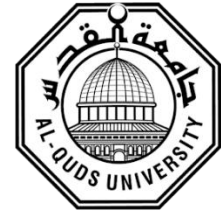




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ABSTRACT

The Prevalence and Correlates of Anxiety, Depression, and Symptoms of Trauma among Palestinian Adults in Gaza After a Year of War: A Cross-Sectional Study

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Armed conflicts have a devastating effect on the civilian population, not only by direct violence but also by causing long-lasting psychiatric conditions, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety, as a result of exposure to traumatic events like displacement, loss of loved ones, and destruction of homes. The military attack on Gaza, which has been ongoing since October 7, 2023, compounds an environment of continuing fear, uncertainty, and loss, which markedly increases the prevalence of mental health disorders. This study aims to assess the prevalence of anxiety, trauma symptoms, and depression in the population of Gaza after one year of continuous war. This study aims to offer a comprehensive perspective on the mental health challenges experienced by the people of Gaza. Four hundred five participants compiled online self-reported measures to screen for symptoms of anxiety, trauma, and depression (GAD7; PCL-5). The survey was spread through social media and community networks. Findings revealed alarmingly high rates of moderate levels or higher of depression (72.7%) and anxiety (65%), and trauma symptoms (83.5%). A substantial proportion had lost a family member (45.7%), experienced a military siege (82.5), witnessed someone being martyred or injured (80.5), and reported losing their work due to the conflict (42.7%). Binary logistic regression analysis revealed that losing a family member and living in the northern part of the

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Gaza Strip were significantly associated with a moderate level of or higher depression and anxiety ($p = 0.010$, OR 2.395, $p = 0.010$, OR 2.395, $p = 0.039$, OR = 1.755, $p = 0.027$, OR = 1.929, respectively). The simultaneous presence of any two of the three mental health conditions was seen to be statistically significant, with p -values for each pairwise association being less than 0.05. The study showed that the population of Gaza had an extremely high prevalence of diagnosable mental disorders, as determined through validated screening tools for anxiety, depression, and trauma symptoms. These findings have far-reaching consequences, highlighting the urgent and critical need for medical and psychiatric therapies to alleviate the significant psychological load that the prolonged conflict has placed on these people.