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Depression and Anxiety: Cross Cultural and Gender Study

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Introduction: In this study we compare the levels of depression and anxiety among Kuwaiti and Iraqi females and males. Iraqi people have been living in war while Kuwaitis were not directly exposed to this experience.

Objectives: to examine the relationship between culture, gender, depression and anxiety.

Methods: Standard Arabic Versions of the Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II) and Kuwait University Anxiety Scale (KUAS) were administered to undergraduates from Kuwait and Iraq, (511 Kuwaiti & 726 Iraqi), (618 males & 619 females). The mean age of the sample was 20.81 ± 1.80 .

Results: Reliabilities ranged from .80 to .89 (alpha) for the BDI-II & from .80 to .89 for the KUAS, denoting good internal consistency. The correlation between the BDI-II & KUAS ranged from .50 to .73 denoting a divergent validity of the scales. Females significantly had higher depression scores than males in both societies ($f=35.89$, $p, <.001$), Iraqi had higher scores than Kuwaiti ($f=46.44$, $p, <.001$). Similarly, in Anxiety females had higher results than males ($f=45.25$, $p, <.001$), Iraqis higher than Kuwaitis (25.9 , $p, <.001$). This indicates that culture and gender play an important role in people's self report of depression and anxiety.