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A Comparative Study of Psychosocial Work Environment Factors and Mental Health among General Practitioners and Dentists in Private Clinics in Kerteh, Terengganu

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Structured Abstract

Background: Psychosocial stress among healthcare professionals affects well – being and quality of care. General practitioners and dentists in private practice experience differing occupational demands, yet local comparative evidence remains limited. This study aimed to assess mental health status, psychosocial work environment, and physiological stress among general practitioners and dentists in private clinics in Kerteh, Terengganu.

Methods: A cross – sectional study design was conducted among general practitioners and dentists in private practice. Mental health outcomes were assessed using the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS – 21), while psychosocial work environment factors were measured using the Psychosocial Risk Assessment and Management at the Workplace (PRisMA) tool. Physiological stress indicators included blood pressure and respiratory rate. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and Chi – square tests to examine associations between occupational role, psychosocial factors, physiological indicators, and mental health outcomes, with statistical significance set at $p < 0.05$.

Results: The findings showed that most respondents reported normal levels of depression, anxiety, and stress. Dentists demonstrated more stable mental health profiles, with psychological distress limited to mild and moderate levels, while general practitioners showed greater variability in distress alongside higher work demand and lower job support. Chi – square analysis revealed limited significant associations among dentists, with stress significantly associated with blood pressure ($p = 0.040$). In contrast, general practitioners showed significant associations between work demand and anxiety and stress, as well as between depression and blood pressure ($p < 0.05$). Most respondents recorded normal blood pressure, while all participants demonstrated normal respiratory rates, resulting in insufficient variability for inferential analysis.

Conclusion: Overall, the mental health of general practitioners and dentists was mostly within normal limits, but differences in psychosocial work environment and indicators of physiological stress suggest that occupational role may affect exposure to stress. The integration of psychological, psychosocial, and physiological data underscores the importance of a supportive work environment in enhancing the mental health of clinicians in private practice.

Keywords: Mental Health, DASS – 21, PRisMA, Blood Pressure, Respiratory Rate

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