

# Lifestyle and level of anxiety in the nursing staff of a second level Hospital in the municipality of San Gil in times of COVID-19

## Abstract

**Introduction:** Anxiety is a feeling in which symptoms such as anxiety, fear, restlessness are manifested that can interfere, for the most part, with life activities, I would say. One of the great factors with which it can be related is with the lifestyle that people lead since this defines how physical and mental health is carried.

**Objective:** To determine the relationship between lifestyle and anxiety level in the nursing staff of a second-class hospital in the municipality of San Gil in times of COVID-19.

**Methods:** A study of a quantitative-descriptive-correlational type was carried out in 60 nurses from the regional hospital of San Gil, including professional and auxiliary personnel, who worked from the beginning of the covid-19 pandemic to the present, the scale of generalized anxiety (GAD-7) and according to the data to those who showed anxiety, the lifestyle profile scale (FIFO-19) was applied.

**Results:** Of the 60 nurses, 43.3% presented anxiety, 90% are women, the age range from 26 to 40 years of age with a percentage of 65%. Of the 43.3% of personnel who presented anxiety, 65.4% showed that they had an adequate lifestyle.

**Conclusions:** All the nursing personnel, the sex that predominated the most was the female sex and in which the majority of anxiety was evidenced, the lifestyle is not related to the anxiety levels in the population.

**Keywords:** anxiety, nursing, lifestyles, pandemic, covid-19

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## Introduction

Anxiety is a feeling of fear, dread, restlessness, and nervousness. These feelings of anxiety and panic interfere with daily activities, are difficult to control, are out of proportion to the actual danger, and can last for a long time, according to the MayoClinic.<sup>1</sup> There are several anxiety triggers such as being subjected to stressful events, work problems and in these times of pandemic, the fear of catching the virus and likewise infecting your loved ones. Anxiety physiologically presents several neurological mechanisms, the reactions caused by anxiety have their beginning in brain mechanisms, the brain of human beings integrates information very well with information from the present to anticipate and foresee the future (consequences). Thus, some parts of the brain store the information collected from the outside through the sense organs, while others provide the stored information related to internal emotions and sensations. These various parts of the brain work and activate cooperatively. When a present situation resembles a previous memory or experience, the same sensations and associated emotions are easily activated.<sup>2</sup>

At the end of 2019, a disease caused by an emerging zoonotic agent appeared in China, in this case a new coronavirus, which was named in the following ways: SARS-CoV-2, 2019nCoV (from English 2019-novel coronavirus) or simply COVID-19 (acronym for coronavirus disease 2019). This virus is capable of causing severe acute respiratory syndrome.<sup>3</sup> The World Health Organization (WHO), in January 2020, declared the outbreak of this new disease, which it called: the COVID-19 disease. Since then it has been identified as an international public health emergency. In these times of pandemic, as a result of covid-19, which has increased hospital demand and caused

overload in health workers, not only physical but mental health, WHO.<sup>4-7</sup>

The crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic impacts social activity, interactions and behaviors on multiple levels. Emotionally, social distancing and self-isolation activities can cause mental health issues, anxiety, and depression. The uncertainty associated with the disease itself, its rapid spread and high risk of infection, as well as the unknown duration of public health interventions to deal with disease progression, can cause and affect pre-existing mental health problems.<sup>8</sup>

In Colombia, the statistics of anxiety in the population have increased with great concern. In the document, the statistical authority presents conclusions that reveal how concern increased in coincidence with the peaks of the pandemic and the state of mind worsened. People aged 10 to 24 and 25 to 54 years old expressed feelings of worry or nervousness, «tiredness», «loneliness», «sadness», «headaches or stomach aches» and «difficulty sleeping» in a greater proportion. However, women were the ones who were most affected by covid-19, to the point that last June 28.5 percent reported having felt lonely, stressed, worried or depressed, compared to 23.2 percent registered by the men.<sup>9</sup>

On the other hand, lifestyles define in many cases the physical, mental and social health of an individual, it is conditioned and integrated by a conjunction of factors, behaviors and habits, favorable and unfavorable, among which stand out diet, tobacco, alcohol, the consumption of substances of abuse, physical activity, sexual behavior, stress, depression and anxiety, being also mediated by socioeconomic

factors.<sup>10</sup> However, having adequate healthy lifestyles means a state of fullness, since it helps us improve our coping capacity against a possible case of contagion of the virus or even in the development of activities of our daily living.

The COVID-19 crisis is exposing health personnel to intense suffering in the face of a death in isolation that has families heartbroken for not being able to accompany and help their loved ones.<sup>11</sup> New evidence collected by the International Council of Nurses (ICN) suggests that COVID-19 caused health problems for nurses around the world. Confirmed deaths of nurses now exceed 2,200 and as the level of infection in the nursing workforce remains high, staff who are already working at their peak are experiencing increased psychological distress due to increasing workloads, as well as abuses and continued protests by anti-vaccines.<sup>12,13</sup>

Therefore, throughout the pandemic, the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles has increased, having adequate physical activity, healthy eating habits, not using tobacco or alcohol, managing free time and recreation, self-care and medical care.<sup>14</sup> These are important factors to have ideal physical health, but without neglecting that they also help to reduce the presence of psychological disorders such as anxiety.<sup>15</sup>

## Materials and methods

A quantitative-descriptive type study was carried out in which a sample of 60 people corresponding to the nursing staff (professional nurse and nursing assistant) was taken. Data collection was carried out through a survey, a sociodemographic analysis was carried out where gender, age, marital status, place of residence and profession were recorded. On the other hand, two validated instruments were used, which were the scale for generalized anxiety disorder (GAD-7) 14-15a 7-item self-applied instrument that is widely used to assess generalized anxiety disorder over the last 2 weeks according to the DSM-5<sup>16</sup> and the lifestyle profile scale (PEPS-I) by Nola Pender, which quantitatively measures an individual's healthy lifestyle<sup>17</sup> where the following variables were evaluated: nutrition, exercise, stress management, self-actualization, health responsibility, interpersonal support, where these variables were evaluated in order to determine if the staff had adequate lifestyles or, failing that, inadequate. For the execution of this project we rely on some ethical considerations of resolution 8430 of 1993 imposed by the Colombian Ministry of Health<sup>18</sup> which establishes the scientific, technical and administrative standards for health research.

## Results

Next, the analysis of the results of the GAD 7 test, which was carried out on professional nurses and auxiliaries of the Hospital, will be presented.

### Sociodemographic characteristics

Regarding age, it can be seen that 21.7% (13) range in age from 18 to 25 years, the majority are female 90% (54), single 51.7% (31), live in the urban area and Regarding their role, most are nursing assistants. (see Table 1).

### Anxiety analysis

It was possible to show that of the 60 people evaluated, 43.3% presented symptoms of anxiety.

**Table 1** Sociodemographic aspects

Variable	F	%
<b>Age</b>		
18 to 25 years	13	21.7
26- 40 years	39	65
Over 40 years	8	13.3
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	54	90
Male	6	10
<b>Civil status</b>		
Married	11	18.3
Divorced	2	3.3
Single	31	51.7
Free Union	16	26.7
<b>Dwelling place</b>		
Rural	3	5
Urban	57	95
<b>Role</b>		
Nursing assistant	48	80
Professional nurse	12	20

Source: authors

**Table 2** Anxiety

	F	%
No	3.4	56.7
Yeah	26	43.3
Total	60	100

Source: authors

**Table 3** Lifestyle anxiety

	F	%
Adapting lifestyle	17	65.4
Moderate lifestyles	9	34.6
Total	26	100

Source: authors

### Lifestyle analysis

It was found that the majority of 65.4% (17) present adequate lifestyles.

## Discussion

Lifestyles and anxiety are closely related to people's health, which is why we saw it as a priority in public health, since it is currently one of the causes of many health problems in said personnel, it was possible to show that only 34.6% of the surveyed nursing staff presented a relationship between lifestyles and the level of anxiety. The results of this study indicate that it is important to have an adequate

control in terms of the mental health of the people of the care staff of a hospital, especially the level of anxiety since this is a disorder of great importance which can generate in people restlessness, despair, irritability, changes in sleep patterns, discord, conflicts, among others, which is why proper follow-up can significantly reduce these signs and symptoms, improve the person's quality of life and peace of mind.

In this study, the nursing staff of a second level hospital was taken as a sample, in which the female sex predominated, the majority were single, their place of residence is in an urban area, on the other hand, comparing it with a study carried out by Sánchez Correo N et al.<sup>19</sup> where it was found that anxiety manifested itself in 59.7% of men and 40.3% of women, very similar to the average anxiety that has been reported at a national level of 49.8 %<sup>20</sup> in terms of the predominant age in our research, it was between 26 and 40 years, compared to a study carried out in northern Spain by Ozamiz Etxebarria et al.<sup>21</sup> It was possible to observe that people who were between the age ranges of 18 and 25 years presented a higher index of stress, anxiety and depression due to their daily work.

Compared to other investigations during the COVID-19 pandemic, in which it was observed that the level of anxiety presented by health personnel was quite high, as a result of their close contact with COVID patients, their fear of becoming infected and infecting others increased. their loved ones, this generated a change in their lifestyles and in their daily routine; Unlike this study, in which both the anxiety levels were not very high and the lifestyles were not adequate, this is possibly due to the fact that the hospital's level of care did not allow for a large influx or care of COVID patients, for which reason the personnel did not have to expose themselves so much, and therefore did not present alterations in mental health and physical well-being. According to the research carried out by Monterrosa-Castro A, et al.<sup>22</sup> the study of anxiety and fear of COVID-19 by staff health personnel presented symptoms of anxiety in the face of the pandemic, it was observed that 73.3% were more frequent to present severe anxiety, which compared to the health personnel of the regional hospital of San Gil, presented a higher percentage of anxiety, due to factors that were not associated with the lifestyle they led during the covid-19 pandemic. Also in international studies such as the one carried out in Mexico where anxiety levels were measured after the pandemic in the general population where it was possible to show that more than 50% of the sample showed anxiety symptoms that were divided into mild, moderate and severe. , and that the participants with a mental health history presented higher levels of anxiety carried out by the researchers Vázquez O et al.<sup>23,24</sup> where compared to In the present study, more anxiety was found in the general population associated with the fear of the complications of the pandemic in daily life stress and depression and the EAI to measure difficulties with sleep, that the indices of anxiety, stress and depression occur more in women and older professionals compared to men and young health professionals.<sup>25</sup>

Where the psychological impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on Spanish health workers was evaluated due to symptoms of worry and anxiety due to close contact with infected patients. A study carried out on health workers was able to show that during these times of confinement they face great battles according to an investigation carried out by López González<sup>26</sup> determined that anxiety levels increased in the participants during the pandemic due to social confinement and changes to face in their lives, where in the research raised only 43.3% were affected by anxiety. In another study carried out on doctors in Colombia by researchers Martínez-Rodríguez et al.<sup>27</sup> it was found that work stress, changes in their daily routines and fear of COVID-19 increased their anxiety levels and effects on their health.<sup>28</sup>

## Conclusion

Identifying the level of anxiety in health personnel is important since this is the quality of the service they can provide to patients, and since the covid-19 pandemic arrived, nurses have been the most affected since they have had to increase The workload, in recent years has increased the consequences related to exhaustion and fatigue in the performance of the profession, directly relating it to the fact that it can affect the quality of care for service users. According to the results obtained in the investigation, it was possible to conclude that, of the sample obtained from 60 participants belonging to the nursing staff of the regional hospital, 43.3% (26 people) presented symptoms of anxiety, of which 90 % corresponds to the female sex. Therefore, it was also possible to show that of the 60 nurses, 95% lived in the urban area and the rest in the rural area of the municipality of San Gil, of the 43% of the sample that presented anxiety, 65.4% present an adequate lifestyle.

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## Conflicts of interest

The authors declares that there are no conflict of interests.

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