

Self-Harm Behavior Among Medical Profession Students at YARSI University and its Review from an Islamic Perspective

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ABSTRACT

*Self harm behavior is a deliberate act of injuring oneself without suicidal intent, often emerging as a response to emotional distress. Medical clerkship students are vulnerable to such behavior due to academic pressure, clinical responsibilities, and psychological stress, which can affect both mental health and academic performance. This research aims to describe the level of self-harm tendency, its psychological and academic impacts, and to examine this behavior from an Islamic perspective among medical clerkship students at YARSI University. This research employed a descriptive quantitative design with a cross-sectional approach involving 96 medical clerkship students. Data were collected using the 22-item Self-Harm Inventory (SHI) questionnaire and analyzed descriptively using IBM SPSS Statistics version 26. The mean SHI score was 28.99, with most respondents categorized as having a low self-harm tendency (85.4%), followed by moderate (13.5%) and high (1%) tendencies. The majority also exhibited low levels of psychological and academic impact, although a small proportion experienced emotional instability and decreased learning motivation. Overall, most students demonstrated a low tendency toward self-harm, yet those with moderate to high scores require particular attention. In Islam, self-harm is prohibited as it contradicts the principle of *hifz al-nafs* (protection of life). It is recommended that universities provide accessible counseling services, mental health support, and spiritual guidance programs as preventive and promotive measures to help students manage academic and emotional stress more adaptively.*

KEYWORDS



Self harm, Medical Profession Students, Mental Health, Self-Harm Inventory, Islamic Perspective

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INTRODUCTION

Self-harm is a deliberate behavior to injure oneself without the intention of ending one's life. This form of behavior includes actions such as cutting the skin, hitting yourself, grabbing hair, or burning the body. Medical professional education students are a vulnerable group to this behavior because they have to deal with heavy academic loads, high clinical responsibilities, and complex psychological stress (Hamza, Stewart, & Willoughby, 2015; Kirtley & O'Connor, 2016; Lawrence, Brent, & Liu, 2023). Such stress can trigger stress, emotional disturbances, and difficulty managing feelings, which can ultimately prompt individuals to seek out maladaptive coping mechanisms such as self-harm (Li, Yang, & al., 2021; Jinneng Liu, Wang, Liu, Li, & Xing, 2023; Qian, Zhu, Li, & al., 2023). This behavior can have a negative impact on mental health, academic achievement, and the overall quality of life of students. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of the prevalence, causative factors, and impact of self-harm behavior among medical professional education students is needed (Luo & al., 2024; Singhal, Bhola, Reddi, Bhaskarapillai, & Joseph, 2021).

Various studies show that self-harm is a global phenomenon with a significant prevalence (Mohling & al., 2024; Rong et al., 2023). Research by (Mehmood, Awan, Fiaz, & Raza, 2023) reported that 28.4% of medical students in Pakistan engage in self-harm behavior, with a higher proportion of males (54.5%) than females (45.4%). In Indonesia, (Nurendah, Maslihah, & Zakariyya, 2023) found that 48.1% of students experienced self-harm due to emotional distress and psychological problems. Research by (Lim et al., 2020) shows a relationship between self-harm and mental disorders such as depression, ADHD, and bipolar disorder. The (Carr et al., 2020) study confirmed the role of childhood trauma and social pressure, while (Paramita,

Faradiba, & Mustofa, 2021) linked childhood experiences of violence to tendencies of self-harm in adulthood. (Richard T. Liu, 2021) research in the UK reported a lifetime prevalence of 4.86% with a higher risk in individuals from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

According to research, (Favril, Yu, Hawton, & Fazel, 2020) highlight the self-poisoning method as a high-risk form of self-harm, while (Laporte, Gex-Fabry, & Golay, 2021) suggest that self-harm functions as a mechanism for regulating emotions. In addition, (Kusumadewi, Yoga, Sumarni, & Ismanto, 2020) showed the importance of early detection through Self-Harm Inventory (SHI), and adapting the Indonesian version of SHI with high validity. Although many studies have been conducted, most of them still focus on the general population or adolescents, while specific studies on medical students in Indonesia are still limited (Pérez & al., 2018).

However, until now, research on self-harm behavior in medical professional education students in Indonesia, especially at YARSI University, has been rarely conducted. Data on the level of predisposition, causative factors, and psychological and academic impacts are not well understood. In addition, there is little data that reviews this phenomenon from an Islamic perspective, even though Islam has strong principles regarding the protection of the soul (*hifz al-nafs*). This condition shows that there is an important research gap to be filled in order to understand the extent to which the phenomenon of self-harm occurs in medical students and how Islamic views can provide a moral and spiritual foundation in preventing it. It is currently unclear how the integration of empirical results with religious values can be used as a basis for comprehensive interventions.

Based on this background, this study aims to find out the description of self-harm tendencies in medical professional education students of YARSI University, analyze the psychological and academic impact it causes, and identify the characteristics of students who have these behavioral tendencies. In addition, this study also aims to review self-harm behavior from an Islamic perspective in order to provide a comprehensive understanding and solutions based on religious values to this problem. This study is expected to provide an empirical overview of the prevalence and impact of self-harm among medical students as a foundation for early detection, offer strategic input for the development of campus mental health policies and counseling services, and contribute an Islamic perspective on self-harm as a basis for spiritually grounded preventive programs. Ultimately, the findings are intended to serve as a reference for universities in formulating holistic, psychologically and faith-based interventions to protect students' mental well-being.

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative descriptive design with a cross-sectional approach. The research was carried out on medical professional education students at YARSI University with the aim of finding out the level of self-harm behavior, psychological and academic impacts, and its review from an Islamic perspective. Primary data was obtained through filling out an online questionnaire using the Google Form platform.

The research instrument used was the Self-Harm Inventory (SHI) which consisted of 22 statements to measure the tendency of self-harm behavior. The Indonesian version of the SHI questionnaire used in this study has been validated nationally by Kusumadewi et al. (2020) with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.831, which indicates a high level of reliability. Each item is scored "1" for the "Yes" answer and "0" for the "No" answer. The total score is used to

categorize self-harm tendencies into three levels, namely low (22–39), medium (40–57), and high (58–74).

Respondents were selected using a total sampling technique involving 96 active medical professional students who met the inclusion criteria, namely registered as active students, willing to be respondents, and able to understand the contents of the questionnaire. The exclusion criteria include students who are on academic leave or do not fill out the questionnaire completely. Before participating, each respondent gave informed consent online.

The collected data is exported into Microsoft Excel, then analyzed descriptively using IBM SPSS Statistics software version 26. The data processing process includes completeness verification, variable coding, and descriptive statistical analysis to obtain the average value, frequency, and distribution of self-harm behavioral tendencies.

This research has received ethical approval from the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Medicine, YARSI University with the number 037/KEP-UY/EA.10/II/2025. All research procedures are carried out in accordance with the principles of research ethics, including the principles of autonomy, data confidentiality, and voluntary participation of respondents.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study involved 96 students of Medical Professional Education at YARSI University who were selected through the purposive sampling method. Respondents consisted of 61 women (63.5%) and 35 men (36.5%). The majority of respondents were in the pre-coas stage (44.8%), followed by semester 1 (31.3%), and a small percentage in semesters 2, 3, and UKMPPD. All respondents were single (100%). Based on the undergraduate cumulative achievement index (GPA), most have a \geq GPA of 3.0 (87.5%), which reflects good academic achievement. Most of the respondents came from Java (74%), with the largest proportion from Java other than Jakarta and Bekasi (34.4%).

These characteristics show that the research sample is quite representative describing the medical student population, with the dominance of women and pre-coas groups who are in the transition phase to the clinical world, which is known to be a stage with high potential psychological stress.

The results of the analysis of the Self-Harm Inventory (SHI) score showed an average score of 28.99, a median of 25, and a standard deviation of 10.22. The minimum score obtained by the respondents was 22 and the maximum was 74, with a score range of 52. The 95% confidence interval is at 26.92–31.06.

The distribution of the level of self-harm tendency in students is presented in Table 1. Based on categorization, as many as 82 respondents (85.4%) were in the low category, 13 respondents (13.5%) in the medium category, and 1 respondent (1.0%) in the high category. These findings show that most students have a low tendency to self-harm, although there is a small group (14.5%) that shows moderate to high levels, which still require psychological attention.

Table 1. Distribution of Self-Harm Tendencies in Medical Professional Education Students of YARSI University

Category	Score Range	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Low	22–39	82	85,4
Keep	40–57	13	13,5
Tall	58–74	1	1,0
Total		96	100,0

Source: Primary data processed (2025)

The results of psychological impact measurement showed that the majority of respondents were in the low category (93.8%), with 5.2% in the medium category and 1.0% in the high category. The most commonly reported symptoms include difficulty controlling emotions, loss of motivation, as well as feelings of sadness and anxiety.

In the academic aspect, most respondents also showed a low impact (91.7%), while 8.3% were in the medium category. These impacts include concentration disorders, decreased learning motivation, and obstacles to academic performance.

The results of this study indicate that real self-harm behavior is found among medical professional education students at YARSI University, although most of the respondents showed a low level of tendency. These findings are in line with the characteristics of medical professional students who face high academic demands, busy clinical schedules, and emotional distress due to increased professional responsibilities. This condition can cause psychological stress and reduce the ability to regulate emotions.

The low tendency to self-harm shows that most students still have adaptive coping mechanisms in the face of academic pressure. However, the existence of moderate to high levels of groups shows the need for early attention and intervention, such as psychological counseling services, mental welfare programs, and strengthening social support in the campus environment. Factors that can affect self-harm behavior include high academic pressure, emotional conditions such as anxiety and stress, and limited social support, especially for students who live far from family.

The results of the study also showed that female students and precoas groups tended to have a higher tendency to self-harm. This condition can be explained through the transition period from undergraduate education to the clinical stage which is full of challenges and differences in emotional regulation between men and women. Psychologically, individuals with low emotion regulation are more prone to using self-harm behavior as a form of escape from emotional distress.

The impact of self-harm is not only physical, but also affects psychological and academic aspects. Students with moderate to high tendencies show symptoms of emotional instability, decreased motivation to learn, and difficulty concentrating. Although most respondents were in the mild impact category, the existence of small groups with medium to high impact emphasized the need for a mental health assistance system in the medical education environment. Regular screening, counseling guidance, and spiritual coaching can help students manage psychological distress and prevent maladaptive behavior.

The findings of this study have important implications for medical education institutions. An integrated mental support policy, training for supervisors and clinical mentors to recognize the signs of student stress, and a spiritual approach based on Islamic values, especially the

concept of *ḥifz al-nafs* (protection of the soul), are needed as a moral basis for the prevention of self-harm behavior. This research provides an initial overview for the development of intervention programs and promotive-preventive policies at YARSI University to maintain the mental well-being of students.

CONCLUSION

Most of the medical professional education students of YARSI University have a tendency to self-harm behavior in the low category, although there are small groups with moderate to high levels that require special attention. Academic stress, clinical responsibility, and emotional stress are thought to be the main triggering factors influencing the emergence of such behaviors. The impact of self-harm can be seen in psychological and academic aspects, especially in students with low coping skills. In the Islamic perspective, this behavior is contrary to the principle of *ḥifz al-nafs* (protection of the soul). Institutional support is needed through counseling services, mental health strengthening, and spiritual coaching as a promotive and preventive effort in the medical education environment.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that universities establish accessible and confidential counseling services supported by professional psychologists. Mental health strengthening programs, such as regular psychological screening, peer support groups, and stress management workshops, should be integrated into the medical education curriculum. Spiritual coaching based on Islamic values, including reflective discussions on self-worth, patience (*ṣabr*), and trust in God (*tawakkal*), can serve as a culturally and religiously appropriate preventive approach. Furthermore, clinical supervisors and academic advisors need to be trained to recognize early signs of psychological distress and self-harm tendencies among students. Future research is encouraged to explore the effectiveness of such interventions and to examine protective factors that enhance students' resilience in facing academic and clinical pressures.

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