

# Study of Depression, Anxiety and Stress Among School Going Adolescents

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Adolescents; the bright hope of the future are characterized by many physical, emotional and developmental changes. However, during this stage, some of adolescents, experience anxious feeling, overwhelming sense of fear, depression and academic stress. Adolescents can experience various life stresses ranging from catastrophic or traumatic life events, persistent strain and daily hassles. Thus Present study was carried out to check the depression, anxiety and stress in this population. **Material and Method:** It is a cross sectional study, in which 200 adolescents were taken; equally boy and girls using purposive sampling. Assessment was done using Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale-DASS (Hindi Version). The statistical analysis was carried out using the SPSS Windows 16.0 software package. The analysis of the obtained data was done using various descriptive and inferential statistics. **Results:** The scores of students in all three domains of Depression, anxiety, and Stress scale were found to be remarkably correlated. It was seen that depression was significantly more among the female students than the male students. **Conclusion:** Overall findings suggest that these adolescents are at high risk of developing depression and anxiety disorder. Adolescents with stress need to be identified early and interventions to reduce academic stress needs to be provided which are likely to affect the occurrence and severity of depression and anxiety.


**Key words:** Adolescents, depression, anxiety, stress

## INTRODUCTION

Adolescents are the energy of today and the bright hope of the future. The stage of adolescence is characterized by significant physical, emotional and intellectual changes, and changes in social roles, relationships and expectations.<sup>[1]</sup> During this stage some of adolescents, experience anxious feeling and overwhelming sense of fear. Anxiety disorders in adolescents have significant impairment in social and academic functioning; produces a substantial distress for both students and family.<sup>[2]</sup> If not treated, these disorders tend to persist, and increase the risk for medical illnesses, impaired well-being, and various psychiatric disorders particularly depression and substance abuse.<sup>[3]</sup> Anxiety

in adolescents seems an important issue that draw researchers' attention since it is related to numerous problems. Previous studies revealed that anxiety is associated with substantial negative effects on children's social, emotional and academic functioning<sup>[4]</sup> poor social and coping skills,<sup>[5]</sup> loneliness, low self-esteem<sup>[6]</sup> school avoidance, decreased problem-solving abilities, and poor academic achievement also found as negative consequences<sup>[7]</sup> Earlier research reported that adolescents are at highest risk for onset of social anxiety disorder or social phobia.<sup>[8]</sup> In a review of the main studies carried out in the general population it was concluded that there had been a one standard deviation increase in rates of anxiety, in children, adolescents, and young adults.<sup>[9]</sup> Depression has serious impact on every person, adolescents have not any exemption. This can lower the quality of life and wellbeing, increases the risks of suicide and can worsen mental or physical health.

It is well proven by research that depression in adolescent is highly associated with increased risk of suicidal behavior, homicidal ideation, tobacco use and other substance abuse into adulthood.<sup>[10-11]</sup> The majority of suicides in India are by those below the age of 30 years and also that around 90% of those who die by suicide

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have a mental disorder.<sup>[12]</sup> About 8% of children and adolescents suffer from depression and 11% of adolescents have a depressive disorder by the age of 18 years according to the National Co-morbidity Survey-Adolescent Supplement.<sup>[13]</sup> Research on Psychiatric disorder among school samples of adolescents was found in about 29% of girls and 23% of boys with depression being the most common disorder.<sup>[14]</sup> In addition to anxiety and depression adolescents are more prone to stress. Stress may take many forms like academic stress, peer pressure, relationships, negative emotions and low economic status of family etc. Achievement anxiety is one of the most common causes of stress in students.<sup>[15]</sup> There is an increasing concern regarding stress and its relationships with mental health problems among school going adolescents in India. Thus present study was carried out with an objective to study the relationship of depression, anxiety and stress (DAS) among school going adolescents and the study also aims to investigate the differences in male and female adolescents.

**METHOD**

*Sample:* The sample consisted of two hundred students from four schools in Palwal District of Haryana. Purposive sampling method was used. The individuals whose age range was 14 to 18 were selected and informed consent was taken out from all the subjects.

*Tools used*

*Socio-Demographic Performa:* A specially designed Performa was used for collecting information about socio-demographic details of the study sample. It has information such as-age, gender, residence, education etc.

*Depression Anxiety and Stress Scale:* The self-administered Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS-42) questionnaire Hindi version was used.<sup>[16]</sup> The DASS is a set of three self-report scales designed to measure the negative emotional states of depression, anxiety and stress. It has been mentioned that as the essential development of the DASS was carried out with non-clinical samples, it is suitable for screening normal adolescents and adults.

*Procedure:* The sample for the present study was taken from Two Hundred (200) students out of which one hundred were male and one hundred were female

students. The sample was taken on the basis of purposive sampling. After establishing rapport, informed consent was taken. The personal data sheet was filled then Depression, Anxiety and Stress scale was administered.

*Data Analysis:* Data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (version 16.0) statistical program. Student's t-test was used to check the difference between male and female students. To find out the relationship between two variables, Pearson's product moment correlation was calculated.

**RESULT**

Table 1

Showing socio-demographic details of the participants

Variable		Male (N=100) (Mean ± SD)%	Female (N=100) (Mean ± SD)%
Age		16.94±0.73	15.04±0.92
Residence	Rural	100 (100%)	100(100%)
Religion	Hindu	100 (100%)	100(100%)
Education	10 <sup>th</sup>	24 (24%)	26(26%)
	11 <sup>th</sup>	34(34%)	38(38%)
	12 <sup>th</sup>	42(42%)	36(36%)

Table 1 is showing sociodemographic details of subjects participated in study. The mean age 16.94 and SD 0.73 of male group while the mean age and SD for female group was 15.04±0.92. All participants were Hindu, belongs to rural area and studying in 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> class. From Table 2 it was seen that female students scored higher than male students in all variables. Differences on all three variables were found to be significant at (0.05) level of significance. Table 3 showing correlations among

Table 2

Showing differences between male and female adolescents

Variables	Male (N=100) (Mean ± SD)	Female (N=100) (Mean ± SD)	t	p
Depression	11.80±3.23	13.62±2.55	3.618	.034*
Anxiety	8.18±5.52	9.74±4.56	2.309	.043*
Stress	13.42±4.19	15.67±5.19	_2.569	.031*

\*Significant <0.05

Table 3

Showing correlations among male and female adolescents.

Variables	Depression	Anxiety	Stress
Depression	1	0.537*	0.617*
Anxiety		1	0.498*
Stress			1

Correlation is significant at the <0.01 level

depression, anxiety and stress. Significant positive correlations were found between all three variables.

### DISCUSSION

On all subscale i.e. depression, anxiety and stress of DASS-42 female adolescents students showed higher depression, anxiety and stress. The findings are supported by previous Indian study in which they also reported that depression, Anxiety and Stress were all significantly higher among the 'board classes' i.e., 10th and 12th as compared to the classes 9th and 11th. In present study most of students are taken from board classes. Pressure to perform well academically is a strong predisposing factor for DAS among the students.<sup>[11,17]</sup> Anxiety can be extremely impactful for adolescents, given the importance of wellbeing during times of transition.<sup>[18]</sup>

When anxiety symptoms are unnoticed or misinterpreted as behavioral or academic concerns, children's social, academic, and emotional wellbeing can be negatively affected.<sup>[19]</sup> The finding that depression was more among the female students compared to males is in line with the past research.<sup>[20]</sup> Recently using BDI a study showed that female students scored higher than male students on depression but it was not significant.<sup>[21]</sup>

On stress scale females adolescents showed greater stress than male adolescents which is in line with other previous Indian studies.<sup>[15,22]</sup> High scores on DASS-42 may be due to pressure that society measures the performances of students in 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> classes. A latest study reported that school going adolescents are exposed to stress; particularly females are at higher risk. The academic pressure is one of the major precursors for the stress.<sup>[23]</sup> The scores in the three domains (DAS) were found to be significantly correlated. Findings of present studies are consistent with earlier research.<sup>[11,24]</sup>

Understanding the prevalence of DAS in this vulnerable population and the possible factors associated with higher levels depression, anxiety and stress would help in the designing and implementing a suitable treatment plan.

### CONCLUSION

Most of students were having depression anxiety and stress. Active steps at the school level and community level needed to tackle these problems. Further studies are needed to explore attitude of students, parents and teachers towards mental health problems on large scale.

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