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PREVALENCE OF SUICIDAL RISK AND ITS ASSOCIATION WITH 2023 WAR EXPOSURE AMONG MEDICAL STUDENTS IN PALESTINE: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

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Abstract

Background: Medical students are particularly susceptible to psychological distress, which may be intensified in conflict settings. Following the 2023 war in Palestine, concerns have emerged regarding the compounded impact of trauma exposure and academic stress on suicidality.

Objectives: The primary objective of this study was to assess the prevalence of suicidal risk among Palestinian medical students and examine its association with direct and indirect war-related exposure, as well as mental health factors.

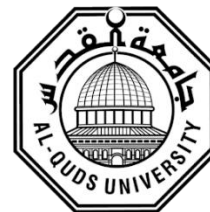
Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted from October to December 2025 among medical students across universities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This abstract presents a preliminary analysis of a randomly selected subset (n = 510). Participants completed a structured bilingual questionnaire incorporating validated measures: the Suicide Behaviors Questionnaire-Revised (SBQ-R), Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9), Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7 (GAD-7), and a 13-item War Exposure Score.

Results: Preliminary findings indicated that 17.6% of students were at high suicide risk. Moderately severe to severe depressive symptoms were reported by 31.2% of participants, while 17.5% exhibited severe anxiety. High war exposure affected 29.3% of students and was a significant predictor of suicide risk. Depression severity also emerged as a significant predictor.

Conclusions: Suicidal risk among Palestinian medical students is substantially elevated in the post-war context and is strongly associated with cumulative trauma and psychological morbidity. These findings



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underscore the urgent need for trauma-informed screening and institutional mental health interventions to safeguard student well-being.

Keywords: Suicidal risk, War exposure, Medical students, Mental health, Conflict settings.