

ORIGINAL RESEARCH

Prevalence of childhood depression in school going adolescents

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Abstract

Background: The present study was conducted for assessing childhood depression in school going adolescents.**Materials & methods:** A total of 300 school going children and adolescents were enrolled. Complete demographic and clinical details of all the patients was obtained. Assessment of mental health of all the children was done. It was done using the Children's Depressive Inventory (CDI). While reading along silently on their copies and marking the answers, students silently followed the administrator's reading of the questions. This was done to help adolescents who had reading or focus issues. All the results were recorded in Microsoft excel sheet and were subjected to statistical analysis using SPSS software.**Results:** Out of 300 subjects, there were 150 boys and 150 girls. Depression was seen in 33 subjects (33 percent). Out of 33 subjects, there were 18 boys and 15 girls. Depression was more common among adolescents of more than 12 years of age.**Conclusion:** Depression is significantly prevalent among school going adolescents.**Key words:** Depression, Childhood, Adolescents

Introduction

Adolescence is a period for the onset of behaviors and conditions that not only affect health at that time but also lead to adulthood disorders. Unhealthy behaviors such as smoking, drinking, and illicit drug use often begin during adolescence and are closely related to increased morbidity and mortality and represent major public health challenges. Many mental health disorders emerge in mid- to late adolescence and contribute to the existing burden of disease among young people and in later life.^{1,2}

The pattern of mental ill health across one's lifespan is the mirror image of that seen in physical illness. The peak age of onset of which mental illness occurs is adolescence and early adulthood.² The peak age of onset of physical illness occurs much later in the fifth to sixth decade of life. Clinically it means that younger patients with physical illness are relatively more likely to have co-existing psychological difficulties in comparison to older patients. It also means that on medical wards, younger patients are quite rare. Young people

may feel at a loss in a medical service which mainly deals with older patients, and their unique needs could easily be overlooked.^{3,4}

Depression is one of the leading causes of poor school performance. It can be associated with learning problems, school dropouts; delinquency, or sexual promiscuity. Depression in adolescence may also manifest with drug and alcohol abuse, excessive risk-taking behaviors, phobias, panic, and eating disorders.⁵ Hence; the present study was conducted for assessing childhood depression in school going adolescents.

Materials & methods

The present study was conducted for assessing childhood depression in school going adolescents. A total of 300 school going children and adolescents were enrolled. Complete demographic and clinical details of all the patients was obtained. Assessment of mental health of all the children was done. It was done using the Children's Depressive Inventory (CDI). The CDI is a 27-item, symptom-oriented self-report questionnaire. During the screening procedure, five teachers participated. The teachers were given explanations of the questionnaire. Each youngster received a copy of CDI. While reading along silently on their copies and marking the answers, students silently followed the administrator's reading of the questions. This was done to help adolescents who had reading or focus issues.⁵ All the results were recorded in Microsoft excel sheet and were subjected to statistical analysis using SPSS software.

Results

Out of 300 subjects, there were 150 boys and 150 girls. Depression was seen in 33 subjects (33 percent). Out of 33 subjects, there were 18 boys and 15 girls. Depression was more common among adolescents of more than 12 years of age.

Table 1: CDI score

CDI score	Boys		Girls		Total	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
≤ 18	132	88	135	90	267	89
More than 18	18	12	15	10	33	11
Total	150	100	150	100	300	100

Table 2: Depression among males and females

Depression	Number	Percentage
Boys	18	54.54
Girls	15	45.46
Overall	33	100

Table 3: Depression among age group

Age group	Number	Percentage
Less than 12 years	8	30.31
More than 12 years	23	69.69
Total	33	100

Discussion

Childhood and adolescence are critical periods to promote mental health as more than half of mental health problems start at these stages, and many of these persist throughout adult life. Currently, this has become a priority as worldwide data shows an increase in the prevalence

of mental health issues in childhood and adolescence and the percentage of those afflicted reaching nearly 20%. The situation is further exacerbated by the fact that many of these children and adolescents are not receiving the specialized care they require.^{5,6}

Globally, nearly 15% of young people ages 10-19 experience a mental health disorder, accounting for 13% of the global burden of disease in this age group. In 2016, almost 20% of children in the United States ages 2-8 years (17.4%) had a diagnosed mental, behavioral, or developmental disorder. In 2018-2019, about 15% of adolescents ages 12-17 years had a major depressive episode, 37% had persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness, and nearly 20% reported that they seriously considered suicide. A study conducted by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) showed that, between 2016 and 2020, the number of children ages 3-17 years diagnosed with depression grew by 27%.⁷⁻¹⁰

In the present study, out of 300 subjects, there were 150 boys and 150 girls. Depression was seen in 33 subjects (33 percent). Out of 33 subjects, there were 18 boys and 15 girls. Depression was more common among adolescents of more than 12 years of age. The Global Burden of Diseases, Injuries, and Risk Factors (GBD) study is a comprehensive study that evaluates incidence, prevalence, and years lived with disability (YLDs), which in its most recent study evaluated the period from 1990 to 2017 for 195 countries and territories, and identified that the burden of mental disorders is present for males and females and across all age groups. The findings of the GBD indicate that mental disorders have consistently formed more than 14% of age-standardized YLDs for nearly three decades, and have greater than 10% prevalence in all 21 GBD regions.¹¹ In a similar study conducted by Singh S et al, authors assessed the prevalence of Depressive Symptoms among Young Adolescents. A total of 1350 adolescent aged 13 to 14 years in school across nine secondary schools. Prevalence of depressive symptoms among all participants was 19 %, with a higher prevalence of depressive symptoms being reported among females 26.3% compared to males 11.7%. Determinants namely females, smoking, been bullied, felt lonely and having no parental supervision significantly increased the odds of depressive symptoms among all adolescents in the multivariate model. In Feeling lonely (65% to 71%) and being bullied (10% to 19%) were ranked as the most important determinants of depressive symptoms among young adolescents.¹²

Conclusion

Depression is significantly prevalent among school going adolescents.

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