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## ANXIETY AND STRESS AND THEIR CORRELATES AMONG A GROUP OF MALAYSIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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### Background:

Young adults, particularly university students face not only challenges associated with independent living- living away from parents, and preparation for work and family, but also academic challenges. Anxiety and stress may be common mental health problems among them. The aims of this paper are to assess the prevalence of anxiety and stress, and identify their correlates among university students.

### Materials and Methods:

A cross-sectional study was conducted among 506 students between the ages of 18-24 years enrolled in four public universities in the Klang Valley. Data was obtained through anonymous, self administered questionnaire using the DASS21 inventory to measure anxiety and stress. Data on socio-demographic and family characteristics as well as living arrangement were also obtained.

### Results:

Analysis showed among all students in the study, 34% had moderate, and 29% had severe or extremely severe anxiety; and 18.6 had moderate and 5.1% had severe or extremely severe stress scores based on the DASS21 inventory. Anxiety scores were significantly higher among the older students (20 and above), and those born in rural areas. However for stress scores, they were significantly higher among younger students (less than 20), females, and those whose family had either low or high incomes compared to those with middle incomes.

### Conclusion:

In these university students, the prevalence of anxiety is much higher than stress, and their correlates differ. These differences need to be further explored to enable the development of better intervention programs to manage anxiety and stress among university students.

### Key words:

Malaysian, urban, youths, anxiety, stress, correlates, university students