

**A-42: Examination related anxieties among science undergraduate students in University of Colombo**

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Undergraduates with real talents and abilities do not score high marks if they are subjected to anxiety problems. In the worst case the student may leave the university without getting a degree.

An investigation has been made to understand the types of anxiety disorders associated with examinations amongst the undergraduates of the Faculty of Science, University of Colombo. A sample of 70 science undergraduates in their final year from both the biological science and physical science streams and selected using regular interval method was used for this study. Data collection was made through personal interviews and using a questionnaire.

Levels of anxiety of students were measured using the well accepted and validated 'William and Cavenar self-rating anxiety scale' for different phases : [1] No examination period, [2] within 1 month to the examination, [3] during the examination period and [4] one month after the examination. The percentage of science undergraduates showing examination related anxieties under those 4 phases are found to be 5%, 15%, 30% and 2.5%, respectively.

A positive correlation was found ( $r = 0.11$ ) between the examination related anxiety level and the intellectual ability of the undergraduates. The 5 commonest disorders experienced by university students while writing an examination are: forgetting of known things at the examination due to panic (21%), memory recall lag, i.e. facts do not surface-up immediately (13%), increased heart beat (13%), prolonged blackouts and 'choked up' conditions (7.6%), and reduction in writing speed (5.1%)

Only 35% of the students believe that increasing the gaps between consecutive exams would ease their anxiety situations. The language (English) does not seem to be a barrier for studies and examinations of the science undergraduates in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year except for 7.5% of the student population. Nearly half of the students (47.5%) were unaware about the counselling services and the possibility of averting most of the examination related anxieties through proper counselling.