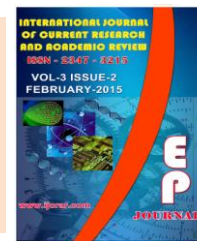




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Depression among adolescents: A cross sectional study

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A B S T R A C T

Adolescence is transformation of a child to a fully-fledged individual. It is a period in which individual develops physically, socially and psychologically. It is in this period in which, due to lack of mental strength and stability, a person develops a serious mental health disorder called depression. A sample of 500 students was assessed using Beck Depression Inventory by investigators. This assessment was done among adolescent students during 2014. The overall prevalence of depression was found to be 68%. Among those with depression, a majority had mild and moderate degree of depression. Our findings point to the importance of broad screening and psychiatric counseling of this vulnerable population.

Introduction

Depression is a common mental disorder that presents with depressed mood, loss of interest or pleasure, feelings of guilt or low self-esteem, disturbed sleep or appetite, low energy, and poor concentration, around five percent of children and adolescents suffer from depression in the general population worldwide. Adolescence is a critical time of development and it signifies a period of high risk for depression. At this stage of development, depressive symptoms are often dismissed or ignored as signs of adolescence or teenage behaviors. Any abnormal or unusual behavior shown by them are often linked to the “temporary phase” that they are going through or occasional bad mood rather than suffering from depression.

Depressed mood has been referred as a common experience during adolescence. The pre-pubertal age depression rate for boys and girls are similar, and doubled in females after puberty. Females are at a higher risk of first onset of major depression from early adolescence until their mid-50’s and have a lifetime depression rate of 1.7 to 2.7 fold greater than males. Studies reported that girls are more depressed and more severely depressed than boys.

The featured article “Characteristics of adolescent depression” by Crowe et al. (2006, 13) studied the particular characteristics of adolescents attending outpatient mental health service in New Zealand. Among the total number of 105

adolescents, a total of 74 had CDI greater than or equal to 12 and were classified as depressed. Greater percentage of girls was found depressed than boys.

Depression in adolescents is a disabling condition that is associated with serious long term morbidities and even suicide (1). About five percent of the general population of children and adolescents may experience depression at any given point in time (2) and its prevalence continued to rise (1). Although depression is common among children and adolescents, it is still frequently unrecognized or undetected (3).

In many societies, depression has been considered as a major health problem, but the treatment seeking is rare, which mostly includes the non-western societies. People from traditional cultural backgrounds either deny psychological distress; interpret such distress as somatic illness or either take it as physical illness (4). Jacob et al. (5) further suggests that while western societies may view depression as a medical problem that requires professional attention, more traditional societies assume depressive symptoms as social problems or as emotional reactions to situations.

Depression is treatable but depressed children and adolescents may present a different behavior than those of depressed adults. Hence, child and adolescent psychiatrists caution parents to be acquainted with the signs of depression in their children (2).

Depression is a universal mental disorder, whose main problem is the change in mood. Depression is a syndrome characterized by a group of symptoms with changes in one's mood (sadness, guilt), behavior (isolation), thought and perception patterns (less concentration, less self-esteem), with

physical complaints (sleep, hunger, sex) and high risk of suicide (6). Studies have shown that one in five children and adolescents are affected by mental health problems and disorders and that the highest prevalence is between 18 and 24 years of age. The period of youth is a time of contradictions when a person goes through many changes and experiences such as emotional, behavioral, sexual, economic, academic, and social, and as well as efforts of discovering one's identity with psychosocial and sexual maturation (7).

Methodology

The intent of the study was to assess the prevalence of depression among adolescent students. The participants were selected randomly from the polytechnic college. A cross sectional study was conducted with a sample size of 500 students studying in first and second years during 2014. The sampling technique adopted was systematic random sampling.

After obtaining permission from the college administration, data collection was done. Questionnaires were distributed in a class at one-time, followed by a full explanation of the reasons for the implementation of the study. Participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and provided informed verbal consent.

Depression was screened based on the data collected using a questionnaire prepared on the basis of a standardized depression scale with 21 items, Beck's Depression Inventory 1 (BDI 1), which includes factors like sadness, guilt feeling, suicidal ideation, changes in appetite and sleep pattern etc. It was designed to document a variety of depressive symptoms the individual experienced over the preceding two weeks. The reasons behind choosing a multiple-

choice questionnaire (BDI) are to limit the responding time, and to elicit more specific and objective answers.

Result and Discussion

The results were found in that 340 Students had depressive features based on Beck depression scale. Hence the prevalence was found to be 68%.

Table.1 Prevalence of Depression

Depression	Frequency	Percent
Yes	340	68%
No	160	32%
Total	500	100.0

Table.2 Depression according to Beck's grading

Beck's Grading	Frequency	Percent
Normal	160	32.0%
Mild Mood disturbance	150	30.0%
Borderline Clinical Depression	60	12.0%
Moderate Depression	90	18.0%
Severe Depression	30	06.0%
Extreme Depression	10	02.0%
Total	500	100.0

The frequency of depression according to Beck's grading, in which 32% were found to normal, 30% of them were under mild mood disturbance, 12% of them fell under category of borderline clinical depression, 18% of them moderately depressed, 6% of them were under severe depression and 2% of them were extremely depressed in the total study population of 500.

This cross sectional survey was carried out to know the prevalence of Depression

among adolescents and in the present study, the BDI has been utilized to detect the prevalence of depression. Its epidemiologic utility has been evaluated in several studies, which concluded that it is a reliable and valid instrument for detecting depressive disorders in non-clinical populations. Several studies support the BDI's usefulness in measuring and predicting depression in adolescent samples (8,9).

Our study found that 68% of students are depressed and the spectrum of depression revealed that 6% are in severe Depression. Prevalence rates of depression are estimated to range from 15% to 66% in various studies (10,11,12). Among Chinese medical students in Hong Kong found that around half of the medical students are depressed (12). In contrast, a study done in Pakistan found that the prevalence rate varied from 49% to 66% among medical students (13). Another study has shown that 39.4% of the medical students are depressed by using the instrument Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (14). A study among adolescents in India showed the prevalence among college going girls as 29% (15). Another study done in Iran among high school and Pre-University students found out that 34% of them were depressed according to cut- off score of BDI 16 (16).

Conclusion

The present study has shown that the prevalence of depression is higher among adolescents compared to the other studies.

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