

Psycho-social Problems Confronted by University Students and the Need for Counseling

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This study concerns the documentary evidence gathered from the students who sought treatment at the Counseling Center at the University of Ruhuna in the year 2008. A diagnostic survey of the student patients at the centre proves that the most prevalent types of psycho-social problems have been anxiety, obsessive compulsion, phobia and somatic disorder.

Anxiety reactions resulted in by minor psychological problems have been the common disorder among most of the university students. The root cause of such anxiety reactions has been the weak social support available from their home backgrounds, guilty consciousness resulted in by failures in romantic relationships, and adjustability problems.

Phobia suggests an irrational fear about developing social relations with their peers, facing university examinations, and tolerating the presence of certain harmless animals or insects in the environment. Obsessive compulsion is a situation where some irrational thoughts forcefully direct them to involve continuously in some abnormal types of behaviour or habits such as homosexuality, smoking or endlessly washing of hands. Somatic disorder is a body pain resulted in by a prolonged psycho-social problems they have been confronted with. Frequent headaches, pains in legs or hands, and difficulties in sleeping are some symptoms of the somatic disorder.

This study reveals that all such psycho-social problems have led to the development of various behavioural disorders among the students in such a way in which their active participation in academic programs is greatly disturbed. Necessary treatment to assist such students could be carried out through individual and group counseling conducted at the counseling center. Some students who are confronted with serious illnesses such as depression and post traumatic stress disorders were directed to psychiatrists for necessary medical treatment. Also it was revealed that conducting seminars, workshops, lectures and discussions for sensitizing students about such psycho-social problems and the role of counseling is vital to minimize the negative impacts of such problems and to enhance their educational achievements.

Key words: *Anxiety, Obsessive compulsion, Phobia, Somatic disorder*