



The Impact of COVID-19: Examining the Relationship Between Physical Distancing and Anxiety in Female Medical Students

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ABSTRACT

Anxiety is a negative emotion that causes feelings of discomfort and is accompanied by somatic symptoms such as sweating and palpitations, some of them having difficulty breathing. This happens when a person is under pressure. With the pandemic requiring students to follow physical distancing, students must re-adapt to the learning system. Women tend to experience anxiety more quickly than men due to hormones and body responses. Therefore, the anxiety experienced by UMM FK students is suspected to have increased due to their preoccupation with physical distancing. The objective of this research is To determine the relationship between preoccupation with physical distancing due to COVID-19 and the anxiety of female students of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Muhammadiyah Malang. Methods This study uses an observational analysis with a cross-sectional approach. The sample was 82 female students who met the inclusion criteria, and it was purposive. Data were measured using the HARS questionnaire instrument and the physical distancing preoccupation questionnaire. Based on the results of the correlation analysis test using the Spearman rho correlation test in SPSS version 25, $\rho = 0.00$ ($\rho < 0.05$) was obtained, which stated a meaningful relationship between physical distancing preoccupation and the degree of anxiety. Conclusion There is a relationship between physical distancing preoccupation due to COVID-19 and the degree of anxiety of FK UMM students.



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INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on people's lives. Not only physical but also has a direct effect on the psychological condition of individuals and society are also affected. Anxiety or anxiety is a disorder in the form of fear that is not absolute and usually occurs in less supportive situations (Diferiansyah, Septa dan Lisiswanti, 2016). The Indonesian Psychiatric Specialist Association (PDSKJI) conducted an online survey on mental health; as many as 63% of respondents experienced anxiety, and 66% of respondents experienced depression due to the COVID-19 pandemic. 80% of people experience preoccupation related to physical distancing and Covid-19 (Roy et al., 2020). Preoccupation is a disorder of the contents of the mind where the sufferer experiences a centered or focused mind in one specific focus for a long time (Nurhayati dan Kresnowati, 2018).

Medical students often experience psychiatric problems because, over time, the learning process of medical students can worsen their mental health (Sari et al., 2017). The percentage obtained for anxiety disorders was 33.4%, and for stress, 13.1% (Iqbal, Gupta dan Venkatarao, 2015).

Based on the above problems, the researcher intends to study the relationship between physical distancing preoccupation due to COVID-19 and the anxiety of female students of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Muhammadiyah Malang. As we know, the pandemic requires students to follow physical distancing, so students have to adapt to the learning system again. While medical students are in normal conditions without a pandemic, the study load and lecture schedule are much denser (Nurcita dan Susantiningsih, 2020).

RESEARCH METHODS

This type of research is a cross-sectional type of observational analysis. The research was conducted online at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Muhammadiyah Malang. Data collection was carried out in October 2021.

This study's subject is a student of the Medical Education study program at the University of Muhammadiyah Malang who meets the inclusion criteria with a minimum of 51 respondents. The sampling technique is purposive sampling. The data obtained in this study are primary data from filling out the physical distancing preoccupation questionnaire and HARS (*Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale*).

The variable studied was the level of anxiety in UMM FK students as a dependent variable, while the preoccupation with physical distancing due to COVID-19. The data were analyzed using SPSS with the Spearman Rank Correlation (Rho) statistical test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Characteristics of Respondents Based on Anxiety Level

In this study, 82 female students met the inclusion criteria. Table 1 shows that 42 respondents (51.2%) did not experience anxiety, 11 respondents (13.4%) experienced mild anxiety, 12 respondents (14.6%) experienced moderate anxiety, 13 respondents (15.9%) experienced severe anxiety, and four respondents (4.9%) experienced very severe anxiety (4.9%).

Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents Based on Anxiety Level

Degree of Anxiety	Sum	
	N	%
None	42	51,2
Light	11	13,4
Keep	12	14,6
Heavy	13	15,9
It is cumbersome	4	4,9
Total	82	100

Characteristics of Respondents Based on Physical Distancing Preoccupation Due to Covid-19

Table 2. Characteristics of Respondents Based on Physical Distancing Preoccupation Due to Covid-19

	Never	Infrequently	Sometimes	Often	Very Often

Preokupasi	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Physical Distancing										
Physical distancing	1	1.22	12	14.63	31	37.8	32	39.02	6	7.32
Relationship with friends	3	3.66	12	14.63	32	39.02	30	36.59	5	6.1
Relationship with family	7	8.54	24	29.27	29	35.37	16	19.51	6	7.32
Online learning	4	4.88	3	3.66	23	28.05	34	41.46	18	21.95
Financial problems	1	1.22	12	14.63	25	30.49	27	32.93	17	20.73
Academic problems	0	0	2	2.44	21	25.61	41	50	18	21.95
Difficulty adapting again	7	8.54	18	21.95	32	39.02	19	23.17	6	7.32

Thinking About Physical Distancing

Thinking About Physical Distancing

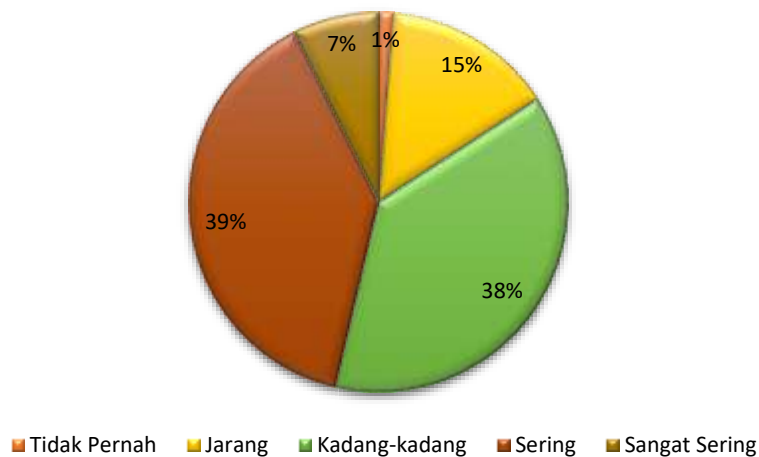


Figure 1. Frequency Distribution Thinking About Physical Distancing

Based on Figure 1 of the question about how often respondents think about physical distancing during the pandemic, the highest distribution among respondents was "often" as many as 32 people (39%).

Worrying about relationships with friends

Worrying About Relationships With Friends

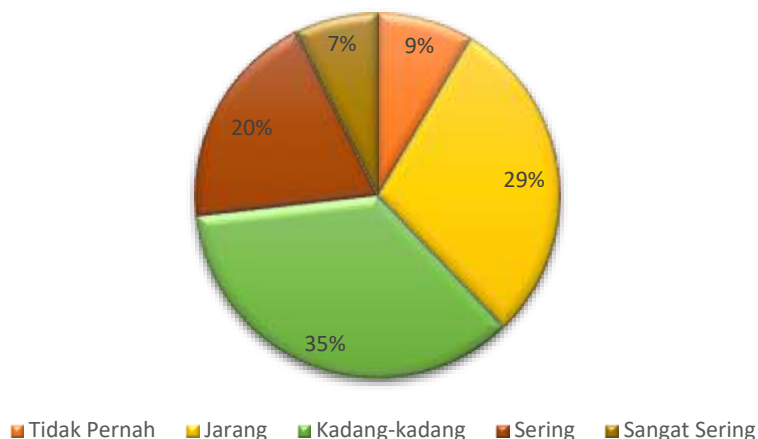


Figure 2. Frequency Distribution Worried About Relationships With Friends

Based on Figure 2 of the question about how often respondents felt worried about relationships with friends during the pandemic, the highest frequency distribution was "sometimes" for as many as 32 people (39%).

Thinking About Online Learning

Thinking About Online Learning

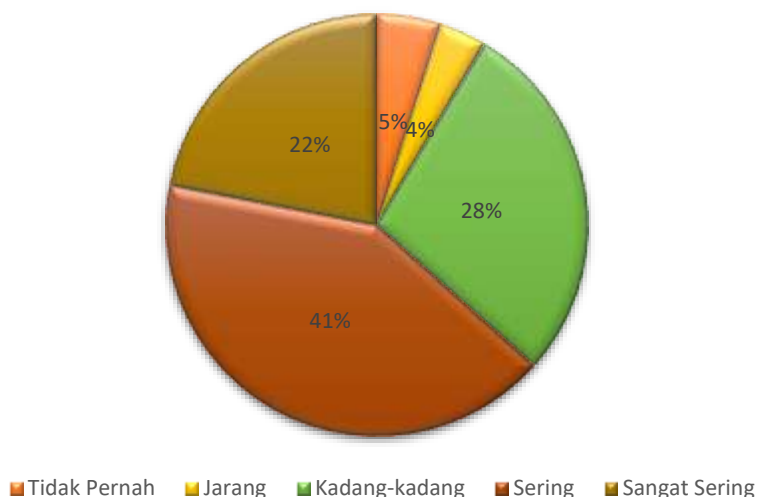


Figure 3. Frequency Distribution Thinking About Online Learning

Figure 5.4 shows how often respondents think about online learning. The "frequent" option found the highest frequency distribution, with as many as 34 people (41%).

Worried About Financial Problems

Worried About Financial Problems

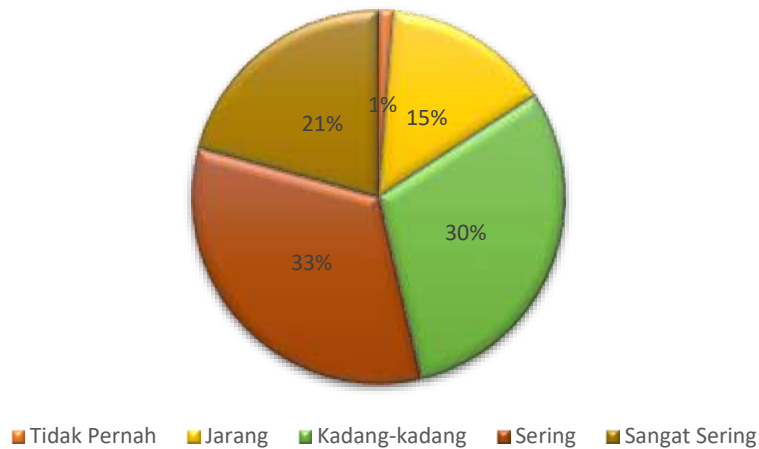


Figure 4. Frequency Distribution Worried About Financial Problems

Figure 5.5 shows how often respondents thought about financial problems during the pandemic. The highest frequency distribution was found in the "frequent" choice of 27 people (33%).

Worried About Academic Problems

Worried About Academic Problems

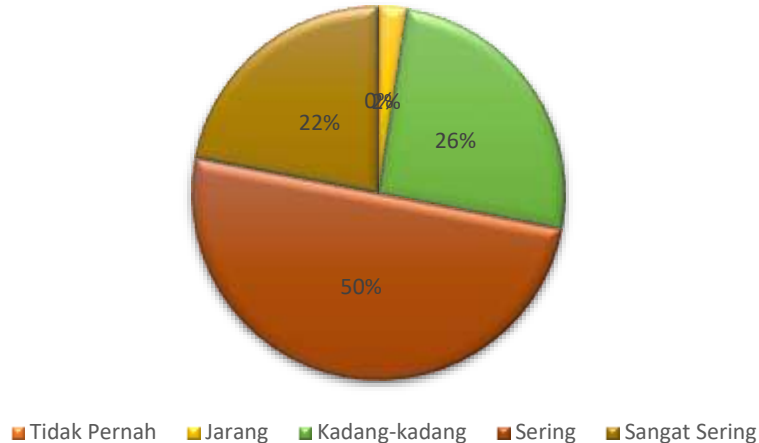


Figure 5. Frequency Distribution Worried About Academic Problems

Figure 5.7 shows how often respondents feel worried about academic problems during the pandemic. The highest frequency distribution is found in the "often" choice of 41 people (50%).

Difficulty Adapting Back

Difficulty Adapting Back

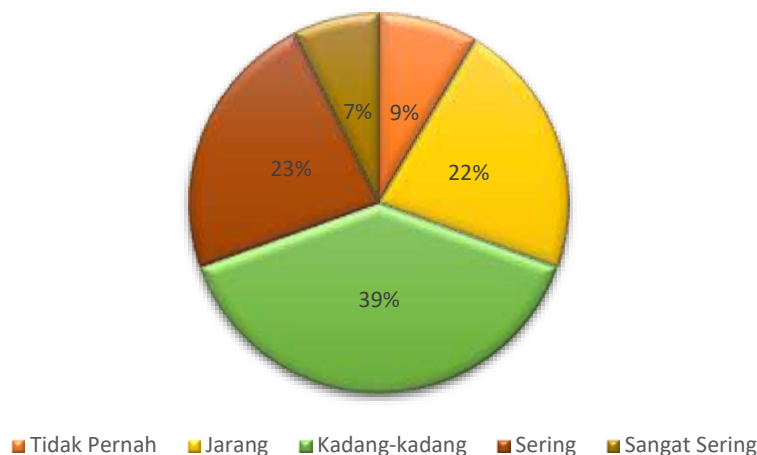


Figure 6. Frequency Distribution Difficulty Adapting Again

Based on Figure 5.7, regarding the difficulty of readapting to the environment, the highest frequency distribution was found in the "sometimes" option of 32 people (39%).

Analysis of Research Results

Table 3. Characteristics of Respondents Based on Anxiety Level

Variable Relationship	Correlation Results	Sig.
Preokupasi Physical Distancing Degree of Anxiety	0,473	0.000

Table 3 shows that the magnitude of Spearman's correlation coefficient between the preoccupation of physical distancing due to COVID-19 and the degree of anxiety of UMM FK students is 0.000. So, it can be concluded that the two variables have a significant relationship.

Discussion

Research conducted by (Nurcita and Susantiningsih, 2020) showed that physical distancing affected anxiety levels characterized by an increase in anxiety responses or symptoms in students of the Faculty of Medicine, National Development University "Veteran" Jakarta. In this study, the majority of respondents did not have anxiety about the Covid-19 pandemic, with a total of 42 respondents (51.2%) and a severe anxiety level of 13 respondents (15.9%) to a very severe anxiety level with a total of 4 respondents (4.9%). Research conducted by (Setyawati, Subhan, and Yusnita, 2021) also explained the same thing, namely, the anxiety experienced by students of the Faculty of Medicine, YARSI University, during the Covid-19 pandemic tended to be expected with 88 respondents (56.4%), moderate anxiety 27 respondents (17.3%), while severe to very severe as many as 15 respondents (9.6%) and 11 respondents (7.1%). This can be due to broader or earlier knowledge of the virus, high resilience and healthy *coping mechanisms*, reduced academic burden, and increased family support, which affects student anxiety (Lasheras et al., 2020).

In line with the research conducted (Ardan, Rahman, and Geroda 2020) stated that as many as 100 respondents (40.3%) were worried about thinking about physical distancing in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is because they fear being exposed to COVID-19 and are less able to carry out daily activities. The results of a study conducted by (Son et al., 2020) show the same thing, namely 52 respondents (31%) feel worried about their relationship with their friends due to the lack of direct interaction.

Research conducted by Son et al. (2020) shows that as many as 61 respondents (38%) often think about online learning because it is difficult to focus on the material provided by the teacher. In addition, students find it easier to understand the material taught face-to-face compared to online. Online lectures are the main source of anxiety in students, which is also a solution and consequence of the pandemic (Christianto et al., 2021).

Similar results were also obtained by Yu et al. (2021), which shows that 34 respondents (37%) are worried about financial problems during the pandemic. Regarding finances, students are concerned about their ability to manage their education finances due to the loss of family income and the loss of opportunities to work and finance their studies (Sundarasen et al., 2020).

Son et al. 2020 stated that as many as 159 respondents (82%) were worried about academic problems affected by the pandemic. Many are worried about the research process and lectures that are required face-to-face due to the restrictions imposed to maintain physical distancing and the lack of physical interaction with students. Thirty-two respondents (39%) sometimes find it challenging to re-adapt to the environment. This is in line with research conducted by (Villani et al., 2021), which stated that as many as 30 respondents (52.63%) felt worried if they had to return to campus and re-adapt to the environment.

This study uses the Spearman correlation test. The researcher chose this type of correlation test because the data of the two variables are numerical and ordinal. In the results of the study, significant results were obtained, showing a relationship between physical distancing preoccupation and the degree of anxiety of female students of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Muhammadiyah Malang.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research that has been conducted, a conclusion can be formulated that there is a relationship between physical distancing preoccupation due to COVID-19 and the degree of anxiety of FK UMM students, and there is a moderate correlation level. The distribution of anxiety degrees among UMM FK students was at a normal level of 51.2%; 13.4% experienced mild anxiety, 14.6% experienced moderate anxiety, 15.9% experienced severe anxiety, and 4.9% experienced very severe anxiety.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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