Students who have serious suicidal ideation, academic distress, or social anxiety may require long-term counseling

Ryo Horita, PhD1,2 · Nanako Imamura, MA1 · Mayumi Yamamoto, MD, PhD, MBA1,2,3
1Health Administration Center, Gifu University, 2Gifu University Hospital, 3United Graduate School of Drug Discovery and Medical Information Sciences, Gifu University

Purpose
The purpose of this study was to clarify the relationship between mental health status at intake and counseling duration.

Methods

Participants and procedures
Of the X university students who used counseling for the first time in 2021, 141 consented to participate in the survey on their first visit.

Measures
(A) Number of counseling sessions (SS)
(B) CCAPS-Japanese (Horita et al., 2020)

Defining variables and statistical analysis
Short-term termination group (SG; N= 61): within 3 times SS.
Long-term continuation group (LG; N = 80): over 4 times SS.
Tests of differences in the eight CCAPS-Japanese factors and the suicidal ideation (SI) item were investigated using an analysis of independent sample t-tests (Bonferroni).

Ethics statement
The research project was approved by the Research Ethical Committee of the Graduate School of Medicine, Gifu University, Japan (approval no. 28-320).

Results

Figure 1. Mean scores of CCAPS-Japanese factors and SI items in SG and LG

Note: †: cut score, Academi Distress: t(139) = 2.12 , p < .05, SI: t(139) = 2.49 , p < .05, Social Anxiety: t(139) = 1.86, p < .10

- LG had higher mean scores for all CCAPS-Japanese factors and SI item than SG.
- Factors exceeding cutoff scores in SG: Depression, Generalized Anxiety
- Factors exceeding cutoff scores in LG: Depression, Generalized Anxiety, Social Anxiety, Academic Distress
- LG scored significantly higher than SG on the Academic Distress factor and the SI item. Additionally, a similar trend was inferred for the Social Anxiety factor.

Discussion
Most of the students who use student counseling suffer from high levels of depression and anxiety. Specifically, students with high scores of academic distress, suicidal ideation, and social anxiety at their initial visit are likely to require medium- to long-term psychological support. The findings of this study will facilitate the adjustment of appointment slots for each counselor in student counseling and correct any evidence-based bias in the number of clients in charge.

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