Social Anxiety among Adolescents and its Relation to Quality of Life

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Introduction

• Social phobia can have a catastrophic impact on adolescents as they face many of the aforementioned situations in everyday life, particular since, as Crozier, Gillihan, and Powers (2011) found, the same symptoms that occur in specific phobias also occur in social phobias. The present study aims to determine the risk factors for social phobia in adolescents of Saudi Arabia.
Methodology

• The original instruments were in English. The researcher adapted these questions for the present study, and then translated them into Arabic using professional bilingual translators.

• Community sample: n=564, ages 12-19, from elementary and high schools.

• Using the schools listed by the Department of Education in Dammam, Saudi Arabia 2012, 22 schools were randomly selected.
Results

• Using 34 as the cut-off score for social phobia suggested by (Mattick & Clarke, 1998), 34.3% (N = 145) of the students are considered suffering from social phobia.

• Adolescents without social anxiety scored on quality of life and its subscales more than adolescents with social anxiety.
Quality of life scores as measured by the WHQOL-BREF and its subscales in school students with and without social anxiety (SAS-A)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Adolescents with social anxiety N= 152</th>
<th>Adolescents without social anxiety N= 411</th>
<th>t value</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHOQOL total score</td>
<td>Mean 88.45 Std. Deviation 14.94</td>
<td>Mean 92.33 Std. Deviation 13.32</td>
<td>2.970</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical health</td>
<td>22.82 Std. Deviation 4.25</td>
<td>22.69 Std. Deviation 3.68</td>
<td>-.378</td>
<td>.706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological health</td>
<td>19.94 Std. Deviation 4.24</td>
<td>21.62 Std. Deviation 3.76</td>
<td>4.524</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social relationships</td>
<td>10.46 Std. Deviation 2.75</td>
<td>10.98 Std. Deviation 2.50</td>
<td>2.119</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>27.30 Std. Deviation 6.08</td>
<td>28.75 Std. Deviation 5.67</td>
<td>2.625</td>
<td>.009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Implications for policy/Practice

• In terms of providing prevention services that target high-risk populations, this study identified that adolescents exposed to psychological disorders are at particular risk of developing social anxiety and other related mental health disorders.
Implications for policy/Practice

• Investigating a mental health condition like social anxiety requires multi-stage recruitment, accumulation of data, development of expertise, and establishment of links with schools and specialist mental health services. Research into this disorder should ideally be conducted in academic institutions with well-established, on-going programmes of research dedicated to this field.
Conclusion

• Saudi Arabia is a newly established country that is currently going through a period of rapid development. Thus, research is still relatively limited, and there is a lack of culturally appropriate instruments for research purposes. It is highly recommended that researchers distinguish carefully between developing a new instrument and using existing instruments, depending on their established psychometric properties.
Conclusion

- This study is the first to initiate investigation of the relationship between social anxiety and the quality of life of Saudi adolescents. It concentrated on adolescents in Arab countries who suffer from social anxiety, with a view to exploring how the collectivist culture influences the nature of social anxiety in these adolescents. This research paves the way for research on which particular psychological symptoms have the greatest effect on the quality of life.
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