



## Prevalence of conduct disorders among adolescent boys and girls: A comparative study

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### ABSTRACT

*At one time or another most children and adolescents act out or do things that are destructive or troublesome to themselves or others as coping. So, present study has been undertaken to assess the comparative frequency occurrence of some common behavioral misconduct among school going male and female adolescents. For this purpose a sample of 150 adolescents of 16-18 yrs age group was selected using purposive random sampling method. Data were collected using a Questionnaire and Information Schedule. Obtained results revealed that different conduct disorders were occurred in more than 50% adolescents approximately. Most of the economical, mental, social and moral delinquent behaviors occurred among the boys and girls not significantly different. Mostly the frequency was observed as moderate to high and some of them are found more in boys and some more in girls. So, social mobilization is needed to take care of this childhood lacunae to ensure flawless future of civilization.*

**Keywords : Conduct disorders, adolescents**

### Introduction

Conduct disorder is a psychiatric category marked by a pattern of repetitive behavior wherein the rights of others or social norms are violated. Symptoms include verbal and physical aggression, cruel behavior toward people and pets, destructive behavior, lying, truancy, vandalism, and stealing.(1) Conduct disorder is a major public health problem because youth with conduct disorder not only inflict serious physical and psychological harm on others, but they are at greatly increased risk for incarceration, injury, depression, substance abuse, and death by homicide and suicide. The syndrome is not a single medical entity but encompasses various forms of "major misbehavior". (2)After the age of 18, a conduct disorder may develop into antisocial personality disorder, which is related to psychopath. Depressive conduct disorder is a combination of symptom with persistent and marked depression (3)

There many environmental factors which may affect the behavior of an individual. Among different age groups adolescent age is the most important and vulnerable of all. So, present study has been undertaken to assess the occurrence of some common behavioral misconduct among school going male and female adolescents comparatively.

### Method

The Sample: For present study a sample of 150 adolescents (75-boys and 75 girls) were selected from Schools of Indore City, using purposive random sampling method. Sampling criteria are being kept as adolescents of 16-18 yrs who agreed to participate as subject in study.

A validated questionnaire was used to collect information. 28 behavioral misconducts were chosen for the study and

classified into four categories as: Economic, Mental, Psychological, and Moral. The frequency of occurrence of behaviors was divided into 5 categories as always / often / not sure / sometimes / never.

The Technique: To collect authentic and unbiased information the subjects were at first made known about the purpose and need of the study. They were then explained about the meaning of asked behaviors. To ensure anonymous state the subject no personal information was taken. Data were collected by sitting them quite away from each other only in the presence of researcher.

### Results:

Table 1 : Occurrence of Economical Conduct Disorders among the adolescents (\*P>.05)

Disorder	Gender	Frequency of occurrence					'Z' Value
		always	Often	Not sure	Some-times	Never	
Stealing	Boys	1	1	15	19	39	.447*
	Girls	1	3	15	10	46	
Disobey Borrow	Boys	-	3	3	43	26	.519*
	Girls	-	1	6	45	23	

Table -2: Occurrence of Mental Conduct Disorders among the adolescents (\*P>.05, \*\*P<.05)

Disorder	Gender	Frequency of occurrence					'Z' Value
		Always	Often	Not sure	Some-times	Never	
Doubtfulness	Boys	3	5	6	41	20	.198*
	Girls	3	5	8	34	25	
Short-temperedness	Boys	10	5	6	40	14	2.2*
	Girls	15	15	6	25	14	
Stubborn	Boys	8	4	1	50	12	3.542**
	Girls	14	11	-	44	5	
Selfishness	Boys	8	6	5	29	27	.750*
	Girls	9	2	9	21	34	
Suicidal	Boys	-	-	4	7	64	3.201**
	Girls	3	4	7	15	46	
Murdering	Boys	1	-	1	10	63	.786*
	Girls	1	1	4	2	67	

From the table 1 it is clear that the frequency of economical conduct disorders like stealing, and disobey borrow in between boys and girls is not significantly different as per obtained 'Z' value. Furthermore, the table indicates that borrowing is high comparatively. The frequency of economical delinquency was found in more than 50% adolescents approximately in moderate level.

From the table 2 it is clear that the frequency of mental conduct disorders like doubtfulness, selfishness and thinking about murder occurred in boys and girls not significantly different as per obtained 'Z' value, while occurrence of short-temperedness, stubbornness and thinking about suicide are found significantly different. Furthermore, the table reveals that the frequency of mental misconducts like doubtfulness, short-temperedness, stubbornness and selfishness are found higher (50 - 80%), in moderate frequency level. More severe forms of psychological misconducts like thinking of murdering or suicide was also found among 15-20% adolescence. Short-temperedness, stubbornness and thinking of suicide are found more in girls comparatively, and doubtfulness, selfishness and thinking of murder is found more in boys.

Table 3 : Occurrence of Psychological Conduct Disorders among the adolescents (\*P>.05)

Disorder	Gender	Frequency of occurrence					'Z' Value
		Always	Often	Not sure	Some-times	Never	
Quarrelling	Boys	5	3	9	44	14	1.575*
	Girls	6	8	9	44	8	
beating	Boys	2	-	10	44	19	.006*
	Girls	1	9	11	26	28	
Mimicking	Boys	1	5	5	56	8	.547*
	Girls	4	9	4	40	18	
Jealousy	Boys	5	3	5	26	36	1.113*
	Girls	6	4	6	30	29	
Substance abusing	Boys	3	1	2	27	42	1.248*
	Girls	1	11	7	17	39	
Threatening	Boys	12	11	3	38	11	.225*
	Girls	9	11	7	37	11	
Imitating	Boys	3	2	4	43	23	.711*
	Girls	3	3	10	37	22	
Alcoholism/ smoking etc.	Boys	-	-	-	12	63	2.4*
	Girls	-	-	4	01	71	
Forbidding	Boys	-	4	2	10	59	2.12*
	Girls	1	1	10	15	48	

The table -3 shows that none of the social misconducts like quarrelling, beating mimicking (making fun of others), jealousy, threatening, substance abusing and imitating, alcoholism/smoking and forbidding occurred not significantly different in boys and girls as per obtained 'Z' value. Furthermore the table reveals that quarrelling, mimicking and threatening are the three most prevalent misconducts (> 80 %), while substance abusing, alcoholism/smoking are found least prevalent (<20%). Similarly, imitating and jealousy was also found prevalent in moderate frequencies (up to 30%). Quarrelling was found more in girls while beating, mocking and forbidding are found more in boys comparatively.

From the table -4 it is clear that the occurrence of moral delinquent behavior like disobeying, lying, cheating, roaming, absenting from school, teasing, indiscipline, occurred among the boys and girls not significantly different as per obtained 'Z' value and absenting from school was found significantly different. Furthermore the table indicates that disobeying, lying, and teasing others are found the most prevalent (>80%) and cheating, absenting from school, running away from school, undisciplined, and abusing are found moderately prevalent (40%- 60%) among the adolescents.

Table 4 : Occurrence of Moral Conduct Disorders among the

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**adolescents**

Disorder	Gender	Frequency of occurrence					'Z' Value
		Always	Often	Not sure	Some-times	Never	
Disobeying	Boys	5	2	10	45	13	1.44*
	Girls	5	10	5	49	6	
Lying	Boys	-	2	6	53	14	.40*
	Girls	-	3	9	48	15	
Cheating	Boys	1	1	7	16	50	.89*
	Girls	-	4	12	11	48	
Deceitfulness	Boys	-	2	3	12	58	2.98**
	Girls	-	2	8	25	40	
Roaming	Boys	1	3	7	12	52	1.24*
	Girls	-	-	3	13	59	
School truancy	Boys	-	1	6	18	50	1.07*
	Girls	1	-	4	14	56	
School absenting	Boys	-	1	6	24	44	1.97**
	Girls	-	2	3	17	53	
Teasing	Boys	2	7	3	53	10	1.23*
	Girls	7	11	4	41	12	
Indiscipline	Boys	4	4	7	14	46	.06*
	Girls	2	-	7	24	42	

Disobeying, dishonesty and running away from school are more prevalent among girls while roaming, absenting from school are found to be more prevalent in boys comparatively.

**Discussion**

So the results of present study reveal that adolescents have many conduct disorders and they suffer more of psychosocial misconducts than economical. It can be amused that being economically dependent upon parents, so they are not vulnerable for it. The results also indicate that some of the misconducts are more in girls and some are more in boys, which indicates gender impact of discrimination and peer pressure

The effects of the peer social context and child characteristics on the growth of authority-acceptance behavior across time was partially attributable to the level of disruptive behavior in the classroom peer context into which they were placed. Peer-context influences, however, were strongest among same-gender peers. Children learn and follow behavioral norms from their same-gender peers within the classroom. (4)

Those in whom behavior misconducts persists requires psychological help. It is estimated that 5% of children show serious conduct problems, being described as impulsive, overactive, and aggressive and engaging in delinquent behavior(5). Some of such behaviors are genetic inheritance, ineffective parenting, and living in a neighborhood in which violence is common. There is a lack of consensus on what actually works, despite considerable efforts made to help children with conduct disorders. Most mental disorders being occur during youth (12-24 years of age), although they are often first detected later in life. Poor mental health in young people is found notably lower educational achievements, substance abuse, violence, and poor reproductive and sexual health (6). Evidence suggests that exposure to stress and ways of coping are pivotal in prevention of mental health and adjustment problems during childhood and adolescence. Coping may be a moderator, or a protective factor, which increases or decreases the probability of developing mental health problems in response to a stressor. Coping may also be a mediator, which is set off by the stressor and accounts for the resulting symptoms (7).

It is easier to nip unruly children behavior in the early stages of life than in later stages and thus one should make a point of trying to establish the dos and don'ts in the early life stages of one's children, this will make sure that the growing process is characterized by very few behavioral issues. Right input at early ages will develop a sensible adolescent and a good human being later and a strong human society at large.