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Depression: As A Mental Health Disorder of the Adolescents in the Present Era

Tarangini Das

Guest Faculty, Cotton College State University, Dept. of Education, Assam, India

Abstract

Adolescence is a time of both disorientation and discovery. It describes the teenage years between 13-19 years of age. Adolescence is the most sensitive and colourful period of development of man's life. Dealing with adolescents is always having been a challenge for both parents and clinicians.

An adolescent progresses through stages of biological development as well as psychological and social development. It is in this period that a person becomes both physically and psychologically mature and capable of independent living. But, in this stage of adolescence a boy or a girl may go through various problems; may be because of their household atmosphere, day-to-day happenings or their personal experiences of life. Such a problem that an adolescent go through is Depression. Depression is a low mood and aversion to activity that can affect a person's thought, behaviour and feeling. This paper is an attempt to study the causes and consequences of depression during the adolescence period of life. Everyone go through ups and downs in their mood. Sadness is a normal reaction to life's struggle. A depressed adolescent can overcome his situation with counseling.

Key words: Depression, adolescence, feeling, counseling.

1.1 Introduction: Psychiatric disorders have proved to be a major problem in the present decade. Kasper, et al. (2008) have said that mental disorders like depression, anxiety disorders and adjustment disorders affect approximately 10% of the total population in general. For the convenience of study human life span has been divided into several stages. Like, infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood and old age. The adolescence period of life starts from the age of 12/13 years and lasts till 19/20 years of age. The period of adolescence has been drawing the attention of the psychologists, clinicians and educational thinkers for several points of considerations. This stage of life affects all sections of people in the society somehow or other. Stanley Hall, an American psychologist and educator in his book "Adolescence" has described it as the 'period of storm and stress' of life. French

Naturalist philosopher Rousseau, on the other hand described it as the most formative and transitional period of man's life.

This period of life can be said as the most crucial, critical and at the time most colourful period. Colourful changes taking place in all directions naturally make the boys and the girls quite sensitive and restless. Their physical need, mental, emotional and social changes naturally give rise to psychological needs and problems. They feel strong urge to fulfill their needs in their respective environment. If the environment fails to satisfy their needs, in that case it may give rise to excitement, tension and emotional up charges in them. Emotions, both pleasant and unpleasant run very high but without sufficient power to control them. They experience the pleasant emotion of joy, elation, love and affection in their most powerful and passionate form. Similarly, the unpleasant emotions like fear, anger, jealousy, sadness, frustration, depression, anxiety etc are experienced in their most violent form. If the parents, teachers and elder members of the society do not have sympathetic attitude, better understanding and appreciation of them, in that case they are likely to affect all the section in the society.

1.2 Need of Studying Adolescent Behaviour: The progress of the country depends on the maximum exploitation of its human resources. In this context it is of great significance to note that major part of a country's population ranges between the ages 12 to 18 years of age. The country's success therefore in various fields of life depends to a large extent on the proper education, guidance and training of adolescents.

Every teacher and parents must know about the nature and changes that emerge in this transitional period from childhood to adulthood. By understanding the needs and the problems and the behaviour of the adolescents, the parents and the teachers can make efforts to provide a suitable environment for growth and development of the adolescents. Appropriate curriculum, school policies and methodologies of teaching should be suitably designed so that to meet the requirements of the adolescents. The adolescents face many problems during their life span. To make them properly adjusted with the environment by preventing them from having unwanted adolescents behaviour such as drug addiction, delinquency, truancy etc there is the need of studying adolescence behaviour by the parents, teachers and at a large by the society.

2.1 The Problem of Depression: We all go through ups and downs in our mood. Sadness is a normal reaction to life's struggle and setbacks. Many people use the term 'depression' to explain these kinds of feelings, but depression is much more than just sadness. It is a common but serious mood disorder. Depression occurs mainly due to stress. Stress can be viewed as an event or situation occurring in a person's life which compels him to make significant changes in his life situation to adapt to the changing and difficult situation. Depression signifies a low state of mood and aversion to activity. It causes several symptoms that affect how you feel, think and handle daily activities, such as sleeping, eating, working etc. A depressed person may loss interest in activities that were once pleasurable; experience loss of appetite; difficulties in making decisions etc.

In 18th century the scientists claimed that there are two distinct types of clinical representation of depression. One, which has an apparent external cause and another which has no external factor causing depression. Depression can happen at any stage of life. It is now a days very common among the adolescents due to too much of emotionality and rapid changes in the life styles of the people. People are becoming more materialistic day by day. In the roller costar of life, the young boys and girls often find themselves in the midway of no way. They often become confuse what to choose and what to not. Such circumstances give rise to anxiety and depression.

The current definition of depression also clinically known as Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) emphasizes suicidal thoughts and suicidal attempts as the chief characteristics of syndrome of depression. Patients with depression who is constantly contemplating to end his life or has attempted suicide need hospitalization as an urgent measure. The life time risk of suicide in mood disorders is 10%-15% (Barklage 1991, Guze and Robbins 1970, Mueller and Leon 1996).

Some of the common causes that lead to depression among the adolescents are given below-

2.2 Causes of Depression of Adolescents: The causes of depression are believed to be a combination of genetic, environmental and psychological factors. Risk factors include a family history of a condition, major life changes and certain medications etc. the 40% appears to be related to genetic. Some of the major issues may be responsible for depression is as follows:

- **Heredity-** some are hereditarily predisposed to suffer from depression. If someone with blood relation has issues with depression there are more chances of causing the same situation.
- **Hormones-** changes in the body's hormonal balance may also be causing depression.
- **Traumatic events-** traumatic events such as physical or mental abuse, death of a loved one, divorce or separation of parents may have a real impact on anyone.
- **Low self-esteem-** adolescence is a very sensitive period. Changes in physical and mental conditions automatically affect the self-confidence.

2.3 Common Situations Causing Depression:

- The adolescents become self-dependent at this time and they don't like the elders to interfere. Such a situation definitely causes conflict with the parents and this may also be a cause of depression.
- The death of someone close of the adolescents can also cause depression.
- At this stage of life the young boys and girls feel attracted to the opposite sex for the first time and they get into love relationships. Conflict in these relations can cause depression.

- Physical and emotional stress in educational institutions or somewhere outside may also lead the adolescent to depression.
- The negligence of the parents also affects the mental and emotional health of the adolescents.

Due to the imaginative nature of the adolescents sometimes it becomes difficult to understand whether the boy or the girl is actually in depression or not. As mood swings are very common among them. But if someone is experiencing the signs and symptoms every day for more than two weeks, he might be suffering from depression and needs to consult the doctor.

2.4 Signs and Symptoms of Depression:

The signs and symptoms of depression can be classified into two categories:

1. Psychological symptom
2. Somatic symptom

Psychological symptoms are:

- Feel sad or to cry a lot and it doesn't go away
- Feeling of hopelessness
- Feeling of guilt and worthlessness
- Loss of confidence
- Thoughts of suicide
- Loss of interest in hobbies and activities that were pleasurable once
- Difficulty in remembering

Somatic symptoms:

- Loss of appetite
- Difficulty in concentrating
- Loss of sleep or oversleeping
- Fatigue
- Headaches, cramps or digestive problem without a clear physical cause
- Feeling restless and tired most of the time
- Constipation

3.1 Treatment and Therapies: Depression can be treated even at the most severe cases. Earlier the treatment begins the more effective it is. Depression is usually treated with medications and psychotherapy. Medicines can be prescribed only by the doctors. If these treatments do not reduce the symptoms brain stimulation therapies like electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) is applied.

Psychotherapy— it is generally the first recommended therapy for the treatment of depression. Psychotherapy is not a specific kind of therapy but involves a variety of techniques. During this therapy the person with depression talks to a licensed and trained

mental health care professional who helps the patient to diagnose and work through the causes of depression. Psychotherapy helps to understand the behaviour, emotions and ideas that contribute to his depression. It restructures ways of thinking and the ways in which faulty thinking may perpetuate depression.

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) - It is mainly to deal with depression, anxiety, phobias etc. It is a directive, time-limited and structured approach. This theory believes in the fact that an individual's affect and behaviour largely determined by the way in which he structures the world. It includes a number of other therapies all of which focuses on how thinking affects the way a person feels and acts. The idea of cognitive behavioral therapy is that you can change your way of thinking about a situation and also change the way you feel and act.

Interpersonal therapy for depression - it focuses on the behavior interaction, a depressed person has with his family, friends, co-workers and every other people they interact daily. The main goal of this therapy is to improve the communication skills and increase self-esteem in a short period of time. The therapy takes duration of three to four months. This therapy is very effective for depression caused by loss and grief, relationship conflict, major life events, social isolation etc.

3.2 Types of Therapy of Depression: To qualify as depression, one of the two core symptoms must be present for at least two weeks along with at least four other depressive symptoms which includes fatigue, poor appetite, weight loss, sleep disturbances and impairment of memory and concentration. Therapy can be given in a variety of formats. Such as,

Individual - this therapy involves only the patient and the therapist.

Group- here two or more patients may participate at the same time. Patients are able to share experiences.

Couples- this type of therapy helps the spouses and partners to understand why their partner is depressed and what changes in communication and behaviour can help.

Family- this is important for the family to understand what their loved one is going through and what effort they can make to help them out of the situation.

4.0 Prevention is Possible through Formation of Good Habits: Having depression does not mean that a person is weak, or a failure, or is not really trying. It only means they need treatment. If someone thinks that he is depressed, he should talk to someone. Most people with depression can be helped with counseling, provided by a professional psychologist. Committing suicide is not a solution.

Today people live in a materialistic world. A little bit change in the life style of the people has become very necessary. Life style changes are not always easy to make, but that can have a big impact on depression. Such like:

- Cultivating supportive relationship

- Getting regular exercise and sleep
- Practice relaxation techniques

Some tasks that an adolescent can do are:

- Spend some time with nature
- List what you like about yourself
- Read a good book
- Listen to music
- Do something spontaneous
- Remain hopeful during challenging and difficult time
- Solve problems in positive and creative ways

It is very necessary to sleep 6-8 hours a day. To follow a regular bedtime routine is of most important. Again, physical exercise stimulates the 'feel good' chemicals in the brain to feel positive and energetic. Here, 'yoga' is a big way of relaxation and early morning is the best time for it. Taking out time for physical exercise makes us stable as well as positive towards life. Healthy food and a balanced diet provides the body with necessary minerals and vitamins needed for our proper body functioning. A sound mind can only be expected in a sound body.

The present era of technology has widened the gap with the nature. In this era of globalization, people are focused on fulfilling their dreams and rather than taking out time for extra beneficial activities. In spite of busy schedule taking out time to spend with nature is very important. Even at the darkest of the days people should always try to be positive. It is also important to ingrain the habit of reading books, listen to favourite songs etc. in order to develop self-love.

5.0 Conclusion: Depression is a serious illness responsible for many suicides and a lifelong recurrent problem in many cases. Although sometimes depression is believed to be hereditary, environmental conditions too influencing it to occur. Family is named as the most important primary agency for the all-round development of the child. The home atmosphere and family relationships exercise much influence upon the young boys and girls. Parents should understand that adolescence is the age when the child is learning and discovering himself. The support of their parents is very important for the effective personality development of the child. All the pressure the parents create also adds on to the other pressure caused by the child's day today life.

As it is to be said that prevention is better than cure, the adolescent boys and girls should be given an environment of love, affection, care and a sense of freedom so that he or she can take independent bold decision. Today's adolescent is tomorrow's 'people of the country'. Showing them the right way of life is everyone's responsibility. Study of 'adolescent psychology' will greatly help the county in the effective utilization of human resources.

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