

A study of Prevalence of Depression among Adolescents

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Abstract

Background: It is a mental health problem in adolescents worldwide with an estimated prevalence of 4-5% in mid to late adolescents. Adolescents these days have become prone to feelings of sadness, hopelessness because of the excessive use of technologies; internet, social networking sites and mobile phones.

Objectives: To study the level of depression among adolescents. To work out gender differences among adolescents on depression and to examine school wise differences (Govt. & Private) as the level of depression.

Materials and Methods: In demographic items; Depression Scale for Children and Adolescents by Anita Vulic-Prtoric (2005) was administered to a sample of (n=400) adolescents (boys and girls) both studying in Private and Govt. Senior Secondary Schools of Chandigarh and its surrounding areas. Data was collected on a standardized questionnaire of 'Depression Scale with reliability of 0.71.

Results: Depression scores demonstrated that 64 (16 %) adolescents were severely depressed. Among the adolescent population 64 (16 %), 40(10%) were girls and 24 (6%) were boys. The study further analyzed that the private school adolescents exhibit higher level of depression when compared with government school adolescents. The teachers and parents should be made aware of this problem with the help of school counselors so that the depressed adolescent can be identified early and helped rather than suffer silently.

Keywords: Depression, Gender, Adolescents.

Introduction

Younger generation particularly adolescents, these days are experiencing various issues regarding mental health such as anxiety and depression symptoms in school-aged population. Adolescents are facing these problems so much in this period. Depression is an inevitable event in the life of young people and society. As we know that depression in adolescents exists and can be very harmful to this generation. According to World Health Organization (WHO), depressive disorders are the fourth leading health problem in the world and it will be second disabling disease of mankind in 2020 (Akiskal, 2000). Recent studies have shown that greater than 20% of adolescents in the general population have emotional problems and one-third of adolescents attending psychiatric clinics suffer from depression (Kovacs, 1989).

Depression among adolescents has emerged as a major mental health problem. To estimate the prevalence of depression among school going adolescents a cross sectional survey was carried out at higher secondary schools in South India which included 2432 school going adolescents and found 25% (612) students with depression (Jayanthi & Thirunavukarasu, 2015).

In a cross-sectional study conducted by Bansal, Goyal, and Srivastava (2009); 3% to 9% of adolescents get affected with depression at once, and at the end of adolescence and 20% of adolescents report a lifetime prevalence of depression.

In a study conducted at Noida (U.P.) by Chauhan, Lal and Nayak (2014) prevalence of depression was observed to be 38% among adolescents. Their findings further revealed that males (35%) were found less depressed as compared to the females (41.8%) and highest prevalence of depression was seen in obese (48.7%) adolescents.

In another cross sectional study of 1275 students (731 males and 544 females) of different colleges the prevalence of depression was found 64.9% due to various reasons for e.g. staying away from home, smoking, alcoholism, part time job and commitment were associated with depression (Goud, Ramesh and Kumar, 2014).

Going by trends it was observed that depression has emerged as major mental health problem in last two decades significantly particularly among adolescents.

Reviewing the change of behaviours among adolescents, it was decided to conduct the study to determine description of difference by examining objectives as;

- a) General trends of depression in government and private senior secondary schools of Chandigarh.
- b) To explore the levels of depression between boys and girls
- c) To study the degree of difference between adolescents studying in Govt. and Private Senior Secondary Schools of Chandigarh.

Operational Definitions

Adolescents: Adolescents are the students who are in the age group of 14-18 years and are studying in classes ranging from X to XII.

Depression: It is an abnormal state of an individual related to symptoms such as; pessimistic attitude, low subjective mood related to sadness, insomnia, loss of appetite, inter-personal relationships and school adjustment.

Significance of the Study

Depression is more than just sadness. Depression during adolescence is associated with academic difficulties, risky behavior engagement, nonsuicidal self-injury in later in adolescence and lower income levels, higher divorce rates, suicidality in adulthood (Auerbach et al, 2014 & Avenevoli, 2015). More distressingly, 75% of individuals undergoing depression during adolescence will make a suicide attempt in adulthood (Nock et al, 2013). So the objective of the current study was to assess the prevalence of depression among adolescents. This depression can give birth to various psychological problems like loneliness which causes depression, anxiety, low self esteem and mental conflicts and sufferings.

It was observed that particularly no such study on adolescents has been conducted so far in Chandigarh. Adolescents of senior secondary schools ranging from age group 14-17 years represent the sample for the undertaken study because According to Lintonen and Rimpela (2004) adolescence is a period of rapid psychological maturation and susceptibility to depression. They further emphasized the vulnerability of depression to the negative health impact of adolescents. The undertaken study was planned to identify the prevalence of depression among adolescents studying in Senior Secondary Schools of Chandigarh by concentrating on demographic variables- Gender (males & females) and Type of Schools (Govt. & Private).

Title of the study:

“A study of Prevalence of Depression among Adolescents”

Objectives:

1. To study the levels of depression among adolescents.
2. To work out gender differences among adolescents on depression.
3. To examine school wise differences (Govt. & Private) as the level of depression.

Methods and Procedures

Design of the study

The undertaken research was a comparative study with respect to gender and type of school. So, adolescents were compared with each other on the extent to which background characteristics gender (male & female); type of school (govt. & private) of adolescents studying in Senior Secondary Schools of Chandigarh.

Sample population

The study sample constituted of adolescents studying in Senior Secondary Schools of Chandigarh and its surrounding areas. The sample included 200 boys and 200 girls drawn randomly from 10 Govt. and 10 Private Senior Secondary Schools.

Tool used

The study used Depression Scale for Children and Adolescents prepared by Anita Vulic-Prtoric (2005). The scale consisted of 26 items in the format of self report to assess severity of depressive symptoms. The reliability for the test was determined by split half method which comes out to be 0.68. The total score for 26 statements varied from 26 to 130 showing low depression to high depression.

Scoring

For analysis, the response to each question was converted to points ranging from (26-130) & very high score denotes very high depression whereas low score denotes low depression (Vulic-Prtoric, 2005). Therefore, higher level of depression group ranging from (100-130).

Statistical Techniques

The data collected was analysed by using descriptive analysis. The following statistical techniques were employed for analysis and interpretation of the data.

- Mean
- Standard Deviation
- Percentage
- t-test

Analysis of Data

Table 1: Percentage Scores of Depression among Adolescents

The Severity of Depression	N	In Percentage	Male Adolescents	Female Adolescents
Higher Depression Level	64	16	N=24	N=40

Table 2: The Level of Depression among Male and Female Adolescents

Gender	Total	Mean	S. D.	df	T	P
Females	200	40.33	13.453	398	2.31	At 0.01 level
Males	200	39.79	30.461			

Table 3: Difference between Level of Depression among Govt. and Private school Adolescents

Variables	N	Mean	S.D.	df	T	Level of significance
Govt. School	200	46.22	8.64	398	3.01	0.01 level
Private School	200	58.58	9.88			

Table-1 reveals higher level of prevalence of depression. Among the 400 adolescents, 64 adolescents were found severely depressed (16%) which included 40 female adolescents and 24 male adolescents, whose depression scores ranged from 100 to 130.

Table-2 reveals significant difference between male adolescents and female adolescents in their mean scores for depression. The calculated value of 't' further indicates that it is significant at 0.01 level.

Table -3 indicates significant difference between Govt. and Private school adolescents. The calculated mean of private school adolescents is greater than of Govt. school adolescents. T- Value is significant at 0.01 levels which mean there is a significant difference between the scores of levels of depression among Private and Govt. school adolescents.

Results and Discussion

In term of adolescents, the undertaken study showed that prevalence of depression among female adolescents has a strong adherence than male adolescents as they scored low on depression scale. The study further concluded that female adolescents experience more depressive symptoms when compared with male adolescents. These findings were supported by Nair, (2004) who studied the prevalence of severe and extreme depression among adolescents was 9.5% and also supported by Rani, (2010) who reported mild depression among adolescents was 37.1% adolescents and number of adolescents who reported moderate depression was 19.4% and severe depression was 4.3%.

Delimitations of the study

1. The present study was delimited to adolescents studying in Senior Secondary schools of Chandigarh and its surrounding areas. For the generalization of results more studies and research work can be conducted to other regions, colleges and universities.
2. The present research fails to recognize the symptoms of depression which can help male and female adolescents to know the reason behind it.

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