

## EFFECT OF MENTAL HEALTH ON ADJUSTMENT AMONG ADOLESCENTS

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### ABSTRACT

WHO identifies adolescence as the period in human growth and development that occurs after childhood and before adulthood, from ages 10 to 19. Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. Adjustment is the behavioural process by which humans and other animals maintain equilibrium among their various needs and the obstacles of their environments. The present study examines the effect of mental health on the adjustment of adolescents on various dimensions like home, health, social, emotional and occupational adjustment. The study was conducted on 100 adolescents from rural background in Kerala. Mental Health Questionnaire developed by Priya Daniel and Bell's Adjustment Inventory were used in the study. Statistical analysis like 't' test and Pearson correlation was done and the results showed that there is significant difference among the mental health status of girls and boys. It was also found that there is a significant difference among their adjustment in various aspects like emotional and social adjustment. The data also explained that the mental health and social and emotional aspects of adjustment are positively correlated among adolescents.

**Key Words:** Adolescence, Mental Health, Adjustment

### INTRODUCTION

Adolescence represents one of the critical transitions in the life span and is characterized by a tremendous pace in growth and change that is second only to that of infancy (Girish Bala Choudary, 2014). Mental health is an expression of emotions and signifies a successful adaptation to a range of demands (Philip G. Zimbardo, Ann L. Weber, & Robert L. Johnson, 2003). The importance of maintaining a good mental health is crucial to living a long and healthy life. Mental health refers to a person's health of the mind. Therefore the changes in social, cultural, physical and educational life can affect an individual's mental health.

A study was conducted by Bharath Kumar Reddy, Asthik Biswas and Harini Rao (2012) in Raju Multispecialty Hospital, Bangalore, India on "Assessment of Mental Health of Indian Adolescents Studying in Urban Schools". This study aims to assess a community of Indian adolescents studying in urban schools using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) for behavioural difficulties and mental health disorders. All high school pupils attending three urban schools in Bangalore were eligible to participate. The self-report version of the SDQ was administered to the pupils in the classroom whose parents consented. Thirty participants had an abnormal SDQ score and 53 had a borderline abnormal SDQ score. Abnormal SDQ scores were more common among females than among males. The difference was most pronounced on the emotional symptoms subscale compared to a mean male score of 2.90. Mental health problems are widespread among Indian adolescents. The SDQ is a useful preliminary assessment tool of the mental health profile

of Indian adolescents and highlights the need for childhood mental health promotion in schools. The SDQ could also be used in a primary care setting to screen adolescents for mental disorders.

Adjustment refers to the extent to which an individual's personality functions effectively in the world of people. A well adjusted personality is well prepared to play the roles which are expected of the status assigned to the individual within the environment. According to Parameswaran and Beena (2004) Adjustment is a process by which a living organism acquires a particular way of acting or behaving or changes an existing form of behavior or action. This adjustment is of two types viz. adjustment to external conditions and adjustment becomes necessary, as a person grows older. An adjustment mechanism may be defined as any habitual method of overcoming blocks, reaching goals, satisfying motives, relieving frustrations and maintains equilibrium. Armin Mahmoudi (2011) conducted a study on Relationship between adjustment and Academic achievement among Adolescence Students in Iran. A total of 100 adolescent students of class 9 studying in Shiraz city were randomly selected. They were administered Bell's Adjustment Inventory (1968) which measured adjustment of an individual in 4 areas (Home, health, social and emotional). Academic achievement scores were collected from the respective schools. One-way ANOVA was employed to find out the significance of difference between students with different levels of adjustment in various areas and their academic achievement scores. Results revealed that only home adjustment had significant influence over academic achievement. Emotional, social and health adjustments did not have

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significant influence over academic achievement of the sample studied.

A high-quality parent-child relationship remains the strongest predictor of adolescent mental health (Steinberg & Silk, 2002). Max W. Abbott, Sai Wong, Maynard Williams, Ming Au and Wilson Young (2002) conducted a study on 'Chinese migrants' mental health and adjustment to life in New Zealand'. The purpose of this study was to identify and assess the relative importance of predictors of the self-rated adjustment and psychiatric morbidity of recent Chinese migrants. Chinese migrants (n = 271) living in Auckland and aged 15 years or older completed a postal questionnaire that included the Chinese Health Questionnaire (CHQ). Most respondents did not report major adjustment problems. Major predictors of poor adjustment included unemployment, low English proficiency, lack of university education, younger age, shorter residency, expectations not met and regrets about coming to New Zealand. Although the overall prevalence of mental disorder for this sample of recent migrants appears to be similar to that of the general population, significant risk factors were identified. The findings extend knowledge of the adjustment and the mental health of migrants and provide potential focal points for primary and secondary prevention interventions.

The study is very much significant as the mental health is an essential part of adolescence overall health and it has a complex interactive relationship with their physical health and their ability to succeed in school, at work and in society. Both physical and mental health affect how people think, feel and act on the inside and outside our adjustment style and problems in adjustment.

#### Hypothesis

- There is significant difference between the mental health status of adolescent boys and girls

#### RESULTS

Table 1 shows the results of descriptive statistics of boys and girls in mental health and various aspects of adjustment.

|               | Gender | N  | Mean  | Std. Deviation | t     | DF | Sig. (2-Tailed) |
|---------------|--------|----|-------|----------------|-------|----|-----------------|
| Mental Health | Boys   | 50 | 21.28 | 3.897          | 2.287 | 98 | *               |
|               | Girls  | 50 | 23.20 | 2.807          |       |    |                 |
| Home          | Boys   | 50 | 24.54 | 3.564          | 1.830 | 98 | NS              |
|               | Girls  | 50 | 25.70 | 2.720          |       |    |                 |
| Health        | Boys   | 50 | 27.18 | 4.350          | .001  | 98 | NS              |
|               | Girls  | 50 | 27.18 | 3.988          |       |    |                 |
| Social        | Boys   | 50 | 22.62 | 5.225          | 2.920 | 98 | *               |
|               | Girls  | 50 | 25.06 | 2.758          |       |    |                 |
| Emotional     | Boys   | 50 | 22.64 | 6.154          | 4.887 | 98 | *               |
|               | Girls  | 50 | 27.22 | 2.460          |       |    |                 |
| Occupational  | Boys   | 50 | 26.18 | 2.593          | 1.286 | 98 | NS              |
|               | Girls  | 50 | 26.76 | 1.858          |       |    |                 |

- \*Significant at 0.01 level
- NS Not Significant

- There is a significant relationship between mental health and various aspects of adjustment.

#### METHOD

**Sample:** The data for the study was collected from adolescents using purposive sampling. Adolescents from rural background were taken for study. The sample consisted of 100 adolescents with 50 girls and boys each.

#### Scales

29item MHQ developed by Priya Daniel in 1997. Among the 29 items, 11 items are positively loaded items and 18 are negatively loaded. Total score range from 0-29. A higher score indicates higher mental health. Bell's adjustment inventory was used to assess an individual's adjustment in a variety of aspects like home, health, social, emotional and vocational adjustments. Home adjustment refers to satisfaction or dissatisfaction with home life and relationship with members of the family. Health adjustment checks how well the person copes with his or her illness, and whether the individual is satisfied with his or her health condition. Adjustment in social dimension refers to how the person is well extraverted, shy or submissive in nature. It also shows how the person is well adjusted in social gatherings. Emotional adjustments assess the level of nervousness and depression the individual experiences when the subject gets emotionally disturbed. Occupational adjustment refers to the level of satisfaction of the individual with his or her employment, working conditions and colleagues (Evangeline M.De.Jesus, 1995). The inventory consists of 159 items.

#### STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Mean, Standard deviation and t- test was used to assess the difference in the mental health and adjustment between the boys and girls. Pearson correlation was used to determine the relationship between mental health and adjustment of the adolescents.

The t value indicates that there is significant difference among the two groups (t=2.287). On the basis of mean score it was found that mental health was higher in the girls than boys. The obtained data indicates significant difference is seen among the adjustment of boys and girls in social and emotional dimensions. In the social aspect, it is found that girls are more adjusted than the boys. This describes that girls are well adjusted to the social gatherings and the girls are reported to be more extraverted than the boys. As far as the emotional adjustment is concerned, it is shown that the girls have high emotional adjustment and it is found that the difference is extremely significant. The data reveals that the girls get adjusted more rapidly than the boys to

tension evoking situations. The mean score in health adjustment shows that both groups adjust to health in a similar manner. It can be concluded that both groups have a positive attitude to their health and they look to health with satisfaction.

The data indicate a satisfied home adjustment among the group of adolescents. The adolescents seem to have well adjusted manner in social occasions. The both groups seem to emotionally stable considering the obtained data. The data indicates that the adolescents are well adjusted to the school environment.

While analysing the table it can be assumed that girls are likely to experience high mental health status and report elevated levels of adjustment in home, social, emotional and occupational aspects.

**Table 2 shows the correlation between mental health score and various aspects of adjustment**

|               |                     | Home adjustment | Health adjustment | Social adjustment | Emotional adjustment | Occupational adjustment |
|---------------|---------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Mental Health | Pearson Correlation | -.007           | .086              | .249*             | .255*                | .099                    |
|               | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .944            | .393              | .012              | .011                 | .328                    |
|               | N                   | 100             | 100               | 100               | 100                  | 100                     |

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 shows the relationship between mental health and adjustment. The data describes that the mental health of the group is positively correlated with emotional adjustment and home adjustment. The data indicates that when the group has high level of mental health there are chances of improved adjustment in social and emotional dimensions among the group. The data suggests that a relationship exists between mental health and social and emotional facets of adjustment.

As the mental health status of the group increases in it can assumed that the social and emotional adjustment of the group also increase. When the group can realize their potential and cope with their daily hazards, the group tends to be aggressive with their social contacts. So when the group's mental health reduces there are chances of group turn to be retiring and submissive with their social contacts.

While considering mental health and emotional adjustment it is seen that the relationship is significant. Hence it can be assumed that when the group enjoys their life in a positive way, with a good mental health, it contributes to the emotional stability of the individual.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Mental health is important as it influences the ways individuals look at themselves, their lives and others in their lives. Like physical health, mental health is important at every stage of life. From the study it is observed that girls tend to have high mental health than the boys. In the aspect of health adjustment it is seen that both the genders are satisfied with their health in a

similar manner. Apart from health adjustment, girls tend to adjust more than boys in the facets like home, social, emotional and occupational adjustment. It can be concluded that mental health has a foreseeable influence on social and emotional adjustment of the adolescence.

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