who applied it for the first time in Iraq 1980^[4].

Medical students in Baghdad were chosen as a young intelligent healthy population sample to be investigated in 1980, 1990 respectively using the same inventory. We realized that repeating the study will reveal the effect of different environmental variables on the scoring profile and to compare their responses at different periods of time.

Method:

The CCEI inventory was standardized and revalidated in many countries including Iraq, all showed adequate reliability after application of its original version in UK 1966^[5, 6].

After obtaining the formal approval from the responsible authorities and oral consent from the participants, one hundred twenty (74 male and 46 females) students in Baghdad Medical College, were requested to fill the Arabic version of (CCEI) questionnaire voluntarily during the period of April 2001. Detailed instructions were given about the test and the purpose of the study, contribution in the study was voluntarily.

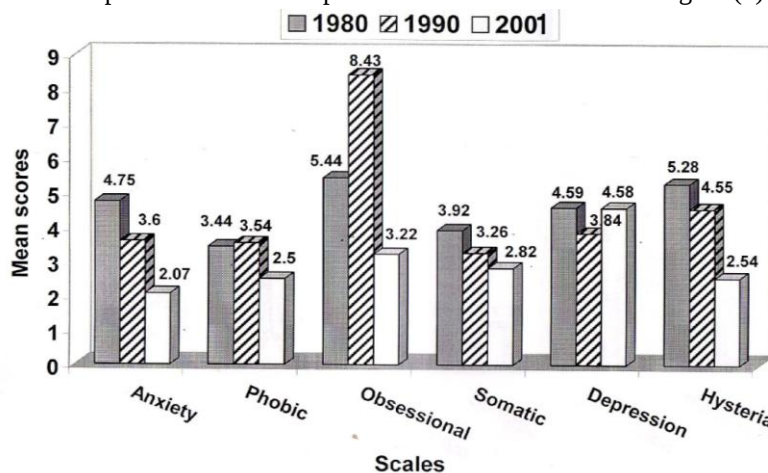
The results were submitted to statistical analysis with the help of department of community medicine in Baghdad College of medicine.

Results:

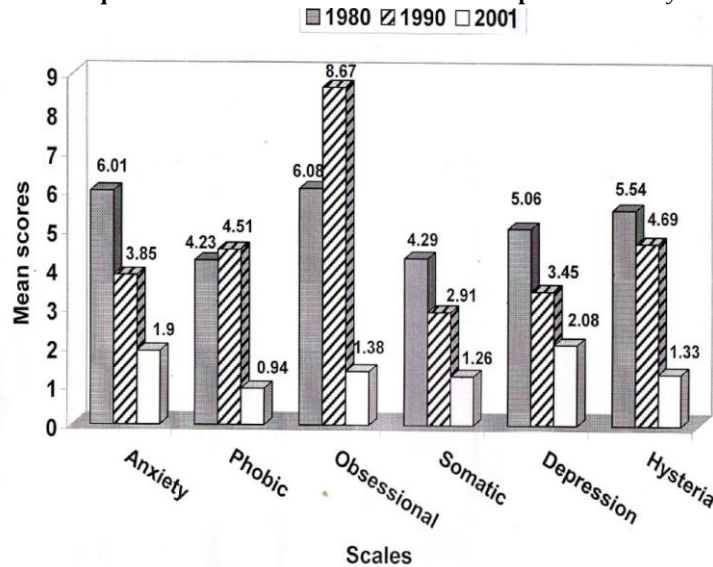
All the participants responding to the test filled the forms in full.

The rate of each score of the six scales matches with the rate of presence of a certain neurotic trait in the studied subject. According to Table (1) the male students mean scores were higher than females in all scales.

By comparison with the previous two studies, the mean scores of the male students were reported to be the less in all scales except that of depression as shown in figure (1).



Fig(1) Mean scores on CCEI Scale among male medical students in three decades



Fig(2): Mean scores on CCEI scales among female medical students in three decades

Figure (1) and (2) revealed the mean scores distribution among the six scales in the present Study and the previous similar two studies. The rate of scoring is proportional to the severity of the neurotic symptoms represented by each scale. Figure (2) showed that the mean scores of all six scales were less than the previous two studies in female students.

Discussion:

By re-applying the CCEI Questionnaire in 2001 on a sample similar to the other two studies in 1980, 1990, we tried to compare their neurotic profiles among these three decades, the results showed male students mean scores doubled that of their female colleagues in all six scales. This can be explained by the fact that men may have more worries and psychological burden than women in general because of their need to fulfill their medical career and future financial burden. In comparison with previous findings, the average scores of all scales in this study are lower than that of 1980, 1990 except in the scale of depression which wasn't statistically significant. This unexpected finding may be attributed to the fact that Iraqis in general acquired psychological adaptation to the hardships of the economical sanction imposed on the country. At August 1990 and may be medical students developed more substantial adaptability to overcome current difficulties than before.

Again male students scored higher than females in all six neurotic scales in all these three studies specially in the scale of Anxiety and phobic experience. We adopt the above explanation depending on psychological assessment but needs further studies to be substantiated using the same inventory as its validity and reliability had been tested before^[7,8].

Conclusion:

We concluded from this study that there was a reduction in mean scores for the neurotic traits measured by (CCEI) when compared with the scores of previous similar studies done 1980, 1990, where males scored higher than females.

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