

ANXIETY LEVELS IN VEGETARIANS AND NON-VEGETARIANS INDIAN STUDENTS

Sanskriti Sanskriti

Student (specialist)

Мордовский государственный университет им. Н.П. Огарёва, Медицинский институт,
Saransk, Россия

E-mail: sushpawanson2807@gmail.com

Relevance: Anxiety disorders affect academic performance and quality of life (2), with students being particularly vulnerable due to stress. Dietary patterns, such as vegetarian and non-vegetarian diets, differ nutritionally and may influence stress responses, which could in turn affect psychological well-being (1). However, evidence remains inconsistent, requiring further study.

Purpose: To study anxiety in vegetarian and non-vegetarian students and assess dietary influence on mental well-being. While non-vegetarian diets provide complete proteins, vegetarian diets may need careful planning, raising the question of whether they offer equally sufficient nutritional support for psychological health.

Methods: Study on first- and fifth-year medical students across three phases: Phase 1 (start), Phase 2 (semester exams), Phase 3 (end year). The sample included vegetarians (n=20) and non-vegetarians (n=32). Tools used: Test Anxiety Questionnaire, Hamilton Anxiety Scale, Spielberger Inventory, Eating Habits Questionnaire. Data collected via Google Forms.

Results: In Academic anxiety, irrespective of their diet, on an average both of the groups don't show academic anxiety. Non vegetarians show gradual increase academically (27%,34%,36%). Vegetarians showed significant difference in Phase 3 (p=0.039320); non-vegetarians in Phases 2 (p=0.001576) and 3 (p=0.018565). Reactive anxiety in vegetarians was moderate-high in Phases 2-3 (50%-55.55%), while non-vegetarians showed mild-moderate in Phases 1-2 and high (48.4%) in Phase 3. Personal anxiety differed in Phase 1 (p=0.027517), with non-vegetarians showing intra-group differences (p=0.000028; p=0.000775). Hamilton Scale showed vegetarians decreasing from 66.66% to 46.15%, while non-vegetarians increased from 46.15% to 90%. Significant differences existed between Phases 1-3 and 2-3 in both groups.

Conclusion: Vegetarians had higher initial anxiety that decreased over time, indicating adaptation. Non-vegetarians showed a sharp rise by Phase 3 (90%), suggesting greater vulnerability to late academic stress. Diet may influence stress response; further research is needed.

Источники и литература

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