

## Mental health among adolescents

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of present study was to know the difference between male and female adolescents on Mental Health among adolescents. The random sampling method was used in this study. The total sample consisted of 200 subjects out of which 100 were male adolescents and 100 were girls adolescents were from Kendriya Vidyalaya, Kankarbagh, Patna. Mithila Mental Health Status Inventory by Kumar and Thakur (1984) was used to measure Mental Health. The data were analysed using to 't' test. The result showed that there is significant difference between male and female adolescents on Mental Health.

**Keywords:** *Mental Health, Adolescents*

Adolescence is said to be the stage in a person's life between childhood and adulthood. It is the period of human development during which an individual move from the dependency to independence, autonomy and maturity. Adolescence involves a process which extends over significant period of a person's life. Adolescence presents many challenges as physiological, biological, psychological and social changes are confronted. According to WHO the age range of 10-19 years referred to the period of adolescence. WHO defines adolescents as person between 10-19 years of age and many studies through the world have adopted this age range as the standard the present study unless otherwise stated specifically will conform to the WHO age range of 10-19 years when referring to adolescence. The size of the adolescence population in the world commands attention: they numbered nearly 1.1 billion in 1995 of which 913 million lived in developing countries.

Most countries in the region are currently experiencing an increasingly larger adolescent population, although the rate of that increase is decreasing. The biological and cognitive changes which have been described not only present challenges directly, but also have a significant impact on psychological functioning. Additionally, there are major psychological challenges for the young person with regard to a central feature of adolescence which involves the formation of a new identity. The adolescent is no longer a child; a new person is emerging. The adolescent developmental stage is therefore, characterized by emotional reactivity and a high intensity of emotional response. This makes it difficult for adolescents to control and modulate their behavioural responses, which at times may be inappropriately extreme.

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## Mental Health among Adolescents

The adolescents are faced with striving to integrate previous roles of being young and carefree to having to deal with the emotional demands of loss with no support from parents. Mental health is an essential component of young people's overall health and wellbeing. It affects how young people think, feel, and act; their ability to learn and engage on relationships; their self-esteem and ability to evaluate situations, options and make choices. Mental health is considered as a component of general health. According to Taylor and Brown (1988) identified the following criteria of mental health from the clinical literature: contentment, positive attitudes toward the self, the ability to care for and about others, openness to new ideas and people, creativity, the ability to perform creative and productive work, the ability to grow, develop and self-actualize, especially in response to stressful events. The world Health Organization has recently defined mental health as "A state of wellbeing in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make contribution to his or her community" (WHO, 1999).

Adolescence is a developmental phase during which several of the mental health disorders of adulthood appear. The monitoring studies conducted during this phase offer a good opportunity to gain a thorough understanding of the development of various mental disorders. The study of mental health and disorders in adolescents has been a part of the department's operations since the early 1990 and is still one of our focus areas.

A person's mental health influences the ability to handle stress, relate to other people, and make decisions. A conceptual model of mental health drafted by the project is presented. Mental health is considered as a component of general health. Mental ill-health encompasses a continuum extending from the most severe mental disorders to a range of symptoms of different intensity and duration that result in a variety of consequences. The topic of mental health is, however, very complex as most mental disorders are multi factorial in their etiology, multitude of risk factors may influence the onset course and restitution of one disorder and a risk factor may be common for many forms of ill-health, both somatic and mental illness.

### ***Mental Health***

The problem of defining mental health as a specific component of human health is complicated by the fact that into this component not only the objective-behaviour but also the subjective aspect of life's manifestations should be included: Psychological processes of thought, feelings and emotions, needs and demands, and other manifestations of experiencing the life and forming the inner world of an individual. Sartorius (1983) points to three levels of mental health from a more general point of view: 1. The absence of any clearly defined mental disorder, 2. A certain reserve of strength and resistance which would help a man to overcome unexpected burden and extraordinary demands, 3. An equilibrium between man and his environment or other individuals, the coexistence between characteristics and the manifestations of life in an individual, others, and the environment. Taylor and Brown (1988) identified the following criteria of mental health from the clinical literature: contentment, positive attitudes toward the self, the ability to care for and about others, openness to new ideas and people, creativity, the ability to perform creative and productive work, the ability to grow, develop and self-actualize, especially in response to stressful events.

Mental health is an essential element of general health, as there is no health without mental health. The concept of mental health has two dimensions, the positive and the negative. Positive mental health is a value in itself. Individual with positive mental health usually

## Mental Health among Adolescents

demonstrate positive affect and positive personality traits, which are considered as resource. They have high levels of self-esteem, sense of mastery, sense of coherence (life experienced as meaningful and manageable) and self-efficacy. It can be conceptualized as a person's ability to cope with adversity, and avoid breakdown or diverse health problems when confronted with adverse experiences.

Negative mental health is concerned with mental disorders, symptoms and problems. In the current diagnostic classifications mental disorders are defined by the existence of specific clusters of symptoms. Symptoms of mental disorders and mental health problems also exist without the criteria for clinical disorders being fulfilled.

### *The major objective of the present study was as under*

To examine the extent of overall Mental Health dimension wise among male and female adolescents.

### *On the basis of review of literature following hypothesis was formulated*

1. There will be significant difference between male and female adolescents in the level of their overall mental health.
2. There will be significant difference between male and female adolescents on egocentrism dimension of mental health.
3. There will be significant difference between male and female adolescents on alienation dimension of mental health.
4. There will be significant difference between male and female adolescents on expression dimension of mental health.
5. There will be significant difference between male and female adolescents on emotional instability dimension of mental health.
6. There will be significant difference between male and female adolescents on social non conformity dimension of mental health.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### *Sample*

Total two hundred (200) adolescents of 14-18 years age were randomly taken from Kendriya Vidyalaya, Kankarbagh, Patna. Out of 200 sample one hundred (100) boys and one hundred (100) were girls studying in class IX, X, XI and XII. For the selection of sample every fifty student enrolled in the attendance register of various sections of different classes were taken to ensure the random selection of the participants. Total strength of students (IX to XII) in the school was more than two thousand. In the selection of the sample attempts were made to make the sample homogenous in terms of the socioeconomic status and other demographic considerations. The entire samples were selected from the Kankarbagh Branch of the Kendriya Vidyalaya, Patna.

### *Tools*

**Mental Health:** For assessing the level of mental health among the subjects 50 items Mithila Mental Health Status Inventory by Kumar and Thakur (1984) was used. Original test in English (Thakur, 1984) had five scales viz, Egocentrism, Alienation, Expression, Emotional Instability and Social Non-conformity. These five scales were considered cardinal one for estimating mental health status of people. Alienation, egocentrism, and social non-conformity scales were included to assess psychiatric and social problems; expression and emotional instability were put to ascertain personality disturbances. Selection of the scale was made after a careful review of the relevant literature on the subject and discussions with experts of

## Mental Health among Adolescents

clinical psychology. Items of the selected scale were made more meaningful specially in the Indian context. These five scales, therefore, covered important areas of mental health status of people.

### Statistical Analysis

The data were analyzed with the help of statistical package for Social Sciences using various statistical techniques like mean, S.D., t-test.

## RESULTS

Overall and dimension wise comparison of Male and Female Adolescents on Mental Health Scores and 't' Value between the Mean scores of the two groups.

	Male(N=100)		Female(N=100)		't'Value
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Egocentrism	22.55	4.79	23.50	4.81	1.09
Alienation	22.80	4.19	21.78	3.36	1.77
Expression	31.08	4.13	32.91	4.01	2.85**
Emotional Instability	25.52	5.11	24.45	4.01	1.59
Social non-conformity	25.22	4.16	25.31	4.67	0.13
Total	127.20	11.01	124.50	9.3	2.74**

\*\*Significant at .01 level

In general, mental health status among the adolescents was found a little poor as the mean score of the mental health for the total sample was found to be 127.80 against the maximum score of 150. However, it is important to mention to that higher score on mental health indicates poor health. According to table the mean score of 127.80 can be considered as high score itself indicating poor mental health given in the said table clearly revealed that the adolescents were most poor on the expression dimension followed by social non conformity, emotional instability, alienation and egocentrism dimension of mental health.

As far as the difference between males and females on mental health status was concerned the mean and standard deviation scores on overall mental health as well as for its various dimensions were computed separately for males and females and the result were given in table. From the said table it appeared that males were better than females on overall mental health as the mean scores for the two groups were 127.20 and 129.95 respectively. The difference between male and female were also tested by computing 't' test. The difference between the two groups was so large that it was also found statistically significant as the 't' value was found 2.74.

## CONCLUSION

It can be confidently said that gender difference exists in the level of mental health of adolescents. Despite of contradictory evidences the finding of the present study clearly indicated that females found better than males with regard to the mental health. However, previous studies indicating superiority of males over females on the level of mental health. Thus, the hypotheses are presuming significant difference between males and females on mental health was found to be confirmed.

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## Mental Health among Adolescents

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### ***Conflict of Interest***

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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