

CAN SELF-DIAGNOSIS DECREASE AN INDIVIDUAL'S ANXIETY?

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Abstract: In this digital age, access to information has become increasingly easy. However, the ease of accessing information has triggered the emergence of self-diagnosis behavior. This study was conducted using a systematic literature review approach guided by the PRISMA guidelines. Articles were searched for using platforms such as Google Scholar and Research Gate. In this study, the researchers reviewed 10 journal articles accredited by Sinta and Scopus. The results of the study show that self-diagnosis behavior has a strong relationship with increased anxiety. Other factors include the immaturity of the prefrontal cortex in adolescents and internet addiction, which exacerbate the tendency toward self-diagnosis behavior. Furthermore, research can be conducted by examining and collecting more in-depth data using other approaches so that the relationship between self-diagnosis and anxiety can be understood more comprehensively by the public.

Keywords: Self-diagnosis, Anxiety, Mental Health, Internet

1 INTRODUCTION

We currently live in an era of digitalization, where individuals can easily search for and obtain information. One such information is health information. According to Hootsuite and We Are Social (2022), in their Indonesian Digital Report 2022, the primary reason for internet use in Indonesia is to obtain information (Riyayanatasya *et al.*, 2024). However, in reality, information seeking is not accompanied by good literacy skills, leading to errors in seeking help. A survey conducted by the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology in collaboration with the Katadata Insight Center (KIC) stated that 71% of respondents had never accessed the internet for health services. This supports the fact that internet use in searching for health information is not supported by the use of health services (Riyayanatasya *et al.*, 2024). Mistakes in information seeking trigger the emergence of self-diagnosis behavior. According to White and Horvits (2009), self-diagnosis is a phenomenon where an individual decides that they have a disease based on known information (Maskanah, 2022). Self-diagnosis is a fairly growing phenomenon. Factors that support self-diagnosis behavior are divided into two, namely internal factors such as skeptical thinking and external factors such as psychological literature, online sources, etc. In addition, self-diagnosis behavior can also be caused by a cliché background such as studying abnormal psychology (Amrah *et al.*, 2024).

Self-diagnosis can happen because individuals feel curious about an unknown problem and seek information to discover its cause (Triandini & Kurniasari, 2021). The phenomenon of self-diagnosis has a serious impact on mental health, disrupting daily activities (Jayanti, Adrio and Adim, 2024). Individuals who self-diagnose are susceptible to mental health disorders such as anxiety disorders. According to the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, in 2019, 157,695 people in Indonesia experienced anxiety disorders, predominantly young adults (Azzahroh, Hanifah, & Nurmawati, 2020). Anxiety can manifest in mood disorders, thoughts, and physiological activity. This is also supported by the statement of Psychologist Persada (2021) that self-diagnosis can cause individuals to suffer from excessive anxiety and behave in an unusual manner (Maskanah, 2022). Furthermore, research conducted by Affandi & Dewi (2023) also stated that individuals who self-diagnose experience cognitive impairment in the form of feelings of confusion and the emergence of negative self-perceptions.

Previous studies have revealed that cognitive self-diagnosis can cause individuals to feel confused about what they are suffering from and give rise to negative self-perceptions (Affandi, 2024). Maskanah (2022) also stated that self-diagnosis can have a negative impact on mental health and can interfere with daily activities (Jayanti, Adrio and Adim, 2024). In addition, self-diagnosis behavior can have an effect on changes in an individual's personality. A study conducted by Nurdiana & Rubino (2024) states that adolescents who self-diagnose can become more withdrawn (Nurdiana and Rubino, 2024). The prevalence of mental health disorders due to self-diagnosis requires special attention, as individuals often do not know how to minimize the impact of self-diagnosis appropriately. Through research conducted by Nurismawan (2024), it was stated that adolescents with low understanding of mental disorders trigger them to conclude information without clear evidence, thereby affecting the level of anxiety and psychological well-being of adolescents (Nurismawan *et al.*, 2024).

Based on the above description, self-diagnosis behavior can have a negative impact on mental health, both cognitively, emotionally, and in terms of personality. Someone who self-diagnoses is prone to negative self-perception and confusion, which are effects of increased anxiety levels. A low level of understanding of mental disorders further exacerbates the condition, requiring special attention to reduce the adverse effects. However, previous studies have not specifically explored the relationship between self-diagnosis and anxiety. Therefore, this scientific paper was written with the aim of determining how self-diagnosis can affect a person's anxiety levels and providing the best strategies to overcome the effects of this behavior.

2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

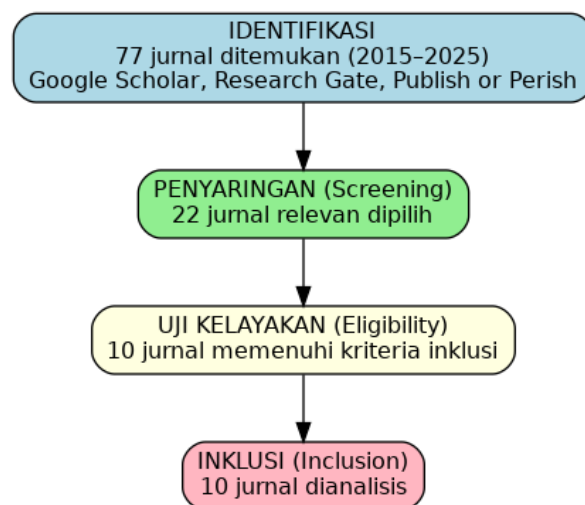
This study was conducted using a systematic narrative review approach, examining various relevant scientific articles to gain a comprehensive understanding of the topic discussed. In this process, the author referred to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta Analysis (PRISMA) guidelines. The steps taken included identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. During the Identification stage, the author established several limitations and eligibility criteria for the articles to be analyzed. To clarify the selection process, the following table presents the inclusion and exclusion criteria used in determining the articles:

Table 1: Article Criteria

No	Inclusion Criteria
1	Year of publication between 2015 - 2025
2	Articles indexed in at least Sinta
3	Articles are openly accessible
4	Articles are available in full text
5	Focus on the topic : Self-Diagnosis or Anxiety

The results obtained were then identified using the PRISMA method based on the following criteria:

Identification stage, At this stage, searches were conducted in several databases such as Google Scholar, Research Gate, and Publish or Perish. The search was conducted using the keywords "Self-Diagnosis and Anxiety." The results yielded 77 relevant journals from 2015 to 2025. Screening stage In this stage, the journal articles obtained are screened to select the most relevant journals for the research topic. The results yielded 22 journals that align with the research topic. Eligibility Stage In this stage, the articles that passed the screening stage are re-evaluated to ensure they meet the inclusion criteria and to eliminate those that do not qualify. The results showed that there were 10 articles that met the inclusion criteria. Included At this stage, the articles that have been tested for eligibility are then entered into the analysis to obtain a summary of the results and conclusions. A total of 10 articles will be analyzed to obtain a summary and conclusions.



The search for articles for this study was conducted through several scientific sources, such as Google Scholar, Research Gate, and Publish or Perish, using the keywords "Self Diagnose and Anxiety" in the search field. The researcher limited the journal search to the past 10 years from 2015 - 2025, using international journals indexed by Scopus and Sinta. articles obtained were selected based on inclusion criteria. The articles that passed then underwent a screening process to be further evaluated for their stability. Articles that passed the suitability stage were then used and analyzed. articles obtained were selected based on inclusion criteria. The articles that passed then underwent a screening process to be further evaluated for their stability. Articles that passed the suitability stage were then used and analyzed

3 RESULTS

Identitas Peneliti	Judul	Metode penelitian	Partisipan	Hasil
Amanda audrey affandi & kartika sari dewi (2024)	Risiko penurunan kondisi kesehatan mental pada remaja pengguna media sosial yang melakukan self diagnose	Kualitatif	4 partisipan, usia 16-17 tahun	Pencarian informasi dilakukan karena munculnya rasa penasaran terhadap kondisi mental diri sendiri yang menyebabkan munculnya perilaku self diagnose
Nurmaya Amrah, Sitti Murdiana, Ismailandari Ismail (2024)	Gambaran Self Diagnose Mental Disorder pada Dewasa Awal Pengguna Media Sosial	kualitatif	2 orang dari usia 21 - 22 tahun	self diagnose diawali dengan adanya kondisi diri yang dirasa mengganggu dan proses asosiasi dengan informasi gangguan mental di media sosial
Mulyani Indrawati, Ikhlas Rasido, Dhevy Puswiartika, Hasan (2025)	Meningkatkan Literasi Kesehatan Mental melalui Psikoedukasi pada Mahasiswa Baru Program Studi Bimbingan Konseling	Kuantitatif	96 mahasiswa dibagi 2 kelompok (eksperimen dan kontrol)	pemberian psikoedukasi dapat meningkatkan literasi kesehatan mental yang dapat memperluas pemahaman dan mengurangi stigma terhadap gangguan psikologis
Safa jayanti, Adrio Kusmareza Adim (2024)	Konsep Diri Self-Diagnose Anxiety Mahasiswa Prodi Ilmu Komunikasi Universitas Telkom	kualitatif	mahasiswa program studi ilmu komunikasi universitas telkom usia 18-24 tahun	self diagnose anxiety membuat individu memiliki konsep diri negatif yang membuat mereka memandang rendah diri mereka dan memicu rasa putus asa
Cindi Mealani Putri, Dela Aristi, Raihana Nadra Alkaff, Uray Kania Desita, Henny Meilani, Salsabila Sabrina, Rani Dwi Jayanti Maulidia (2025)	Literasi Kesehatan Mental dan Perilaku Diagnosis Diri pada Mahasiswa	Deskriptif analitik	409 responden mahasiswa aktif tingkat sarjana UIN Syarif Hidayatullah	responden penelitian memiliki kemampuan literasi pada tingkat sedang dan rendah terutama dalam hal akses layanan kesehatan
Nurdian,	Analisis	kualitatif	4 orang remaja akhir dan	self diagnose

Rubino 2024	self diagnosis remaja dan implikasinya dalam komunikasi interpersonal terhadap orang tua		orang tua remaja	menyebabkan keterbatasan pembicaraan, kesulitan penyesuaian diri dan tekanan emosional. Selain itu, self diagnose juga menyebabkan ketegangan dan kesulitan dalam komunikasi antara orang tua dan remaja.
Ach. Sudrajad Nurismawan, Y unita Dinda Lestary, Budi Purwoko, Hannes Zulfikar Alfaried, Khilyatun Nafisah	Unraveling the dangers of mental health self- diagnosis: a study on the phenomenon of adolescent self- diagnosis in junior high schools	kualitatif	4 siswi SMP Muhammadiyah 12 GKB Gresik	self diagnosis dilakukan oleh anak usia dini dan remaja awal, partisipan penelitian melakukan self diagnose beberapa kali. Faktor penyebab perilaku self diagnose ialah rasa penasaran, rasa takut untuk berkonsultasi dengan ahli, pengaruh konten sosial media. Dampak dari self diagnose ialah kecemasan berlebih, kesulitan bersosialisasi dan muncul nya rasa tidak percaya diri, dan overthinking
Rasmawati Rasmawati, Budi Anna Keliat, Herni Susanti	Improvement in Patients' Ability to Care for Anxiety and Impaired Body Image: A Case Report of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and Family Psychoeducation	Kualitatif Deskriptif	2 pasien yang mengalami kecemasan dan gangguan citra tubuh yang berhubungan dengan penyakit kronis, seperti gagal jantung dan hipertensi	setelah intervensi, kedua pasien menunjukkan penurunan gejala kecemasan secara signifikan, peningkatan kemampuan untuk menerima kondisi tubuhnya, dan disimpulkan dukungan keluarga menjadi faktor penting dalam keberhasilan terapi
YY Wima Riyayanatasya, Shinta Desiyana Fajarica, Asrin Dimas Tri Fathullah, Arifuddin	Eksplorasi Informasi Kesehatan di Era Digital: Studi Pada Remaja Pelaku Self Diagnosis sebagai Audiens Media	Kualitatif	4 informan utama	kesehatan mental merupakan informasi yang paling sering dicari oleh informan, hal tersebut meliputi penyakit yang diderita, gejala, pengobatan dan jenis obat. Perilaku self- diagnosis yang dilakukan merupakan bentuk kepercayaan terhadap informasi kesehatan

				online.
Santosa, K. C. T., & Princen. (2023)	Pengaruh Health Anxiety Terhadap Peningkatan Cyberchondria Dengan Moderasi Neuroticism Pada Dewasa Muda.	Kuantitatif	242 orang	Health anxiety berpengaruh signifikan terhadap cyberchondria dan Neuroticism terbukti memoderasi hubungan tersebut

4 DISCUSSIONS

In today's digital age, searching for information can be done very easily. According to Hootsuite, We Are Social (2022) in the Indonesian Digital Report 2022, the main reason for using the internet in Indonesia is to find information (Riyayanatasya et al., 2024). One of them is information about health. According to data released by the Indonesian Ministry of Health (2018), approximately 48.2% of the population in Indonesia admitted to seeking health information through the internet (Nurismawan et al., 2024). Information searches are conducted due to a high level of curiosity and are done to obtain confirmation or validation of the information that has been obtained. However, a survey conducted by the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology together with Katadata Insight Center (KIC) states that 71% of respondents have never accessed the internet for health services (Riyayanatasya et al., 2024). This aligns with a survey conducted by Change.org (2021) which states that more people access online health services than consult with psychologists or doctors at hospitals (Maskanah, 2022). Internet use without involving healthcare professionals is prone to self-diagnosis behavior. This aligns with research conducted by Sadida (2021), which showed that 60% of 100 respondents obtained information related to mental disorders from social media, and 39% of them felt they had a mental disorder after reading that information (Amrah et al., 2024). This is supported by a survey by Vismara (2020) in 12 countries regarding health information searches, as many as 12 - 40 % of the population searched for health information, and it was found that one in two people had made a self-diagnosis based on the information they obtained (Santosa & Princen, 2023).

Self-diagnosis can be a main cause of anxiety. When someone seeks out a lot of information related to mental health, it can lead to excessive anxiety, especially if the information comes from unverified sources. A person may associate common symptoms with serious diagnoses without the guidance of a professional. This can lead someone to label themselves as an "individual with a mental disorder." According to research by (Morris & Petrie, 2021; Amrah, Murdiana, Ismail, 2024), when someone learns about a disease, they form a mental image and schema of that disease. When an individual experiences certain symptoms, and those symptoms align with their excessive thoughts, it can lead to confirmation bias and reinforce the belief that they are indeed experiencing the disorder they have imagined. The higher the match between the symptoms felt and the information obtained, the stronger the belief that the individual is experiencing the disorder, thereby intensifying anxiety. This is also consistent with research by (Stuart, 1981; Rasmawati, Keliat, Susantri, 2020), which emphasizes that anxiety can be triggered by three main forms: behavior, thoughts (cognitive), and emotions (affective). These three forms are interconnected and reinforce one another. From a behavioral perspective, individuals experiencing anxiety often exhibit symptoms of withdrawing from social interactions and fleeing from situations perceived as threatening. This behavior is seen in individuals who choose to seek mental health information independently through the internet without consulting a professional. From a cognitive perspective, anxiety can cause disorders such as an inability to focus and thoughts filled with repetitive worries. When a person feels physically or emotionally uncomfortable, they are very vulnerable to forming false beliefs. An individual may begin to associate all the symptoms they read about with their own condition. Self-diagnosis is not only an action but a form of expression of thoughts distorted by anxiety. In addition to cognitive and behavioral aspects, affective or emotional aspects cannot be ignored. Affective or emotional aspects play an important role in increasing an individual's anxiety. This is in line with research conducted by Rasmawati, Keliat, Susantri (2020) where patients continue to experience intense emotional responses in the form of deep sadness even though cognitively they are able to accept the reality of loss. This supports the notion that strong and subjective emotional responses can exacerbate anxiety conditions, as is the case with individuals who self-diagnose (Rasmawati, Keliat and Susanti, 2020).

Self-diagnosis and anxiety affect several aspects of ourselves, such as cognitive aspects. Someone who makes a self-diagnosis based on their knowledge of what they are experiencing will feel confused. They feel uncertain about what they are experiencing. Additionally, they may not understand the steps they should take. This is supported by research conducted by Affandi (2024), which found that the impact of self-diagnosis behavior is confusion and uncertainty about the illness they are experiencing (Affandi, 2024). Self-diagnosis can also lead to changes in self-belief, where individuals

may feel weak and abnormal. This effect is exacerbated by negative beliefs about oneself, commonly referred to as the placebo effect. The anxiety felt by individuals can create pressure. If this pressure persists over time, it will have physical and emotional effects on them. This pressure disrupts their daily activities due to psychological conditions. This effect is called the Affective Effect, where individuals engage in self-diagnosis and experience physical and emotional pressure. If anxiety is not addressed, it will affect the individual and alter their behavior. Individuals tend to withdraw and avoid social interactions (Jayanti et al., 2024).

One effective strategy to reduce anxiety levels and self-diagnosis behavior is to improve mental health literacy through structured education programs. This education not only teaches individuals to recognize symptoms and understand the causes of mental disorders, but also encourages them to seek help from competent professionals. This approach is in line with the framework proposed by Kutcer (2016) and Indrawati, Rasido, & Puswiartika (2025), which highlights three domains of mental health literacy, namely knowledge, efficacy in seeking help, and attitudes towards psychological issues. Improving literacy has a significant impact. Individuals with a better understanding of mental health are quicker to recognize symptoms of disorders, more confident in seeking help, and able to manage their emotions in a healthier way (Maelani et al., 2025). Conversely, low mental health literacy often leads individuals to misinterpret the information they obtain, which can trigger inappropriate self-diagnosis and exacerbate anxiety. In addition, good literacy also helps create a supportive environment for open discussion about mental health issues, including within the family. This social support is an important factor that helps individuals avoid the pressure to diagnose themselves based on information that may not be valid. Azhari's (2021) research supports this view, emphasizing that consulting a professional is much safer and more effective than relying on unguided self-diagnosis (Nurdiana & Rubino, 2024).

In practical terms, efforts to improve literacy can be carried out through various programs, such as community training, interactive seminars, social media campaigns, or the integration of mental health topics into the education curriculum. With the right strategy, the community will not only be equipped with the right knowledge, but also guided to take the right steps in maintaining their mental health, so that the practice of incorrect self-diagnosis can be minimized.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The phenomenon of self-diagnosis is an issue that deserves serious attention, particularly in relation to mental health, and also in situations where individuals lack the critical ability to discern the accuracy of the information they obtain. This situation has the potential to encourage individuals to diagnose themselves, which can lead to excessive anxiety and form incorrect perceptions or beliefs about the psychological state they are experiencing. Self-diagnosis can occur through a gradual process, from recognizing symptoms, acknowledging a condition, and the desire to find a solution. Communication barriers and a lack of emotional support can prevent individuals from seeking professional help, which negatively impacts unresolved psychological stress, disrupting various aspects such as cognitive, affective, and even daily behavioral functions. To support this, effective solutions are needed, such as open communication strategies between children and parents, and the elimination of stigma surrounding mental health issues. With a comprehensive approach, self-diagnosis behavior should be minimized, and awareness of the importance of mental health should be increased.

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APPENDIX

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