

ABSTRACT

Depression, Anxiety and Stress (DAS) are three negative mental states and their prevalence is an area of concern among early adolescents. Hence, the study had an objective of formulating, and analysing the effectiveness of a suitable preventive intervention to alleviate DAS in early adolescents and was carried out in two phases. The first phase was to identify the levels of DAS, their interrelationship, and their determinants. A descriptive cross-sectional design was adopted with randomly selected 1038 school-going adolescents aged 12-15 years. DASS-42 of Lovibond and Lovibond was used to assess the level of DAS and its association with the sociodemographic determinants. A self-formulated rating scale to identify the potential determinants of DAS was used. The second phase adopted was before, after, and follow-up with a waitlist-control group experimental design aiming to formulate and implement an appropriate preventive intervention to build a repertoire of coping skills to alleviate DAS. 60 children each constituted the experimental and wait-list control group. A customized preventive intervention titled Comprehensive School-based Intervention Training to Alleviate Depression, Anxiety and Stress (CSIT-DAS) was devised. The first phase of the study alerts that out of 1038 school-going adolescents, anxiety tops the list with 91% of the selected respondents being affected followed by depression (84.2%) and stress (75%) from mild to extremely severe levels. The area of residence, and mother's education reported a statistically significant association ($\chi^2 (2) = 9.651; p <.01$); ($\chi^2 (2) = 14.992; p <.01$) with anxiety and fathers' education over stress ($\chi^2 (2) = 11.748; p <.05$). In the second phase that examined the effectiveness of CSIT-DAS through a Two-way MANOVA of repeated measures, a statistically significant effect with $F (3, 57) = 9.246, p = .0001, \eta^2 = .327$, confirms that the experimental and wait-list control groups differ in terms of intervention. The profile plots showed that the mean score of the experimental group had a significant decline and the wait-list control group with a significant increase in all three negative emotional states. Hence, lowered DAS among the experimental group of respondents is indicated. The post-hoc tests of Two-way MANOVA of repeated measures of the experimental group over the sustainability further confirm that CSIT-DAS as a powerful tool in sustaining the decline in DAS.

Keywords : Early Adolescents, Depression, Anxiety, Stress, Negative Mental States, Mental Health, Preventive Intervention.