

# Prevalence and Consequences of PHOBIAS, Survey Based Study in Karachi

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## Abstract

A phobia (anxiety disorder) is an overwhelming and unreasonable fear of an object or situation that poses little real danger but provokes anxiety and avoidance. The three classes of phobias are social phobia (fear of speaking with others, fear in meeting new people and some other social situations), agoraphobia (fear of being outside), and specific phobias (fear of other items or situations). Our survey aims to find out the Prevalence and Consequences of PHOBIAS among the population of Karachi, Pakistan. The survey was conducted on a general public population of 200 people belonging to different age groups and genders (26.5% male, 73.5% females) in the month of November and December, 2014. A questionnaire was provided to sample population inquiring different situational questions from sample to access their type of phobia. After our survey on general public about the Prevalence and Consequences of PHOBIAS, Survey Based Study in Karachi, we have found that overall 45% people suffering from social phobias, 46% people suffering from specific phobias and 30.5% people are suffering from agoraphobia.

**Keywords:** Phobias; Anxiety disorder; Social phobia; Agoraphobia; Specific phobias

## Introduction

A phobia is a type of anxiety disorder. It is an excessive and irrational reaction of fear [1]. In phobia, there is intense fear of something which is actually having no danger [2].

## Types of phobia

**Agoraphobia:** Agoraphobia involves intense fear of any place or situation where escape might be difficult or help unavailable in the event of developing sudden panic-like symptoms [3].

**Social phobia:** Social anxiety disorder is also a term for social phobia [4]. In this type of phobia, there is a feeling of shyness in an individual person which builds into a high or heavy fear. People suffering from it can feel self-consciousness and uncomfortable in participating everyday social situations.

**Specific phobias:** Specific phobia involves marked and persistent fear and avoidance of a specific object or situation [3] like, Acrophobia (the fear of heights), Glossophobia (the fear of speaking in front of audience), Claustrophobia (the fear of enclosed or tight spaces), Aviophobia (the fear of flying), Dentophobia (fear of the dentist or dental procedures), Hemophobia (fear of blood or injury), Animal or insect phobias [most common are arachnophobia (fear of spiders), cynophobia (fear of dogs), and ophiophobia (fear of snakes) and Nyctophobia (fear of the nighttime or darkness) [4].

**Signs and symptoms of phobias:** The symptoms of a phobia can range from mild feelings of apprehension and anxiety to a full-blown panic attack. Some basic signs and symptoms are difficulty in breathing, chest pain, pounding heart, tightness, trembling, feeling dizzy, churning stomach, hot or cold flashes, sweating and tingling sensations [2].

**Treatment of different phobias:** Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is a talking treatment which can help to understand how different is the patient's 'habits of thinking' that can make anxiety worse or even cause it. Medication can play a part in the treatment of some people with phobias. Antidepressants, anxiolytics and beta blockers are the common prescribed drugs for phobias [5-11].

**Exposure therapy:** It focuses on changing your response to the object or situation that you fear and may be helpful for phobias. It is very curative method for the treatment of agoraphobia, social phobia, and specific phobias [12-18]. We have done these types of studies [19-22].

## Methodology

We have conducted a survey on population of 200 people of different age groups and genders (n=200) to check the Prevalence and Consequences of PHOBIAS among the population of Karachi, Pakistan. We inquired from our volunteers about different types of phobias by asking few simple questions regarding their fears and avoidance of various daily activities to which they can categorize as their phobias. We have statistically analyzed our results to evaluate which phobia is most common among population.

## Results and Discussion

A phobia (anxiety disorder) is an overwhelming and unreasonable fear of an object or situation that poses little real danger but provokes anxiety and avoidance. The three classes of phobias are social phobia (fear of speaking with others, fear in meeting new people and some other social situations), agoraphobia (fear of being outside), and specific phobias (fear of other items or situations). This survey was done on the population of 200 people (53 male, 147 female). All the 200 samples actively answered our questions for the survey of Prevalence and Consequences of PHOBIAS among the population of Karachi, Pakistan (Table1).

The first question was asked from sample in our survey on

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Received March 20, 2015; Accepted April 13, 2015; Published April 27, 2015

**Citation:** Naveed S, Sana A, Rehman H, Qamar F, Abbas SS, et al. (2015) Prevalence and Consequences of PHOBIAS, Survey Based Study in Karachi. J Bioequiv Availab 7: 140-143. doi:10.4172/jbb.1000228

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|       |        | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|--------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | MALE   | 53        | 26.5    | 26.5          | 26.5               |
|       | FEMALE | 147       | 73.5    | 73.5          | 100.0              |
|       | Total  | 200       | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

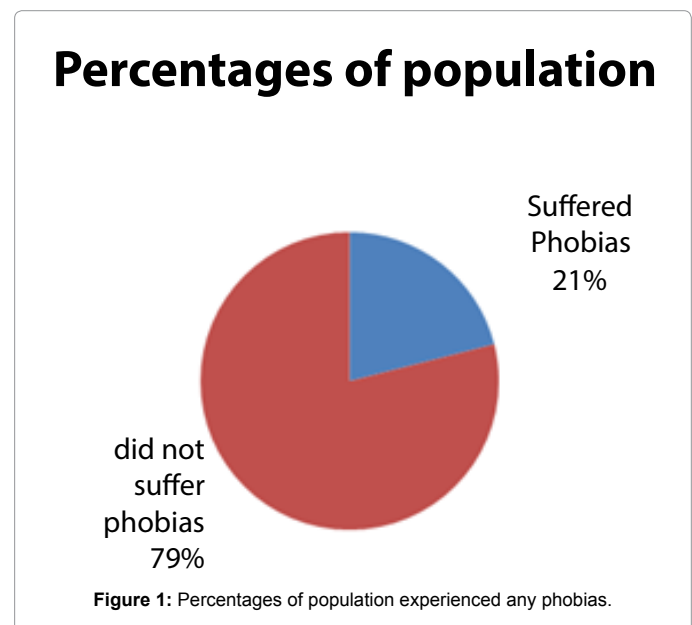
**Table 1:** Gender.

Prevalence and Consequences of PHOBIAS among the population of Karachi, Pakistan, was about their phobia experience that is “Have you ever experienced any phobia?” This question was asked from 200 samples. All the samples answered this question. 158 people out of 200 answered this question as yes, they have experienced. While the other 42 answered they have never been felt any phobia or fear. The second question was asked from sample in our survey on Prevalence and Consequences of PHOBIAS among the population of Karachi, Pakistan, was about social phobia experience that is “Have you hesitate to initiate conversation with a stranger?” This question was asked from 200 samples. All the samples answered this question. 84 people out of 200 answered this question as yes, they have hesitate to initiate conversation with a stranger. While the other 116 answered they have never been felt any phobia or fear in initiating conversation with a stranger. The third question was asked from sample in our survey on Prevalence and Consequences of PHOBIAS among the population of Karachi, Pakistan, was also about social phobia experience that is “Have you avoid participation in seminars and presentations?” This question was asked from 200 samples. All the samples answered this question. 56 people out of 200 answered this question as yes, they have avoid participation in seminars and presentations. While the other 144 answered they never avoid participation in seminars and presentations. The fourth question was asked from sample in our survey on Prevalence and Consequences of PHOBIAS among the population of Karachi, Pakistan, was also about social phobia experience that is “Have you avoid parties and public gatherings?” This question was asked from 200 samples. All the samples answered this question. 62 people out of 200 answered this question as yes, they have avoid parties and public gatherings. While the other 138 answered they never avoid parties and public gatherings. The fifth question was asked from sample in our survey on Prevalence and Consequences of PHOBIAS among the population of Karachi, Pakistan, was about specific phobia experience that is “Have you a fear of death?” This question was asked from 200 samples. All the samples answered this question. 104 people out of 200 answered this question as yes, they have a fear of death. While the other 96 answered they have no fear of death. The sixth question was asked from sample in our survey on Prevalence and Consequences of PHOBIAS among the population of Karachi, Pakistan, was also about specific phobia experience that is “Have you a fear of illness?” This question was asked from 200 samples. All the samples answered this question. 99 people out of 200 answered this question as yes, they have a fear of illness. While the other 101 answered they have no fear of illness. The seventh question was asked from sample in our survey on Prevalence and Consequences of PHOBIAS among the population of Karachi, Pakistan, was also about specific phobia experience that is “Have you a fear of spider, snake or insect bite?” This question was asked from 200 samples. All the samples answered this question. 139 people out of 200 answered this question as yes, they have a fear of spider, snake or insect bite. While the other 61 answered they have no fear of spider, snake or insect bite. The eighth question was asked from sample in our survey on Prevalence and Consequences of PHOBIAS among the population of Karachi, Pakistan, was also about specific phobia experience that is “Have you a fear of cleanliness?” This question was asked from 200 samples. All the samples answered this

question. 70 people out of 200 answered this question as yes, they have a fear of cleanliness. While the other 130 answered they have no fear of cleanliness. The ninth question was asked from sample in our survey on Prevalence and Consequences of PHOBIAS among the population of Karachi, Pakistan, was also about specific phobia experience that is “Have you a fear of heights and hiking?” This question was asked from 200 samples. All the samples answered this question. 70 people out of 200 answered this question as yes, they have a fear of heights and hiking. While the other 130 answered they have no fear of heights and hiking. The tenth question was asked from sample in our survey on Prevalence and Consequences of PHOBIAS among the population of Karachi, Pakistan, was also about specific phobia experience that is “Have you a fear of water and seaside?” This question was asked from 200 samples. All the samples answered this question. 71 people out of 200 answered this question as yes, they have a fear of water and seaside. While the other 129 answered they have no fear of water and seaside. The eleventh question was asked from sample in our survey on Prevalence and Consequences of PHOBIAS among the population of Karachi, Pakistan, was about agoraphobia experience that is “Have you a fear of leaving home?” This question was asked from 200 samples. All the samples answered this question. 53 people out of 200 answered this question as yes, they have a fear of leaving home. While the other 147 answered they have no fear of leaving home (Figures 1-3). The twelfth question was asked from sample in our survey on Prevalence and Consequences of PHOBIAS among the population of Karachi, Pakistan, was also about agoraphobia experience that is “Have you a fear of new places?” This question was asked from 200 samples. All the samples answered this question. 69 people out of 200 answered this question as yes, they have a fear of new places. While the other 131 answered they have no fear of new places (Tables 2 and 3).

### Conclusion

Phobia is an anxiety disorder. Many people suffering from phobias which markedly affect their daily routine life. After our survey we have find that overall 45% people suffering from social phobias, 46% people suffering from specific phobias and 30.5% people are suffering from agoraphobia.



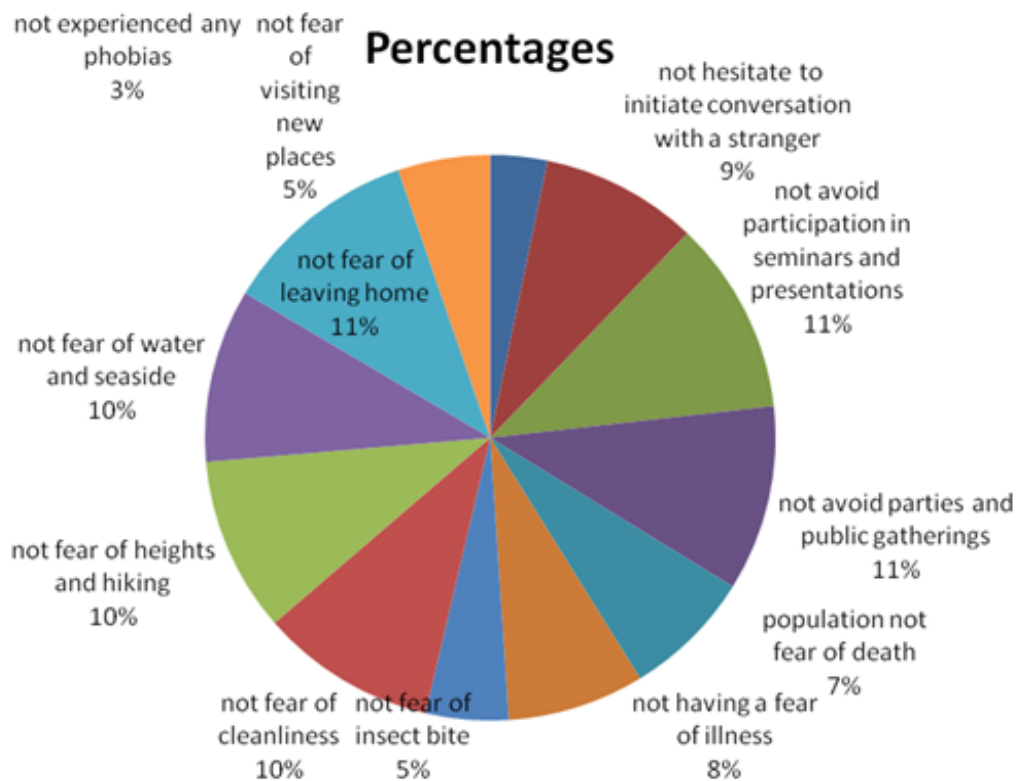


Figure 2: Percentages of population give positive response to Questions.

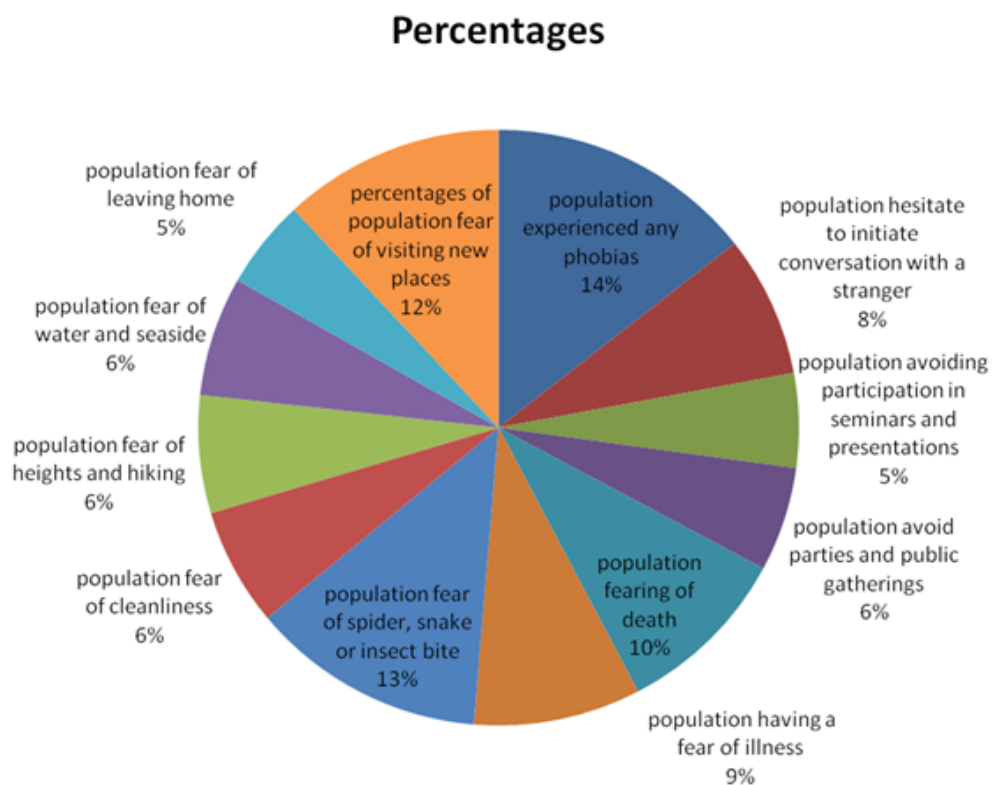


Figure 3: Percentages of population give negative response to Questions.

| Responses   | Percentages | Frequency |
|---|-------------|-----------|
| population experienced any phobias                              | 79%         | 158       |
| population hesitate to initiate conversation with a stranger    | 42%         | 84        |
| population avoiding participation in seminars and presentations | 28%         | 56        |
| population avoid parties and public gatherings                  | 31%         | 70        |
| population fearing of death                                     | 52%         | 71        |
| population having a fear of illness                             | 49.50%      | 53        |
| population fear of spider, snake or insect bite                 | 69.50%      | 69        |
| population fear of cleanliness                                  | 35%         | 62        |
| population fear of heights and hiking                           | 35%         | 104       |
| population fear of water and seaside                            | 36%         | 99        |
| population fear of leaving home                                 | 27%         | 139       |
| percentages of population fear of visiting new places           | 66%         | 70        |

Table 2: Percentage and frequency of population give positive response to Questions.

| Responses   | Percentages | Frequency |
|---|-------------|-----------|
| not experienced any phobias                           | 21%         | 42        |
| not hesitate to initiate conversation with a stranger | 58%         | 116       |
| not avoid participation in seminars and presentations | 72%         | 144       |
| not avoid parties and public gatherings               | 69%         | 130       |
| population not fear of death                          | 48%         | 129       |
| not having a fear of illness                          | 50.50%      | 147       |
| not fear of insect bite                               | 30.50%      | 131       |
| not fear of cleanliness                               | 65%         | 138       |
| not fear of heights and hiking                        | 65%         | 96        |
| not fear of water and seaside                         | 64.50%      | 101       |
| not fear of leaving home                              | 73.00%      | 61        |
| not fear of visiting new places                       | 34.00%      | 130       |

Table 3: Percentage and frequency of population give negative response to Questions.

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