

## **PREMENSTRUAL DYSPHORIC DISORDER (PMDD) AND THE ACADEMIC, EMOTIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL IMPACT ON STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO**

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Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS) and Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD) are two disorders related to the menstrual cycle which brings physical and emotional changes in the week prior to menstruation, with the symptoms subsiding upon menstruation. PMS requires the presence of one affective symptom and physical symptom for diagnosis while PMDD presents more severe symptoms and is recognized in the Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 5 (DSM-5). The worldwide prevalence of PMDD varies greatly with some studies reporting rates as low as 1.2% in Japan and as high as 36.1% in Nigeria. These differences in values are mainly due to the various study populations and the difference in age groups of participants and the cultural norms of the study context. Studies also use daily ratings and retrospective symptoms assessment, which also leads to varying prevalence rates. When the impact of PMDD is considered within University cohorts, it has shown to affect them academically, interpersonally and emotionally. A study reports a 22% impact on academic work, and a higher impact on social and sexual life (35% and 32% respectively). The present study investigates the provisional prevalence, impact and associated risk factors for PMDD among students at the University of Colombo.

A questionnaire booklet was used for data collection and the first two sections gathered demographic and menstrual details while the third section contained a checklist for premenstrual symptoms. The last two sections assessed impact in academic, interpersonal and emotional domains. The DSM-5 criteria for PMDD was adopted for constructing an effective/somatic symptom checklist while academic and interpersonal impact was measured by a scale constructed by the Principal Investigator (PI). Negative emotional effect was measured using the Sinhala version of the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale- 21 (DASS-21).

A total of 409 female students from six Faculties at the University of Colombo participated in the study and 31.78% of them reported symptoms required for provisional prevalence of PMDD. The most common symptom reported was physical changes while affective symptoms were relatively rare. Academic, interpersonal and emotional impact was shown mostly regarding difficulty in concentrating on studies, anger towards others and stress reactions. A significant

relationship was shown between positive family history of premenstrual difficulties and PMDD among the students ( $r=0.2$ ,  $N=409$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). In conclusion, results showed that PMDD is related to significant impairment in academic, interpersonal and emotional domains of the students considered for this study. The key outcomes of the study emphasize the importance of recognizing the symptoms of PMDD as it can create awareness of its debilitating impact and for those who have a family history of menstrual conditions to manage their symptoms effectively. The cultural differences in symptom expression found in this study also warrants further studies which may lead to development of culturally adaptable measures for PMDD.

Keywords: Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder, Emotions, Behaviorus, DASS, DSM-V, University students

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