

DEPRESSION AS A PREDICTOR OF SUICIDE AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

Jerónimo D' Silva

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to find out depression as a predictor of suicide among college students. The sample consisted of 463 participants including male and female participants in the age group of 17-21 years. There were 250 males and 213 females pursuing their studies in various colleges. Tools used were Hamilton's Depression Rating Scale designed by Hamilton, (1960) and Suicide Behaviours Questionnaire-Revised (SBQ-R) by Osman, et al., (2001). A significant positive correlation ($r=.101, p<0.05$) was obtained between depression and suicide.

Depression is a huge public health issue that affects people from all walks of life and is a common mental health issue among adolescents. Feeling of sadness, emptiness, hopelessness, anger and frustration are some of the symptoms of depression. According to Kroning and Kroning (2016), major life stressors and psychological factors also precipitate depression among adolescents. Suicide is a serious threat among the age group of 15-29 years (WHO, 2020), therefore, it was extremely important to identify potentially modifiable risk factors such as behavioural, psychological and social factors which had been productive in reducing the rate of suicide in teenagers (Geng et al., 2020).

Extensive research indicated that females showed higher depressive symptoms while males had higher suicidal risks (Manjula et al., 2018). College students who had mild and moderate depressive symptoms experienced suicidal ideation (Cukrowicz et al., 2011). Depression and suicidal ideation were positively related (Zhang et al., 2017).

Psychological factors such as depression, anxiety, stressful events, familial problems, peer conflicts and personality traits like neuroticism and impulsivity increased the risk of suicidality (Carballo et al., 2020). A sharp increase in depression, self-harm, suicidal ideations, suicide attempts and suicide had been observed in young girls and young women compared to their counterparts (Twenge, 2020). The prevalence rate of passive suicidal ideation, serious suicidal ideation and suicide was also higher for females than males (Orri et al., 2020). Nyundo et al., (2019) reported that females had more depressive symptoms, suicidal ideations and behaviours than males. It can be concluded that depression and suicide are interlinked and women are more prone to depression and suicide.

METHODS

AIM

The purpose of the study was to understand the role of depression as a predictor of suicide among college students.

SAMPLE

The sample consisted of 463 participants including males and females in the age group of 17-21 years which consisted of 250 males and 213 females. The participants were pursuing their studies in various colleges.

TESTS

HAMILTON'S DEPRESSION RATING SCALE

This scale is designed by Hamilton (1960) to measure 17 depressive symptoms. Each item is ranged from 0-4, the score range of 0-7 is considered normal, higher scores point to higher depressive symptoms.

SUICIDE BEHAVIOURS QUESTIONNAIRE-REVISED

This scale is authored by Osman et al., (2001). The SBQ-R has 4 items, each tapping a different dimension of suicidality: The score should range from 3-18; a higher score indicates the higher tendencies to commit suicide.

PROCEDURE

Due to the pandemic, data was collected by using Google Form where the participants were sent the Google link individually, all the instructions were given at the beginning which included asking for their consent and clearly telling them that the data will be used purely for academic purpose and assurance was given that complete

¹ Department of Psychology, Rosary College, Navelim, Goa

confidentiality would be maintained. Data were scored and computed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics like mean and standard deviation as well as correlation was computed to interpret the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A correlation value ($r=.101$, $p<0.05$) which was significant at 0.05 level of significance. A significant positive correlation was found between suicide and depression ($r=.101$), indicating that as depression increases, suicide also increases. The rise in depression was caused due to dropping out of school or not completing college study which compelled adolescents to experience depression leading to attempt or complete suicide (Smith et al., 2020; Soor et al., 2012; Soto-sanz et al., 2019). The present study was supported by the previous study which highlighted a strong relationship between the severity of depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation in college students (Thompson, 2010). Kalin (2021) found that depression and suicidal ideation were positively related which confirmed the present study.

CONCLUSION

Adolescents are the most vulnerable section of our society. Parents and teachers should play a greater role in helping them to prevent depression by offering necessary assistance. Teachers must play an active role through a mentoring program especially in identifying any signs or symptoms of depression. Students must be trained to help their college-mate to speak out about their problems and help them to assistance from counsellors.

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