

## Social Phobia among Medical Students: Prevalence and Socio-Academic Correlates

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### ABSTRACT

Extreme fear of social situations is the hallmark of the common mental health condition known as social phobia, affecting academic performance and daily life. Medical students may be particularly vulnerable due to the demands of their studies. The purpose of this study is to evaluate social phobia's incidence and socio-academic correlates among Saudi Arabian medical students studying in Riyadh. A cross-sectional study was conducted using a paper-based questionnaire distributed to a stratified random sample of 828 medical students from three universities in Riyadh. The Mini-Social Phobia Inventory (MINI-SPIN) was utilized to identify students with social phobia, while the Patient Health Questionnaire-4 (PHQ-4) assessed comorbid anxiety and depression. Social phobia prevalence was 47.2%, higher among males (51.17%) than females (37.17%). Significant socio-academic factors associated with social phobia included lower academic performance (GPA < 3.75), lack of participation in extracurricular activities, and living away from family. Students with a history of generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) and depression were more likely to experience social phobia. Multivariate analysis revealed that female gender, second-year academic level, and previous experience remained significant predictors of social phobia. The study highlights a high prevalence of social phobia among medical students in Riyadh, with significant socio-academic correlations. The findings underscore the need for targeted interventions to address social anxiety, improve academic performance, and support the overall well-being of medical students.

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