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ADOLESCENT DEPRESSION: A SERIOUS ISSUE

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Abstract

      A study on adolescent's urban boys and girls was carried out on a sample of 400. 200 each of them are adolescent boy and girls in those 100 boys from low SES and 100 from middle SES vice versa about the adolescent girls. The data pertaining to the study data was collected by administering depression scale and SES scale on sample adolescents.75% adolescent boys having low level of depression while 53% girls in middle SES while 91% boys and 83% girls in middle SES.27% girls having high level of depression as compare to boys having 14%. 3% boys in middle SES having high depression while girls having 8%.There are no significant differences was noted in depression levels except low and high depression levels in low SES.

Introduction

      In every stage of human life, many changes are observed but the rapid changes are noted mainly during prenatal period, infancy and adolescence period. The rapid changes in primary and secondary characteristics are commonly occurring in adolescents who all make them to have confusion, feeling of inadequacy, insecurity, anxiety and depression because of normal maturation process and also the influence of sex hormones. Depression is often described as "an exaggeration of the duration and intensity of normal mood changes" (Brown 1996). Depression is different than occasional blues and grief because depression is persistent and often interferes with the teen's ability to get along with parents and friends, complete school work, and appropriately participate in other normal daily activities.

      There are many causes / factors that contribute to depression in adolescents are broadly categorized as **personal factors** – physical appearance, body build, health status, social status and academic achievement, **school related factors** - friends, peer group, relation with teachers, school environment and **family factors** – home environment, family monthly income, family size, family type, parental education, relationships with parents and siblings, parental expectations from children, parental emotional condition, etc. Dorn *et al.* (1988) study results revealed that adolescents who had low self esteem were highly self critical and who felt little sense of control over negative events were particularly at risk to become depressed and higher BMI is associated with more severe form of depression.

      For adolescents status symbols are more important because they depict them and their family socioeconomic status among peer group. Good socio-economic status definitely elevates them in high place in society and also to opt for carrier according to their interest. On the other hand poor socio-economic status may deprive adolescents from many comforts and they may lose the chance to win peer acceptance. Ritsher *et al.* (2008) had documented an association between low socio-economic status and depressed state of adolescents. Johnson *et al.* (1999) found that low parental SES increased the risk for depression among adolescent offspring.

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Objectives

- To study the family background of the selected sample
- To administer socio- economic scale on adolescents to know their family socio-economic status
- To assess depression levels of adolescents by administering depression scale

Methodology

The present investigation was planned to assess the depression levels among adolescent boys and girls. The sample consists of randomly selected 400 adolescent boys and girls from urban area in the age range of 16 to 18 yrs and studying in std X, XI and XII. The sample adolescent's depression was assessed by administering Depression Scale of Karim and Tiwari (1986).The socio-economic status of the sample adolescents was assessed by based on socio-economic scale of Kuppuswamy. Out of 400 samples 200 from low SES 100 boys and girls each and 200 from middle SES 100 boy and girls each.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 illustrates the background information of the selected adolescent boys and girls from urban area. About ordinal position,35 percent of the sample adolescent boys verses 28% girls in low SES status group were found to be first born among siblings followed by middle born girls (44%) and last born(28%). In middle SES 39 percent boy having first ordinal position 23 middle and 38 % last born position. The corresponding percentage of middle SES status group girls was 19, 44 and 37 respectively. With regard to the number of siblings a large percentage of 94% of the selected adolescent boys reported to have 1-3 siblings and girls 67% in low SES. About in the girls in low SES some changes are found 8% of girls having low SES and more than 4-6 siblings and in middle SES 4% girls having more than 4-6 siblings. With respect to medium of instruction, majority 55 percent boys in low SES belong to Marathi medium and 65% girls. But in middle SES 35% boys and 50% girls are in Marathi medium. Thirty two percent adolescent boys and 30% girls in low SES studying in English medium of middle SES studying in semi English while 13 percent and 5% boys and girls in low SES. There were significant differences found in the personal background of the sample adolescents.

Table 1
Personal Background of Adolescent Boys and Girls

Personal background variables	Socio-economic status and parentage of the adolescent boys and girls					
	Adolescent Boys		Adolescent Girls		Z Values	
	Low SES(100) a	Middle SES(100)b	Low SES(100) c	Middle SES(100)d	a vs c	b vs d
Ordinal position First born Middle born Last born	35.00(35) 21.00(21) 44.00(44)	39.00(39) 23.00(23) 38.00(38)	28.00(28) 44.00(44) 28.00(28)	19.00(19) 44.00(44) 37.00(37)	1.06NS 3.58** 2.39*	3.19** 3.22** 0.14NS
Siblings	94.00(94)	96.00(96)	67.00(67)	60.00(60)	5.12**	6.82**

1-3 4-6	6.00(6)	4.00(4)	25.00(25)	36.00(36)	3.84**	6.17**
Medium of Instruction Marathi English Semi English	 55.00(55) 32.00(32) 13.00(13)	 35.00(35) 47.00(47) 18.00(18)	 65.00(65) 30.00(30) 5.00(5)	 50.00(50) 43.00(43) 7.00(7)	 1.45NS 5.83** 1.99*	 5.72** 0.56NS 2.38*

Figures in parentheses indicate number of adolescents   NS – Non-significant

* - Significant at 5% level   ** - Significant at 1% level

Table 2

Depression levels of adolescent boys and girls and its relation with SES groups

Assessed levels of depression	SES and percentage of adolescent boys and girls					
	Adolescent Boys (200)		Adolescent Girls (200)		Z values	
	Low SES (100) (a)	Middle SES (100) (b)	Low SES (100) (c)	Middle SES (100) (d)	a Vs c	b Vs d
Low	75.00(75)	91.00(91)	53.00(53)	83.00(83)	3.32**	1.69NS
Moderate	11.00(11)	6.00(6)	20.00(20)	11.00(11)	1.77NS	1.27NS
High	14.00(14)	3.00(3)	27.00(27)	8.00(8)	2.30*	1.56NS

Figures in parentheses indicate number of adolescents   NS – Non-significant

* - Significant at 5% level   ** - Significant at 1% level

Comparison between depression level of adolescent boys and girls are shown in fig 1 and table 2 the depression scale was administered on the sample of 400 adolescents for the study. 27% of the adolescent girls having low SES assessed to have high level of depression followed by moderate level of depression (20%) and low level depression (53%). Seventy five percent of adolescent boys assessed to have low level depression by 11% moderate level of depression and 14% high level of depression. Significantly a higher percentage of high depression in girls as compared to adolescent boys in low SES. In another side middle SES the figures indicated that as compared to girls boys are more in low level of depression i.e.(91%) and girls percentage is 83%. Six percent middle SES boys having moderate level of depression as (11%) girls 8% girls having high level of depression.
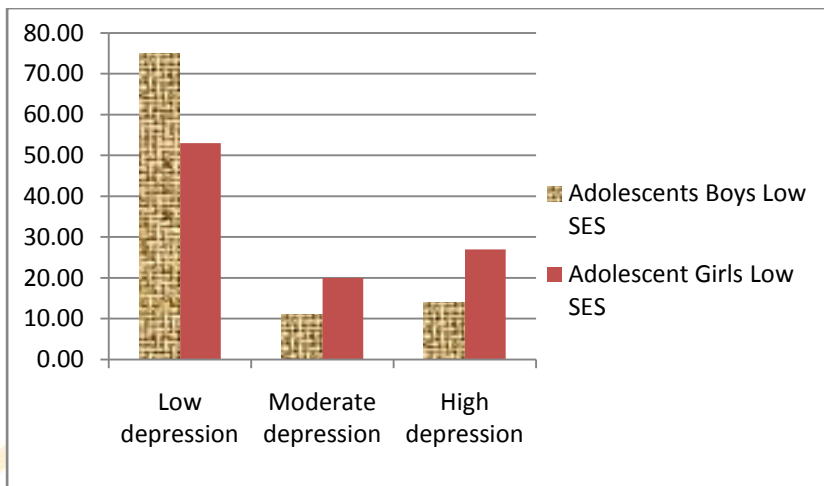
Fig 1 Depression levels of the sample adolescents boys and girls having low SES
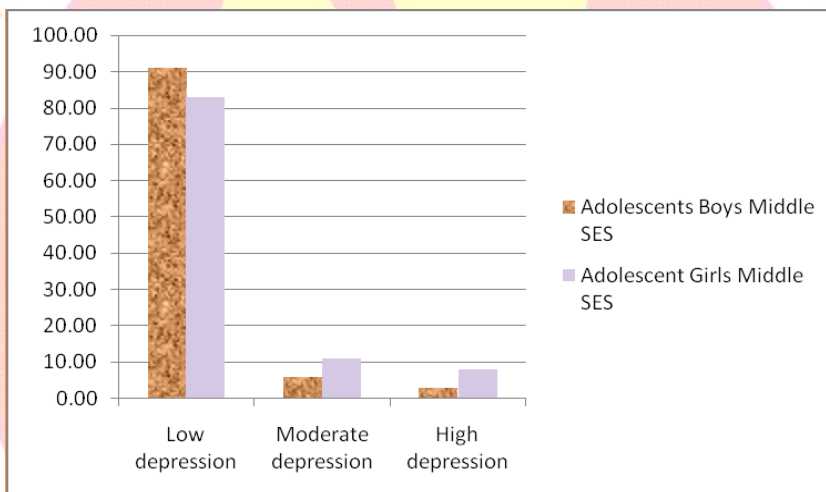

Fig 2 Depression levels of the sample adolescents boys and girls having middle SES

Z values indicate that there are no significant changes in depression levels of adolescent boys and girls except low SES in low and high depression levels. It can be inferred from the results that relatively higher percentage of adolescent girls found to have higher level of depression as compared to the adolescent boys.

Conclusion

It can be concluded from the results majority of the adolescent girls found to have high level of depression irrespective of their SES. The personal background variables like ordinal position, siblings, socio-economic status and medium of instructions were found to have significant influence on the depression levels of adolescent boys and girls. The most important thing anyone can do for the depressed person is to help him or her to get an appropriate diagnosis and treatment as depression can be reduced by taking appropriate measures. Therefore, there is a great need to organize community educational programmes to create awareness about the present and future consequences of depression on adolescent's families and society.

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