

# Evaluation of anxiety in patients who admitted to an ophthalmology outpatient clinic during COVID-19 pandemic.

Elif Ateş Budak<sup>1</sup>, Mine Karahan<sup>2</sup>, and Çağla Çilem Han<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Dicle University Medical Faculty

<sup>2</sup>Dicle University

<sup>3</sup>Antalya Kepez State Hospital

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## Abstract

**Purpose** Many studies revealed that stress, anxiety and depressive symptoms are increased during the pandemic in both healthcare workers and the general public. In our study, we aimed to evaluate anxiety levels in patients who applied to an Ophthalmology outpatient clinic during the COVID-19 pandemic. We thought that close contact requirement in eye examination might lead to the anxiety of COVID-19. **Methods** This is a cross-sectional descriptive study conducted in Dicle University Ophthalmology department outpatient clinic. Data were collected for COVID-19 fear and safety measurements and all the patients were applied Hamilton Anxiety Scale (HAM-A). **Results** A total of 223 voluntary participants were recruited. Of the participants, 101 were female and 122 were male. HAM-A total score mean was found  $9.28 \pm 8.717$  and approximately half of the patients (51.6%) had a score of higher than 6 which means clinical significance. Women and single participants had higher anxiety levels compared with men and married/partnership respectively. Age, educational level and fear of COVID-19 when visiting the hospital were found to be related to HAM-A levels. 41.7% of the patients had postponed the hospital admission because of the pandemic and this was also significantly associated with the anxiety levels. **Conclusions** This is the first study that investigates anxiety specifically in an eye clinic specifically during the COVID-19 outbreak. This study, apart from supporting the increased anxiety levels in the pandemic, highlights that anxiety must have caused a problem of proper access to health services. **Key words:** COVID-19, anxiety, pandemic, ophthalmology

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