

# Pattern of OCD Symptoms in Muslim Patients in Tertiary Care Hospital

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## Abstract

**Objectives:** To find the pattern of OCD symptoms in Muslim patients.

**Methodology:** This study was conducted at the department of psychiatry Khalifa Gul Nawaz Teaching Hospital Bannu, Pakistan from January 2022 to December 2022. Those who fulfilled the DSM criteria for obsessive compulsive disorder were included in the study. Those patients who were suffering from medical or neurological illness were excluded from the study.

**Results:** Ninety-Five Muslim patients (68 males and 27 females) fulfilled the DSM criteria for obsessive compulsive disorder. The mean age of the group was 25.88±7.39. The main themes of obsessions and compulsions were religious (62%), contamination (22%), and orderliness (16%).

**Conclusion:** This study demonstrates the role of religion in the development of numerous obsessions and compulsions, which may be useful in the early detection and treatment of obsessive-compulsive disorder in our culture. Furthermore, in Islamic culture, the implications of these findings on nonpharmacological therapeutic methods like exposure and response prevention (ERP) and cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) could be considerable.

**Keywords:** OCD, DSM criteria, Muslim populations, KP

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## Introduction

Study was conducted at Khalifa Gul Nawaz Teaching Hospital obsessive compulsive disorder is a mental disorder characterized by obsessions (mental phenomena) and compulsions (motor act)<sup>1</sup>. Obsessions are recurring, intrusive, and persistent thoughts or pictures that enter a person's head despite his or her best efforts to keep them out. Compulsions are stereotyped behaviors, routines, or mental tasks that are repeated and appear to be for a specific reason. A compulsion is frequently coupled with an obsession since it serves to alleviate worry and distress<sup>2-3</sup>.

Although it was previously thought that OCD was a rare disorder affecting only 0.05 percent of the population, a

recent large-scale survey in the United States revealed that the condition is much more common.<sup>4-5</sup>

It has also been hypothesized that religion could have a role in the development of OCD in some circumstances<sup>6</sup>. It appears to be more common in those who were raised in a strict religious environment.<sup>7-10</sup>

It is commonly observed that culture may have an impact on the symptomology of psychiatric illnesses.<sup>11</sup> Religious impulses and cleaning procedures were shown to be common in OCD patients in this study, and they were linked to religious duties of the concept of sin because Muslims are accustomed to praying five times a day followed by cleansing rituals known as Ablution.

When an obsession starts, these rituals are increased in severity to a pathological degree depending upon

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culture, religion and belief system. The impact of Muslim culture in phenomenology was noted by Mahgoub and Abdel Hafez <sup>12</sup>, where contents of obsessions were mainly related to religious practices, namely prayers and associated washings. Similarly, in some other studies, religious themes were prominent in 50% of Jewish OCD subjects in Jerusalem. <sup>13 14</sup>

In this context, because of profound importance of the frequency of various contents of obsessions and compulsions, we planned to undertake a study pattern of OCD in Pakistan, a country with a profound Islamic Ideology.

We expect that, at this early stage, this study will analyze the impact of religion on the phenomenology of this problem, because good diagnosis and recognition of OCD are the first steps in proper treatment.

## Material and Method

Teaching Hospital Bannu out-patient psychiatry department. A total of a hundred patients, both male and female, agreed to take part. This study only included people who met the DSM criteria for OCD. A semi-structured proforma for clinical interview was used to evaluate the subjects. Demographic information, as well as personal and family histories of obsessive-compulsive disorders, were collected. Rating of severity was carried out by using Yale Brown obsessive compulsive scale. The operational definitions were used according to DSM-5. The following operational definitions of OCD forms were adopted.

Religious themes: These included rakaat (a set of sequential tasks) and wazoo (washing certain parts of the body in a specific order). Religious repetitions and religious washing are terms used in this study to describe doubts about the quantity of rakaat of prayers and the proper execution of wazoo. Obsessional ideas, and the nature of compulsive activities was dominated by religious elements.

Religious content was predominant in both themes of obsessions and nature of compulsive activities. (Table.1)

| Symptom          | No. | %age  |
|------------------|-----|-------|
| 1. religion      | 62  | 65.2  |
| a. Prayer        | 29  | 30.5  |
| b. Wazoo         | 24  | 25.2  |
| c. Faith         | 9   | 9.4   |
| 2. contamination | 22  | 23.15 |
| 3. order/safety  | 16  | 16.84 |

|                  |   |      |
|------------------|---|------|
| 4. aggression    | 6 | 6.31 |
| 5. sex           | 3 | 3.15 |
| 6. Death         | 2 | 2.10 |
| 7. Miscellaneous | 3 | 3.15 |

## Results

A total of 95 patients (68 males and 27 females) met the DSM criteria for obsessive compulsive disorder. The mean age of the participants was  $25.78 \pm 7.39$ . The total duration of the course of OCD was  $4.49 \pm 2.2$  years. In the majority of the subjects, the illness began before the age of 30 years. The mean age of the group was  $25.88+7.39$ . The main themes of obsessions and compulsions were religious (62%), followed by contamination (22%), and orderliness (16%).

| Symptom    | No | %age  |
|------------|----|-------|
| Obsession  |    |       |
| Single     | 20 | 21.05 |
| Multiple   | 30 | 31.57 |
| Total      | 50 | 52.62 |
| Compulsion |    |       |
| Single     | 18 | 18.94 |
| Multiple   | 28 | 29.47 |
| None       | 4  | 4.21  |
| Total      | 50 | 52.62 |

## Discussion

The mean age of our study sample was close to that of the study conducted by Mahgoub OM et al <sup>12</sup>. The mean duration of OCD illness in our study was found to be similar to the study of Jaissorya et al <sup>15</sup>.

According to Akhter et al, <sup>46</sup> percent of obsessive-compulsive patients were preoccupied with dirt and contamination, and it was believed that the socio-cultural background played a major role in this, as Asians in general, and Pakistanis in particular, are preoccupied with purity and cleanliness.<sup>17</sup>

Religion and cultural beliefs and concerns appear to have an influence on obsession and compulsion themes. In this study, Religion has an impact on the phenomenology of OCD because obsessional themes were predominantly related to religious practices such as prayers, whereas these themes were not observed in Stern and Cobb's British study of OCD patients and were infrequent among Hindu patients in a study conducted by Jaissorya et al <sup>15</sup>.

Religious themes were found in a group of Egyptian

OCD patients 18. In contrast to the cleaning compulsions reported in West 19, our culture and religion influence the nature of recurring compulsions. Because prayers and other accompanying washings are the most prevalent shared daily activities among Muslims, these rituals are intensified to a pathological degree when an obsession begins, and these were the most common rituals discovered in this study. Compulsion with religious content was regarded morbid behavior in our patients, and it was connected with extreme suffering, which had a substantial impact on their psychological and religious lives.

Furthermore, they have made a considerable change from their former lifestyles, indicating that they are not symptoms of a personality disorder. Greenberg et al, in a study of Jewish patients with OCD<sup>10-14</sup>, had similar feelings about rituals with religious aspects. Patients with OCD sought expert opinion from religious leaders (Imam/Mufti) on the condition of their illness and their blasphemous ideas in our study, which was similar to studies in other countries<sup>20</sup>.

## Conclusion

This study examines the role of religion in the development of various obsessions and compulsions that could aid in the early diagnosis of obsessive-compulsive disorder in our society. Furthermore, in Islamic culture, the impact of these findings on psychological treatment methods such as exposure and response prevention (ERP) and cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) could be significant.

**Conflict of Interest:** No

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