

Stress among teenage girls

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ABSTRACT

The present paper is an attempt to see the factors and causes of the stress faced by the adolescent girls in Srinagar. Adolescents are the preserver and care taker of the future pursuit and consequently devise the destiny of a nation. It is a moment of brisk expansion of budding to sexual maturity, discovering one's real-self, defining personal values and also finding one's vocational and social directions. While stress is an escalating aspect of deteriorating health now-a-days, there is need to comprehend more about stress and its causes.

INTRODUCTION

The word stress is derived from a Latin word "stringi" which means, "to be drawn tight" (Sawnders, 2007). In medical terms stress is described as, a physical or psychological stimulus that can produce mental tension or physiological reactions that may lead to illness" (Lazarus, 1996). When we are under stress, our adrenal gland releases corticosteroids, which are converted to cortisol in the blood stream. Cortisols have an immune suppressive effect in our body. Stress is a feeling experienced when a person thinks that "the demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilize". Our body tries to adjust to different circumstances or continually changing environment around us in this process, the body is put to extra work resulting in "wear and tear" (Sawnders, 2007). In other words, our body is stressed. Stress disturbs the body's normal way of functioning. Stress is a universal human experience. Unpleasant experiences can bring on stress; getting fired, having an illness in the family, and failing an important exam are all potentially stressful events.

The term stress is used to connote a variety of meaning, both by the common man and psychologist. Psychologists of different persuasions have given stimulus oriented and response-oriented definitions of term and depth psychologists

have treated the concept from the etiological and psychodynamic view points. It appears that under these circumstances the essential features of the stress experience have not received the attention they deserve (Ashwani, 1986).

Teen stress is a pivotal health issue because of its ability to disrupt an adolescent's capacity to handle the demands of daily life, yet it is often overlooked and is poorly understood. Stress emerges for young people as they enter adolescence, a transition that brings rapid socio-emotional changes (Seiffge-Krenke, 2000). Adolescent perception of stress is a relative lack of sport skills in this age group and a plethora of performance errors; children have not learned adaptive coping skills that exacerbate the effects of an already inherently stressful environment (Seiffge-Krenke, 2000). This environment can lead to unhealthy and unhappy experiences. Adolescence (13-18) is a period of intense fluctuating emotions. During this period, adolescents experience conflicts between themselves and society and even within themselves. This creates a considerable degree of stress in them. Hence, the period of adolescence is called as period of "storm and stress". Emotional turmoil leading to "storm and stress" occurs due to great psychological changes occur in response to various physical changes, especially in the area of sexual development (Frank, 1996).

Objectives:

Following were the objectives of the study:

- To know the causes of stress among teenage girls.
- To find out the impact of stress on the academic achievements of the sample.
- To identify the symptoms of stress among teenage girls.

METHODS

The present study was undertaken to know the facts about the stress among teenage girls. A sample of 60 girls was randomly selected for the purpose of the study. The sample were taken from only one school *i.e.*, Islamia Modern High School, Srinagar. Questionnaire-cum-interview schedule was used to collect information from the teenage girls in the age group of 13-16 years. The questionnaire was divided into the two sections to collect the required information. The section one includes information regarding name, sex, age, location, class, type of family, family income, bread earners in the family, qualification of parents and total number of siblings and the section two included the information regarding the various facts, impacts, symptom and problems which teenagers face in their day-to-day life. Data was collected by using interview-cum-questionnaire schedule. Teenage girls studying in class 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th were taken as a sample from the school selected. The information collected was recorded on a pre-prepared performa.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Table 1 indicates the age-wise distribution of the sample and the results indicates that stress is more prevalent in the age group of 15-16 years and constituted 41.67 per cent followed by 28.33 per cent in 14-15 years and 21.67 per cent in 16-17

years and least in the age group of 13-14 years *i.e.* 8.33 per cent.

Table 2 indicates that, 91.67 per cent of teenage girls were having stress during exams. While 8.33 per cent were not stressed during exams. It indicates the high level of stress was during their examination days. A similar study was conducted by Gretchen Vigil (2002) reported that the main cause of stress among teenagers was the exams and school demands (Vigil and Donna, 2002). In the present study, rare cases of stress due to fear from teachers was found. The result showed that 23.33 per cent of teenage girls replied positive when they were asked if any of the school teachers scared them and 76.67 per cent said negative. 96.67 per cent of the studied samples were over burdened due to their school work and 3.33 per cent were not. Since teenagers were over burdened due to their school work they did not get time to attend extra-curricular activities. Further more study revealed that 98.33 per cent of teenagers were mired from participating in extra-curricular activities. A similar study was carried out by (Kelly, 2003) which stated that one of the important causes of stress among teenagers is the fact that they have not enough time in the day.

Table 3 indicates that 33.33 per cent of teenagers have general problem due to stress and rest 66.67 per cent were not affected by the same. Vigil and Donna (2002) stated that many symptoms of the stress among teenagers, which also includes lack interest in life and things, hungry all the time no matter how much one eats. This could be justified in the present study which indicates the percentage of lack of interest. 71.67 per cent felt lack of interest in their daily routines. Majority of girls (78.33%) felt tired most of the time. Change in mood was one of the causes of stress level among teenagers. A study conducted by Lazarus (1996) reported that one of the biological symptoms of stress among teenagers was being hungry all the time. Biological verification was given by her in terms that stress

Table 1: Distribution of sample as per age

Age in years	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
13-14	5	8.33
14-15	17	28.33
15-16	25	41.67
16-17	13	21.67
Total	60	100

Table 2 : Causes of stress among teenage girls due to school environment

Factor	No. of respondents (Yes)	Percentage (%)	No. of respondents (No)	Percentage (%)
Feeling stressed out during exams	55	91.67	5	8.33
Scare of school teacher	14	23.33	46	76.67
Feel stressed because of strict attitude of teacher	18	30.00	42	70
Fell over burdened due to school work	58	96.67	2	3.33
Over burdened of studies hampers participating in extra-curricular activities	59	98.33	1	1.67

General problems	No. of respondents (Yes)	%age	No. of respondents (No)	%age
Health problem affects our daily life any way	20	33.33	40	66.67
Lack of interests in our daily routines	43	71.67	17	28.33
Mood swings cause any anxiety	47	78.33	13	21.67
Feel tired most of the time	47	78.33	13	21.67
Feel hungry all the time, no matter how much eats	2	3.33	58	96.67
Unknown thing frighten you	36	60	24	40

Symptoms	Yes	%age	No	%age
Worrying too much about things	52	86.67	8	13.33
Feeling lonely	45	75.00	15	25.00
Self-blame about things	29	48.33	31	51.67
Feeling hopeless about the future	12	20.00	48	80.00
Feeling of worthlessness	28	46.67	32	53.33
Thought of ending life	40	66.67	20	33.33
Feeling restless	42	70.00	18	30.00

reaction is a hormonal alert that urges for more glucose in the blood. The study further reveals that only 3.33 per cent respondents felt hungry all the time.

Table 4 divulges the symptoms of stress among teenagers. 86.67 per cent of the teenage girls were worried too much about the things. It also indicates that 75 per cent of the respondents felt lonely whereas rests of the 25 per cent did not feel lonely. More than half of the girls *i.e.*, 51.67 per cent did not blame themselves when things go wrong while 48.33 per cent blamed themselves when things went wrong. Majority of the girls *i.e.*, 80 per cent did not feel hopeless about the future. It was further revealed that most of the girls *i.e.*, 66.67 per cent often thought of ending their life and 70 per cent of the respondents felt restlessness when stressed.

During the survey, different opinions regarding the causes of stress at home found among teenagers. Majority of teenagers *i.e.*, 46.67 per cent were positive about that their financial conditions at home are not good while as possessiveness from parents regarding strict attitude among girls received less response.

Conclusion:

Adolescent stress is a topic of apprehension for our community, our teenagers are over booked, lack of time management skills, are driven to succeed and overwhelmed. Many adults remember their teen years with affectionate reminiscences of friends and excitement. Our teens are dealing with conflicting demands from teachers, parents and peers. The primary source of tension during adolescence include academic pressure, relationship difficulties with peers, conflicts with parents and pressure to succeed. During the ten years, today's youth have many adult responsibilities, but without the freedom and independence of adulthood. Often teens have not yet developed the coping skills required to deal with stress and therefore, their responses to stress tend to be less healthy. These unhealthy responses may include anxiety, withdrawal, aggression, physical illness, drugs and alcohol use and depression. Although stress is uncomfortable, it is not unmanageable. There are the ways that teens can work to deal with the stress. The present study was done on various causes of stress among teen girls in private school. Based on finding of present research, it can be concluded that the school work

Causes of stress at home	Number	Percentage (%)
More attention is given to male siblings	20	33.33
Financial conditions at home are not good	28	46.67
Parents have strict attitude	2	3.33
Too have of household work	4	6.67
Feel tense due to too many responsibilities	6	10.00
Total	60	100.00

caused more stress to teenagers. However, other factors like strict attitude of the teacher/people, over burdened due to school work, lack of interest in daily routines also lead to stress among teen girls.

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