

EFFECT OF FAMILY ENVIRONMENT ON PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH AMONG ADOLESCENTS

¹Rajesh Kumar²Beenu Varma¹Associate Professor, Head, Dept. of Psychology, Post Graduate Govt. College, Sector-46, Chandigarh²Assistant Professor, Dept of Psychology, Post Graduate Govt. College, Sector-46, Chandigarh

ABSTRACT

The family environment and role played by each family member and family process provide a network of social, physical, and intellectual forces, which affect the adolescents learning, mental peace, thought content, physical health and thinking process. The aim of the present research was to study the effect of family environment on physical and psychological health among adolescents. Sample was selected from different schools of Chandigarh with the age range 13 to 18 years. Total sample consists of 182 adolescents (91 boys & 91 girls). The sample was administered on Family Environment Scale, Form R by Moos and Moos (1986) and PGI Health Questionnaire which was developed by Verma, Wig & Persad (1985). Scoring was done with the help of manuals and keys. Descriptive statistics, t test and correlation were calculated for statistical analysis. Results depict that there was significant gender differences on physical health among adolescents as the t-value came to be 3.67, $P < 0.01$. It was also depicted that there was gender differences on general health of the adolescents as the t value found was 2.87, $p < 0.05$. Results also show that there was significant relationship between family environment and health among adolescents ($r = 0.66$).

Keywords: Family environment, physical health, psychological health, adolescent

INTRODUCTION

It is critical phase of life; it is a period of major social and physical, psychological and behavioral changes. With changing pattern of social interactions and family relationships the physical and psychological health as well as thought contents of the families has been changed. During different periods of history there was continue to change and shift from one aspect of society to the other and from one family generation to the other generation and in this regard various factors are identified during the last few decades in case of adolescents. During the past several decades family environment has been identified as being a contributing factor in child's physical and psychological development. The family environment and the role played by each family member and family process provide a network of social, physical and intellectual forces, which affect the adolescents learning, mental peace, thought content, physical health and thinking process.

Adolescents are part of population having valuable contributions for the nation building. Adolescence period is considered as a period of transition from childhood to adulthood. It generally refers to the period ranging from ages 12 through ages 19. Adolescence is characterized by psychological and social stages and it also includes physiological development, growth identity and personality formation and parent adolescent relationship. Adolescence period is considered as very important aspect of life because major development changes occur in this period such as physical growth, changes in emotions, independent of parents, intellectual skills and many other changes have been take place. For the adolescence this period is a dramatic challenge, one require adjustment to changes in life, in self and in the family. These changes are also accompanied by the significant stress on teenage children and those around them, while influencing and affection relationship with their family members, peers and adults.

Family relationships play an important role in an individual's life pattern and its health either psychologically or physically depend from early childhood through adulthood period. Families in general and parents in particular, have often deemed to be the most important support system available for a child. The strongest factor in moulding the child's personality or behavior is his relationship with parents. All the family members must have experience to handle the transition phase easily with good knowledge and understanding about the conflicts in teen age. During teenage the child always trying to carve out his or her own identity that is completely separate from the parents. In this phase of life, self esteem, self identity and self dignity become important for them.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Gupta et al. (2016) conducted a research on the students and noticed psychological and behavioural changes in school going adolescents. It was found that male adolescent perceived stress and followed by depression and females faced loneliness as major psychological problem. The major challenge faced by adolescents is peer pressure which appears to be top most challenge for adolescents. Among adolescents conflicted relationship with parents and generation gap are the biggest reasons for problem in their family.

Kumar et al. (2016) studied on the assessment of health profile of school adolescents in rural area of Uttar Pradesh. They found that health camps are the important screening issues for the adolescents. The physical health and family history of these adolescents is inter linked and found to be increasing due to the effect of family environment. Under nutrition among rural adolescents is a critical issue and low awareness about health concerns is an important issue could be tackle with the involvement of school teachers, peer groups, peer group members and adolescent friendly centers. Upadhay et al. (2016) revealed in his findings that parental violence, exposure and its experience affects on mental health and problems like depression, feeling of strain, losing confidence was noticed among youth of states living in Maharashtra , Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Bihar, Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh.

Croutes et al. (2004) found that families who share more quality time together have much warmer family relationship resulting in better psychological adjustments. In research findings of Yin (2003) about the family environment and academic achievement suggested that parents should ensure their children a quiet and stable home environment in which children can study and do their home work.

Study done by Moos and Moos (2002) concluded that children living in supportive and organized families were more likely to have increased self confidence, social competence, and were more self sufficient. Sociologists remarked that home and family is the main goal from ordinary man and woman and there is strong relationship between family environment and physical and psychological development. Lau and Kwok (2000) conclude that cohesive, orderly and achieving family environment is conducive to more positive development among adolescents.

Salma (2015) revealed in her studies that positive and significant association between psychological well being, cohesion, expressiveness, acceptance, caring and active recreational dimensions of family environment. Gender differences were also reported in the psychological wellbeing. Adolescence mental health play a vital role in every place and without mental strength adolescents cannot do any performance in his/her life.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study would be helpful in future for more research in exploring the factors which influence the adolescents' physical health and psychological development. It will also help the teachers, parents, and policy makers, counsellors to coordinate in an effective way so that adolescents can have a sound mind and sound body and better achievements in their life.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the family environment of the adolescents
2. To study the general health of the adolescents
3. To study the gender differences in family environment and general health among adolescents

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1. It is assumed that there is positive relationship between health and family environment among adolescents.
2. It is assumed that there is positive relationship between dimensions of general health (physical health and psychological health) and family environment (personal growth, relationships, system maintenance).

3. It is assumed that there exist gender differences in physical and psychological health among adolescents.
4. It is assumed that there exist gender differences in personal growth, relationships and system maintenance.

METHODOLOGY

SAMPLE

In the present study convenient random sampling was used for getting appropriate data. The sample included 182 (91boys & 91girls) adolescents of class 8th to 12th students studying in different schools of Chandigarh. The age of subjects ranged between 14 to 18 years.

TOOLS USED

Family Environment Scale (FES, 1968, form R): Family environment scale developed by Moos and Moos (1986) was used to assess the family environment of the adolescents. Family environment scale consists of 90 items to measure family climate. It also includes the three domains viz., the relationship dimension, personal growth and system maintenance dimension. Each item in the scale has two responses (true or false). The test-retest reliability of the scale ranges from 0.68 to 0.86. Internal consistency is also satisfactory, ranging from 0.61 to 0.78 for all the dimensions.

PGI General Health Questionnaire (PGI-GHQ, 1985): To measure the physical and psychological condition of the subjects, as perceived by adolescents, were analyzed using PGI Health Questionnaire developed by Verma, Wig & Persad (1985). The scale has two parts section A and section B. The section A includes items related to physical state of the adolescent and contains 16 items. The section B includes psychological health which contains 22 items. The total score depicts the general health of the adolescents.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Descriptive statistics, t-test and correlation were used for the analysis of the scores.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table – 1

Mean, standard deviation, t-ratio of the general health among adolescents

Variables	Gender	Mean	SD	t-ratio

Physical Health	Male	9.21	2.64	3.67**
	Female	7.74	2.75	
Psychological Health	Male	14.74	4.54	1.80
	Female	13.57	4.24	
General Health	Male	23.96	6.29	2.87**
	Female	21.32	6.06	
Note:- **significant at 0.01 level				

Table – 1 revealed that there exist significant gender differences in physical health and general health as the t-value found to be 3.67, $p < 0.01$ and 2.87, $p < 0.01$ level respectively. T-values revealed that the general health of the boys and girls differs. Female adolescents score lesser mean value as compare to the mean value of the boys. Females were low on physical health also this may be due to the insufficient care in comparison to the boys in the same family.

Family and home environment plays a major role in girl's adolescence's general well beings. If the conditions at home are congenial only then their mental and physical health is high. A secured emotional base is essential for the positive development of young girls. When the family members understand their members of the family girls appropriately and offer supports, their positive psychological health and physical health will improve to a great extend. There were previous studies also which revealed the same findings as in the present research. Researchers conducted a study on family environment and health of the school going adolescents. He found that girls scored low on physical health as compared to boys. There was significant difference between boys and girls on the psychological well being as well. Pathak and Sharma (2014) studied the physical health of the adolescents and found that male students were better than the female students.

Table – 2

Mean, standard deviation, t-ratio of the general health among adolescents

Variables	Gender	Mean	SD	t-ratio
Personal Growth	Male	23.36	10.5	1.30
	Female	21.37	10.10	
Relationship	Male	15.7	5.49	1.98*
	Female	13.9	6.54	
System Maintenance	Male	7.9	3.45	3.37**

	Female	9.6	3.09	
Family Environment	Male	47.10	15.82	0.91
	Female	44.95	16.02	
Note:- <i>**Significant at 0.01 level</i>				
<i>*Significant at 0.05 level</i>				

The above table values depict that there exist significant gender differences in relationship ($t = 1.98$, $p < 0.05$) and system maintenance ($t = 3.37$, $p < 0.01$). Values clearly depicts that there were differences in the male and female adolescents' relationship and system maintenance within the family. In the modern scenario also there exist differences. Families treat boys and girls differently within the home environment. Pathak and Sharma (2014) found that students who belonged to stronger home environment group performed better in the sports and academic as compared to the poor home environment group.

Table – 3

Correlation between the family environment and general health

Variables	General health
Family Environment	0.718**
Note:- <i>**significant at 0.01 level</i>	

There exists a significant relationship between the family environment and general health. The value of r comes out to be 0.718, $p < 0.01$, which revealed that there is association between the health of the adolescents and the environment in which they live. Both the variables are interrelated with each other. Salma (2015) revealed that there was significant association between psychological well being and family environment. Gender differences also reported in the psychological well being. From the above mentioned studies it was found that there exist gender differences in the family environment and psychological health among adolescents. Herman et al. (2007) conducted a study on 220 adolescents of China. Researcher found that family environment was associated with adolescents' psychological well being and physical health.

Table – 4

Correlation between dimensions of family environment and general health

↓ Dimensions →	Physical Health	Psychological Health
Personal Growth	.621**	.448**

Relationships	.499**	.621**
System Maintenance	.335**	.345**
Note:- **significant at 0.01 level		

The above mentioned table values depicts that there exist positive and significant relationship between personal growth and physical health ($r = .621, p < 0.01$) and between personal growth and psychological health ($r = .448, p < 0.01$). It was also found that there exists positive and significant relationship between relationships and physical health ($r = .499, p < 0.01$) and between relationships and psychological health ($r = .621, p < 0.01, p < 0.01$). The relationship between system maintenance and psychological health comes out to be positive and significant ($r = .345, p < 0.01$). Various researchers studied the relationship between family environment and health of the adolescents. The researcher found the significant effect of family relations on the physical and psychological health among adolescents. They also found that those adolescents who had good family relations had the higher scores on physical fitness. They are psychological and physically fit as compare to those who had poor family environment.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

From the above mentioned results it was concluded that there exist relationship between family environment and general health. Good and supportive family relationship leads to the healthy physique and mind. Personal growth, system maintenance and relationships have positive impact on physical and psychological health. From the current study parents or the primary agents of the adolescents now can help the adolescents for their better psychological and physical health. They can better help their children to promote their general health by making the environment conducive. New policies can be made to support and encourage the adolescents for their upliftment in future. This will also leads the physical and mental growth of the adolescents.

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