

Mental Health Consequences Among Sudanese Due to the Armed Conflicts and Civil Unrest of 2023: A Cross-Sectional Study

Sahar Elnour

MeenaHealth

Maha Mohammed Bilal

MeenaHealth

Ziryab Zainelabdin Mohamed Elmahdi

MeenaHealth

Einas Mustafa Mudawi Ahmed

MeenaHealth

Abstract

Aim: To investigate depression, anxiety, PTSD, and insomnia levels among Sudanese citizens during the 2023 Armed Forces conflict in Sudan.

Methods: An online survey was distributed. It is composed of five parts, covering the following areas: 1) sociodemographic data; 2) depression assessment; 3) generalized anxiety disorder assessment; 4) post-traumatic stress disorder assessment; and 5) insomnia assessment.

Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 27 was used for data analysis; frequency and percentage were used to describe the qualitative variables. The Pearson correlation coefficient and Chi-square test were used for correlation and association analysis; a P-value equal to or less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

Results: The study included 221 participants, whose ages were 35.02 ± 11.83 years. Among the participants, 57.5% were female. The length of stay in the war zone was 39.29 ± 31.71 days. The sound of gunfire, bombs, or explosions was the most frequent war violence personally experienced by participants or their family members, friends, or acquaintances, in 203 (91.8%) and 221 (100%), respectively.

Moderate-severe and severe depression were present in 25.3% and 62.0%, respectively. Moderate and severe anxiety were present in 36.2% and 52.9%, respectively. 58.8% had PTSD. Sub-threshold insomnia was present in 57.5%.

There was a negative correlation between sex (female) and depression (correlation coefficient = - 0.183, p-value = 0.006), which indicates that depression is more likely to be in females. For PTSD, there was a negative correlation between age and PTSD (correlation coefficient = -0.150, p-value = 0.026), which indicates that younger age groups were more likely to experience PTSD. Additionally, there was a negative correlation between marital status (married) and PTSD (correlation coefficient = -0.175, p-value = 0.009), which indicates that married participants were more likely to experience PTSD.

Conclusions: Exposure to war-related trauma can also lead to mental health issues. These findings emphasize the urgent need for proper mental health support and interventions in war-affected areas to address the prevalent mental disorders.

Keywords

Sudan, War, Conflict, Mental, Health.