

Prevalence of irritable bowel syndrome and its associated risk factors among medical students in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: A cross sectional study 39

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Abstract: Background and Objectives: Irritable bowel syndrome is associated with psychological disorders, including stress, anxiety, and depression which were reported to be high among medical students. This study investigates the prevalence of IBS and associated risk factors among medical students in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Methodology: A cross-sectional online survey study collected responses from medical students in Riyadh using a 24-items questionnaire to evaluate the prevalence of IBS and its associated risk factors among medical students. All statistical analyses were done using (IBM) SPSS version 19. Results: A total of 389 participants filled study questionnaire; female gender was significantly higher than males the diagnosed IBS participants ($p = 0.028$). There was a notable difference between the number of participants with a physician IBS diagnosis and risk categories ($p < 0.001$). No significant correlation was observed in risk subgroups with sleeping duration ($r = 0.095$, $p = 0.06$) and coffee consumption ($r = 0.063$, $p = 0.214$). A significant difference was noted in the risk subgroups regarding having episodes of anxiety, stress, or depression ($p < 0.001$). Counting on self-reporting IBS diagnosis by a physician, prevalence is 12.6%, 95% CI (9.5 to 15.9). Conclusions: In Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, our study found that medical students dealing with anxiety and depression were at high risks of developing IBS. Thus, anti-stress measurements and early screening are highly needed. Moreover, implementation of proper awareness and preventive measures could positively impact with behavioral therapy on the quality of life of the students and to lessen disease burden.