

Levels of Depressive Disorder among Displaced Citizens in Displacement Camps in Baghdad City

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Abstract

Introduction: Internally displaced people are those who are compelled to escape but they either cannot or do not desire to cross an international border. In addition, internal displacement can affect persons in particular or an entire groups⁽¹⁾. The most common psychological reactions found in internally displaced people in addition to PTSD are depression, somatization, and existential problems⁽²⁾. It was found that the prevalence of depression symptoms range among displaced individuals was 38%-41%⁽³⁾.

Objective: The study aims to find out levels of depressive symptoms among displaced citizen in Baghdad city and to find out whether there is any relationship between those levels and some socio-demographic characteristics of displaced citizens.

Methodology: A descriptive analytic design study was conducted from November 10th, 2017 to the April 10th, 2018 with the purpose of assessing the levels of depressive disorder among displaced citizens who temporarily live in displaced camps in Baghdad city. A non-probability (purposive) sample of 110 of those displaced citizens was recruited to join in present study. To meet the goals of the study a questionnaire was made. The questionnaire has two functions: primarily, four socio-demographic characteristics of displaced people: gender, age, level of education, and marital status; and furthermore, fifteen items represent Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS-15) for Almeida (1999)⁽⁴⁾ which expected to determine the levels of depressive disorder among the displaced people. Collected data were examined by means of: a descriptive statistical analysis: frequencies and percentages and tables of distribution; and inferential analysis which was Chi².

Results: The results indicate that about three quarters of the participants are male; half of them are of twenties decade of age; about half of those displaced are unmarried; and three quarters of them have primary and secondary levels of education. And the results reveals too that more than half of displaced citizens have moderate level (64.5%); and only 11.8% are within normal level of depressive disorder; and nearly quarter of them have severe level (23.6%).

Recommendations: The study recommends for the necessity to provide mental health services for displaced citizens in displacement camps. And an escalation in the extent of mental health and psychosocial support services for those displaced citizens. The necessity is needed to sufficiently support and offer broad healthcare for them.

Keyword: Prevalence, levels, depression, displaced, citizens, Baghdad, camps.

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Introduction

The present fight in Iraq has caused in a great displaced Iraqi people. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) appraisals that more than 4.7 million Iraqis, nearly 20% of the general population, have left their homes as a result of the fight⁽⁵⁾. According

to UNHCR (2004)⁽¹⁾, internally displaced persons are those who are forced to run away but they either cannot or do not wish to cross an international border. Internal displacement can affect persons in particular or an entire group. There is a possibility of being expelled by force or frightened to leave by threat, obligation. The most essential feature of internal displacement is that it is involuntary. It consist of movements of people running away from an instant threat and can also take the form of more prepared and organized leavings in expectation of dangers ⁽⁶⁾. Despite this large number of displaced people, little is known about their mental health needs or access to mental health services. However, the information obtained from other displaced populations suggests that their needs may be substantial while their access to services is inadequate⁽⁷⁾. It was found that the prevalence of depression symptomatology range was 38% to 41%⁽³⁾, anxiety symptoms from 27.7% to 54.4%, and PTSD had prevalence ranging between 32% and 52%⁽⁸⁾; and depressive disorder ranged between 3 and 80%⁽⁹⁾. Mental disorders related to compulsory internal displacement are wide-ranging⁽¹⁰⁾, and furthermost researches have focused on a restricted amounts of disorders, such as PTSD, anxiety and depression⁽¹²⁾. Current epidemiological research focusing on the wider common mental disorders related to forced displacement is limited^(11,12). Within the inadequate existing global evidence, common mental disorders prevalence is seen to fluctuate considerably: 27.2% in Colombia, 27.8% in Ethiopia, 40.3% in Palestine, 57.7% in Cambodia, and 62.3% in Algeria^(12,13). So the current study presents a good opportunity to explore and find out levels of depressive disorder within displaced citizens who are forced to leave their own homes and live in displacement camps in Baghdad city.

Objectives: The study aims to find out levels of depressive symptoms among displaced citizen in Baghdad city and to find out whether there is any relationship between those levels and some socio-demographic characteristics of displaced citizens.

Material and Method

A descriptive study was conducted between the 10th of November 2017 and the 10th of April 2018. A purposive non-probability sample of 110 displaced citizens who live in displacement camps in Baghdad city was recruited to partake in the current study. To measure the levels of depressive disorder among displaced citizens an instrument was prepared. This instrument represents a questionnaire which supposed to assess these levels. The questionnaire consists of two parts: four socio-demographic characteristic such as age, gender, marital status, and level of education, and furthermore, fifteen items represent Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS-15) for Almeida (1999)⁽⁴⁾ which expected to assess the levels of depressive disorder among the displaced people. Each item scored from zero as “there is not”; one as “there is”. The total score ranged from zero to 15 for the total Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS-15). The total items scores was measured scored and finally rated on 3-level rating scale. Three levels were determined by applying quartile descriptive analysis; as “normal level” of depressive disorder with cut-off point ranged between 0 and four, as “mild level” of depressive disorder with cut-off point ranged between five and nine, and as “more severe” level of depressive disorder with cut-off point ranged between ten and fifteen. Final data of the present study were analysed by different statistical analysis: descriptive analysis such as distribution, cross-tabulation, frequency, percentages, and quartiles; and an inferential data analysis: Chi-square.

Findings:

Table 1. Distribution of the sample according to the Severity of Depression

	Severity of Depression							
	Within Normal		Moderate		Severe		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Displaced Citizens	13	11.8%	71	64.5%	26	23.6%	110	100.0%

Regarding levels of depressive disorder table two reveals that more than half of displaced citizens have moderate level (64.5%); and only 11.8% are within normal level of depressive disorder; and nearly quarter of them are severe level (23.6%).

Table 2: Distribution in the severity of Depression according the Gender of displaced citizens

			Severity of Depression			Total
			Within Normal	Moderate	Severe	
Gender	Male	f	12	44	16	72
		%	10.9%	40.0%	14.5%	65.5%
	Female	f	1	27	10	38
		%	0.9%	24.5%	9.1%	34.5%
Total		f	13	71	26	110
		%	11.8%	64.5%	23.6%	100.0%

Table three presents the percentages of severity of depression among gender of displaced citizens: more than half of male have moderate and severe levels (54.5%) and quarter of the female have moderate level of depression (24.5%).

Table 3: Distribution in the severity of Depression according the Age of displaced citizens

			Severity of Depression			Total	
			Within Normal	Moderate	Severe		
Age	≤19	f	1	13	8	22	
		%	0.9%	11.8%	7.3%	20.0%	
	20-29	f	6	38	8	52	
		%	5.5%	34.5%	7.3%	47.3%	
	30-39	f	1	9	3	13	
		%	0.9%	8.2%	2.7%	11.8%	
	40-49	f	0	7	4	11	
		%	0.0%	6.4%	3.6%	10.0%	
	≥50	f	5	4	3	12	
		%	4.5%	3.6%	2.7%	10.9%	
	Total		f	13	71	26	110
			%	11.8%	64.5%	23.6%	100.0%

Table four indicates that the twenties decade of age have the highest frequency (34.5%) but the thirties decade have the lowest percentage (0.9%).

Table 4: Distribution in the severity of Depression according the Levels of Education of displaced citizens

			Severity of Depression			Total	
			Within Normal	Moderate	Severe		
Level of Education	Illiterate	f	1	2	4	7	
		%	0.9%	1.8%	3.6%	6.4%	
	Read and primary	f	5	22	10	37	
		%	4.5%	20.0%	9.1%	33.6%	
	Secondary	f	5	24	7	36	
		%	4.5%	21.8%	6.4%	32.7%	
	Institute and more	f	2	23	5	30	
		%	1.8%	20.9%	4.5%	27.3%	
	Total		f	13	71	26	110
			%	11.8%	64.5%	23.6%	100.0%

In regard of levels of education table five shows that 42.7% of displaced citizens having secondary and institute and more have moderate level of depression and only 0.9% of illiterate are within normal level of depression.

Table 5. Distribution in the levels of Depression recording to Marital Status of displaced Citizens

			Severity of Depression			Total
			Within Normal	Moderate	Severe	
Marital Status	Unmarried	f	3	40	11	54
		%	2.7%	36.4%	10.0%	49.1%
	Married	f	10	27	13	50
		%	9.1%	24.5%	11.8%	45.5%
	Divorced	f	0	2	0	2
		%	0.0%	1.8%	0.0%	1.8%
	Widowed	f	0	2	2	4
		%	0.0%	1.8%	1.8%	3.6%
Total	f	13	71	26	110	
	%	11.8%	64.5%	23.6%	100.0%	

Table six indicates that most of unmarried have moderate and severe levels of depression (46.4%) and only 2.7% of unmarried are within normal level of depression.

Table 6. Association between Demographic characteristics of the displaced people and levels of depressive disorder

Demographic Characteristics	X ²	df	p-value	No.
Gender	5.795	1	0.054	110
Age	17.837	4	0.022	
Marital status	9.486	3	0.148	
Level of Education	7.579	3	0.271	

Table seven reveals that there is a significant relationship between gender and age and levels of depression ($\chi^2=5.795$, p-value= 0.054) ($\chi^2= 17.837$, p-value= 0.022) respectively.

Discussion

The high percentage of the male displaced citizens participated in present study (65.5%) does not represent a real indicator to the normal percentages of gender differences within the Iraqi general population. This result is not supported by other different studies such as Sheikh and his colleagues (2015) who indicate that 51.9% of the displaced are female⁽¹⁴⁾, Tekin (2016) 55.9%⁽¹⁵⁾ and Feyera (2015)⁽¹⁶⁾ 53.9% are female. This wide difference might be that many female refuse to participate. About half of displaced citizens are within the age of twenties and with mean= 28.3 years, this result is different from other studies^(14,16). About half

of the sample of the displaced is unmarried, many studies do not agree with this result such as the study of Sheikh (2015) 13.6%are male⁽¹⁴⁾; and 15.9% in study of Feyera (2015)⁽¹⁶⁾. 33.6% have primary school level of education; this percentage is not supported by various studies; 18.4% study of Bader (2009)⁽¹⁷⁾; 26.5% study of Sheikh (2015)⁽¹⁴⁾; and 28.3% study of Alpak (2015)⁽¹⁸⁾. The study indicates that the displaced citizens are inflicted with different levels of depressive disorder; 64.5% inflicted with moderate level and 23.6% inflicted with severe level of depressive disorder. Given that the prevalence of depressive disorders among general population is approximately 7%⁽¹⁹⁾, Regarding the gender differences the study reveals that from total of

displaced citizens inflicted with depressive disorder 61.8% are male and 38.2% are female. Females experience 1.5- to 3-fold higher rates than males beginning in early adolescence⁽¹⁹⁾. Differences by age group the study shows that 18- to 29-year-old displaced citizens represents 46.3% of the total displaced inflicted with depressive disorders. This percentage represents about tenfold higher than the prevalence in individuals age 60 years or older. Given that the normal prevalence of age is threefold of the 18- to 29-year-old of the age 60 years and older⁽¹⁹⁾. The prevalence of depressive disorders in regard to the marital status the results indicate that about 92.3% of the unmarried displaced citizens have moderate and severe levels of depressive disorders; 72.0% and 20.2% respectively. This high prevalence of depressive disorders might be due to big number of unmarried displaced citizens participated in the present study.

Recommendations: The study recommends for the necessity to provide mental health services for displaced citizens in displacement camps. And an escalation in the extent of mental health and psychosocial support services for those displaced citizens. The necessity is needed to sufficiently support and offer broad healthcare for them. Development of mental health and psychosocial programmes and interventions aiming the most vulnerable groups should be prioritised.

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Ethical Clearance: The researchers obtained the oral informed consent from the study participants.

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