



An Exploratory Study to Assess the Factors Responsible for Stress among the Adolescents Studying at Select School of Rahata Tehsil, Ahmednagar District, M. S

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Abstract

Introduction: Previous research studies show high prevalence of stress among the adolescents. It is significant to explore the factors responsible for stress among the adolescents so that preventive and remedial strategies may be planned. Therefore, the present study was conducted with the objectives (1) to assess the level of stress among adolescents, (2) to explore the factors causing stress among adolescents, and (3) to find out association of stress with their selected demographical variables.

Materials and Methods: An exploratory study was conducted on 100 adolescents studying at select school of the Rahata Tehsil, M. S. Participants were recruited in the study by adapting purposive sampling technique. Data were collected using interview technique with the help of adolescent stress questionnaires which are a 56 items checklist with five point rating scale. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Results: Findings of the study revealed factors responsible for stress among the adolescents which included home life, school performance, school attendance, peer pressure, interaction with the teachers, future uncertainty, conflicts in the school, financial pressure, and emerging adult responsibility. About 67% and 33% adolescents were having moderate and low stress, respectively. There was a significant association of stress with occupation of mother, religion, and family income.

Conclusion: The present study reported moderate stress among 67% of the adolescents, which is alarming. This study highlights the need to orient parents and teachers to factors of stress and ways of modifying them.

Key words: Factors, stress, adolescents

INTRODUCTION

The first use of the word “adolescence” appeared in the 15th century and came from the Latin word “adolescere,”

which meant “to grow up or to grow into maturity”^[1] The term “teenage” is used synonymously with adolescence to describe the age from 13 to 19.^[2]

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India is home to over 250 million adolescents (between the ages of 10 and 19) who constitute 20% of the total population, making adolescent health crucial to achieving the country's sustainable development goals.^[3] It is a unique stage of human development and an important time for laying the foundations of good health.^[4]

G. Stanley Hall, the first president of the American psychological association, described adolescence as a time of “storm and stress.”^[5] Hans Selye (1936) defined stress as “the non-specific

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response of the body to any demand for change.” Stress is the expressive and physical strain caused by our response to pressure from the outside world. Common stress reactions include anxiety, bad temper, inability to concentrate, and a variety of physical symptoms that include headache and a fast heartbeat. It is almost impossible to live without some stress. The ability to identify when we are under stress and what is stressing us can greatly improve both our mental and physical well-being. According to Lazarus, stressful events can be appraised by an individual as “challenging” or “threatening.”^[6]

Today stress is a commonly used term. Stress is understood in relation to the stressors or with the feelings associated with it. Stress is both a physical as well as a mental condition that pushes a person to change, grow, fight, or adapt. Palsane *et al.* (1986) also notes that in contrast to the western psychology where stress is believed to be produced by environmental events, in Indian, psychology goals and expectations of the individuals bring to the potentially stressful situation. Persistent stress that is not resolved through coping or adaptation leading to anxiety, withdrawal behavior, and depression is considered as distress is not uncommon.^[7]

The prevalence of stress among Indian adolescents varies from 13% to 45% among different studies done after the year 2000.^[7] Stress can have a significant effect on an adolescent's long-term physical and mental well-being. Stress is experienced by both young people and adults as part of their everyday life. Stress is not bad at all it energizes and maintains goal directed behavior; however, excessive stress can lead to a wide range of mental and physical health.^[6]

Teen stress is often difficult to recognize and parents and educators need to know the impact of stress on the adolescents health to provide the necessary support and help them deal with the multiple issues.^[7] Therefore keeping in mind the high prevalence of stress among adolescents and its impact on their physical and mental health, it becomes imperative to identify the factors which produce stress among them. Hence, this study was undertaken to explore the causes of stress among adolescents with the objectives (1) to assess the level of stress among adolescents, (2) to explore the factors causing stress among adolescents, and (3) to find out association of stress with their selected demographical variables.

METHODOLOGY

Research approach

The present study aimed to explore the factors causing stress among the adolescents; hence, cross-sectional survey approach was adapted for this study.

Research design

Exploring causes of stress warrant exploratory research design; hence, same was adopted for the present study.

Setting of the study

The study was conducted in the Pravara Madhyamic Vidyalaya (highschool), situated in the Durgapur village of Rahata tehsil in Ahmednagar district.

Sample

In the present study, the samples were school going adolescents of Pravara Madhyamic Vidyalaya, Durgapur.

Sample size

Sample size was determined to be 100.

Sampling technique

One hundred adolescents were selected using purposive sampling technique provided that they satisfy the eligibility criteria of the study. Inclusion criteria were set up as adolescent who are (1) in the age group of 10–17 years, (2) both girls and or boys, (3) available at the time of data collection, and (4) willing to participate in the study. Adolescents who were suffering with any mental illness or stress related illness were excluded from the study.

Data collection instrument

Data collection instrument consisted of two sections:

Section A

It deals with sociodemographic data which consists of age, gender, occupation of parents, religion, and monthly family income.

Section B

It consists of adolescent stress questionnaires. It is a checklist containing 56 items. Each item is scored on five point rating scale, in which one represents strongly disagree to 5 represents strongly agree. The dimensions of the scale includes home life, school performance, school attendance, peer pressure, teacher interaction, future uncertainty, school conflict, financial pressure, and emerging adult responsibility.

Tool was validated by six experts from the nursing field. Their suggestions were incorporated in the tool.

Method of data collection

Selected participants were contacted at their school setting. Participants were made comfortable during data collection. Interview technique was used for data collection. Data were collected on one to one basis. Each participant was given 20–30 min to respond to the questionnaires.

RESULTS

Description of sociodemographic characteristics of the participants

Analysis of demographic data shows that each 50% participants belonged to the early adolescence (10–13 years) and late adolescence (14–17 years); 56% participants were female and 44% were male; 100% participants were students; 58% participant's fathers were farmers and 67% participants mothers were housewives by occupation; and 41% participants belonged to the Hindu religion.

Level of stress among the participants

Level of stress was classified as low, moderate, and high based on scores as shown in Table 1. The present study revealed

that 67% adolescents had moderate level of stress, while 33 % adolescents had low level of stress. None of them had high level of stress (Table 2).

Factors of stress

Table 3 depicts the factors causing stress among the adolescents. Factors causing stress among the adolescents were identified as home life, school performance, school attendance, peer pressure, teacher interaction, future uncertainty, and conflicts in the school. It is clear from the Table 3 that attending school is the most stressful area (40.82 ± 2.04) for the adolescents followed by home life (25.17 ± 5.80). Future uncertainty (5.65 ± 2.21) was the least stressful area for them. Second, least stressful area was emerging adult responsibility (6.62 ± 2.14).

Association of level of stress with selected demographical variables

Table 4 shows association of level of stress with selected demographic variables. It shows that there was a significant association of stress with occupation of mother, religion, and family income.

DISCUSSION

The present exploratory study was performed on 100 adolescents at select school of Rahata tehsil with the primary objectives to assess the level of stress and identify factors causing stress among them. The present study found that 67% adolescents had moderate level of stress, while 33 % adolescents had low level of stress. Low level of stress is normal finding as some kind of stress is essential for effective functioning. It is clear from the findings of the present study

that 2/3rd, that is, 67% adolescents experienced moderate level of stress. This shows that stress is ubiquitous in adolescents; however, this finding is alarming. Findings of the present study are in line with findings of other Indian studies. A study conducted on adolescents at urban and rural Moradabad revealed that 49.3% adolescents reported to have stress.^[8] In another Indian study among students, the overall prevalence of stress was found to be 52.7%.^[9]

Few studies from India report very high prevalence of stress among adolescents. A study conducted among school-going adolescents in Delhi reported stress in 87.6% of students.^[10] Research literature shows varied prevalence of stress among the adolescents. It could be due differences in study methodology, use of varied data collection instruments, different sampling techniques, and/or socio-cultural factors. However, all these mentioned studies assessed the prevalence of stress and did not categorize the stress based on its severity.

Adolescents in India are exposed to a wide range of stressors in their daily lives. The present study is one of few studies which sought to explore the causes of stress among adolescents. This study identified factors causing stress among the adolescents which included home life, school performance, school attendance, peer pressure, teacher interaction, future uncertainty, and conflicts in the school. It is clear from the findings of this study that attending school is the most stressful factor (40.82 ± 2.04) for the adolescents followed by home life (25.17 ± 5.80). Future uncertainty (5.65 ± 2.21) was the least stressful area for them. Second least stressful area was emerging adult responsibility (6.62 ± 2.14).

More or less similar findings were reported by few studies. Several studies have highlighted that children and adolescents in India are under high pressure to perform well in academics, which is a major determinant of a stress. In academics, stress is unavoidable among students, and it influences students' performance in all academic activities. A study conducted in selected schools of Puducherry to assess the common factors of stress among adolescents reported that 72.4% adolescents had

Table 1: Scoring procedure to assess level of stress

Level of stress	Scores
Low stress	51–102
Moderate stress	103–151
High stress	152–255

Table 2: Assessment of level of stress among the adolescents (n=100)

Level of stress	Scores	Frequency, n (%)
Low	51–102	33 (33)
Moderate	103–151	67 (67)
High	152–255	0

Table 3: Assessment of factors of stress

Factors causing stress	Mean \pm SD
Home life	25.17 \pm 5.80
School performance	13.69 \pm 4.26
School attendance	40.82 \pm 2.04
Peer pressure	11.63 \pm 3.67
Interaction with teachers	11.10 \pm 3.26
Future uncertainty	5.65 \pm 2.21
Conflicts in the school	8.47 \pm 3.29
Financial pressure	7.44 \pm 2.70
Emerging adult responsibility	6.62 \pm 2.14

SD: Standard deviation

Table 4: Association of level of stress with selected demographical variables

Demographic variable	χ^2	Remark
Age	5.64	Non-significant at 5% level of significance
Gender	0.67	Non-significant at 5% level of significance
Occupation	00	Non-significant at 5% level of significance
Occupation of father	1.87	Non-significant at 5% level of significance
Occupation of mother	156.19*	Significant at 5% level of significance
Religion	33.02*	Significant at 5% level of significance
Monthly family income	134*	Significant at 5% level of significance

*Significant

general stress, 68% had home-related stress, and 67.2% had school-related stress.^[11] Foothills at Red Oak Recovery cites common causes of stress among adolescents as school stress, social stressors, family, trauma, and life changes.^[12] Nagabharana *et al.* reported that adolescents generally perceived stress in their daily lives. Family conflicts and academic pressures were the main triggers for increased stress. Issues around peer relationships and social position were also important contributors.^[13] Arthur and Hiebert reported academic workload as the stressor among male and female students in South Alberta.^[14]

Most of the youngsters face multiple problems in their life. Most of the youngsters confront with issues such as parent's expectation, sibling's rivalry, status issues, and financial issues, in which some problems are actually genuine and some are self-created. Home and school are the centers of these problems. The additional burden of general expectations of parents, friend's, teachers, etc., stress the youngsters.^[15]

The present study also found significant association of stress with occupation of mother, religion, and family income. Significant association of stress with religion was reported by Sreevani *et al.*^[16]

Findings of the present study provide important evidence on the severity of stress as well as factors causing stress among the adolescents. Future studies may be undertaken on larger scale having multiple settings. The present study revealed that attending school is the most stressful factors among the adolescents. Therefore, studies evaluating the effectiveness of different stress management techniques especially on stress resulting from attending school may be conducted.

CONCLUSION

Research literature shows the varied prevalence of stress from 13% to 45% among the adolescents. The present study reported moderate stress among 67% of the adolescents, which is alarming. The factors leading to stress included home life, school performance, school attendance, peer pressure, teacher interaction, future uncertainty, and conflicts in the school. This study highlights the need to orient parents and teachers to factors of stress and ways of modifying them. School teachers may be trained in simple stress management techniques who can utilize their knowledge and skills in training adolescents regarding stress prevention strategies and stress management techniques on larger scales.

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