

# ACUITY OF ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION ACROSS GENDER FOR YOUNG ADULTS SEEKING MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

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## INTRODUCTION

- Individuals with higher traits of masculinity predicts lower anxiety and depressive symptoms whereas higher femininity is associated with higher anxiety and lower depressive symptoms (Arcand et al., 2020).
- However, research shows that mental health issues (e.g., depression, suicide attempt) and associated risk factors (e.g., discrimination) are significantly more prevalent in gender diverse individuals, as compared to cisgender populations (Newcomb et al., 2020; Su et al., 2016).
- Transgender non-binary young adults have two to three times the risk of severe mental health outcomes (e.g., depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, suicide attempts, self-harm, eating disorders) (Connolly et al., 2016; Reisner et al., 2015; Reisner et al., 2016).

## METHODS

### Sample:

- The present study evaluates acuity of depression and anxiety in young adults seeking intensive outpatient mental health treatment.
- Of the participants, 47% identified as cisgender female, 39% identified as cisgender male, 13% identified as transgender non-binary (TGNB).

### The Dorm Model:

- The Dorm is an intensive outpatient program for young adults, ages 18-35, located in New York City and Washington DC.
- Program duration is approximately one year, on average.
- Treatment includes:
  - Empirically-supported behavioral psychosocial methodologies (i.e., Clinical Groups such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), Clinical Coaching, Individual Therapy).
  - Alternative and complementary modalities (e.g., exercise, yoga, reiki, horticulture, community service, social clubs, meditation, mindfulness).
  - A community clubhouse model that fosters socialization, learning, and relationship-building.

## ASSESSMENTS

- Patients filled out the following assessments every 3 months throughout the course of treatment (average length of stay is 12 months).
  - The Generalized Anxiety Disorder Scale – 7 (GAD-7) is a 7-item, self-report assessment that measures symptoms of anxiety over the past two 2 weeks on a 4-point scale (0- not at all, 3-nearly every day).
  - The Patient Health Questionnaire – 9 (PHQ-9) is a 9-item, self-report assessment that evaluates the nine diagnostic criteria for major depression over the past 2 weeks on a 4-point scale (0-not at all, 3-nearly every day).

## DATA ANALYSIS

- A Multivariate General Linear Model (GLM) was performed on type of assessment (time point) and gender (male, female, transgender non-binary [TGNB]).

TABLE 1

### Descriptive Statistics

	Gender Identification	Type of Assessment	Mean	Std. Deviation
GAD_Total	Male	Admission	16.61	6.73
		3 Months	14.33	5.24
		6 Months	12.74	4.78
		9 Months	13.67	6.75
		12 Months	11.82	4.17
		Discharge	11.60	4.03
		Total	15.31	6.35
	Female	Admission	17.64	5.57
		3 Months	16.84	6.07
		6 Months	16.79	5.06
		9 Months	16.08	5.35
		12 Months	14.00	6.00
		Discharge	15.00	3.24
		Total	17.04	5.63
	Transgender	Admission	17.37	4.95
		3 Months	18.56	4.48
		6 Months	16.13	4.85
		9 Months	15.33	1.16
		12 Months	16.50	5.20
		Discharge	16.50	4.95
		Total	17.17	4.69
	Total	Admission	17.20	5.99
		3 Months	16.12	5.73
		6 Months	14.78	5.15
9 Months		15.12	5.56	
12 Months		13.72	5.39	
Discharge		13.92	3.97	
	Total	16.38	5.86	
PHQ	Male	Admission	20.75	7.54
		3 Months	17.33	5.68
		6 Months	17.16	7.00
		9 Months	14.56	6.60
		12 Months	15.45	6.02
		Discharge	15.00	4.58
		Total	19.10	7.31
	Female	Admission	21.92	6.95
		3 Months	21.46	6.76
		6 Months	21.43	6.16
		9 Months	18.85	6.14
		12 Months	15.60	4.67
		Discharge	16.00	3.03
		Total	21.05	6.82
	Transgender	Admission	22.54	5.41
		3 Months	23.56	7.20
		6 Months	19.38	6.09
		9 Months	14.67	3.06
		12 Months	16.17	3.66
		Discharge	16.00	1.41
		Total	21.10	6.00
	Total	Admission	21.53	7.03
		3 Months	20.19	6.75
		6 Months	19.05	6.69
9 Months		16.80	6.23	
12 Months		15.66	4.88	
Discharge		15.62	3.36	
	Total	20.29	7.00	

TABLE 2

### Tests of Between Subjects

	Source	Dependent Variable	F	Sig.	Observed Power
Gender Identification		GAD_Total	5.257	.006	.833
		PHQ	2.860	.058	.559
Type of Assessment_A		GAD_Total	2.444	.033	.771
		PHQ	7.058	.000	.999
Gender Identification *Type of		GAD_Total	.543	.860	.285
		PHQ	.688	.736	.364

## RESULTS

- A significant effect was observed for the relationship between type of assessment and depression ( $p < .01$ ) as well as anxiety ( $p = .03$ ), and significant effects were also observed for the relationship between gender and anxiety ( $p = .01$ ).
- The relationship between gender and depression was not significant ( $p = .06$ ).
- A non-significant interaction was found between gender and type of assessment in relation to the dependent variables.

## DISCUSSION

- These results provide a continued indication of increased likelihood of anxiety and depression in gender diverse individuals, compared to cisgender counterparts.
- These results also highlight the importance of screening for anxiety in gender diverse and cisgender female populations regardless of visible external symptoms. Individuals within the gender diverse population in particular may alter, mask, or hide typical external anxiety symptoms.
- Future research is warranted to understand the psychosocial impact of gender differences for the treatment of anxiety and depression.

## LIMITATIONS

- The present population is a sample of young adult clients in intensive outpatient mental health treatment in New York, New York and Washington, D.C., thus the findings may not be generalizable to other populations. It is important that future research seeks to validate the present survey in diverse populations.
- Additionally, clinical acuity was not accounted for in this sample. It is important to note that clients at The Dorm are admitted with varying acuity, which ranges from severe to mild.

## REFERENCES

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