



Depression in Relation to Affective Dysregulation and Family Environment among Adolescents

KEYWORDS

Depression, affective dysregulation and family environment.

DR. IBADAT KHAN

Counselor, Drug De-Addiction and Treatment Centre, PGIMER, Chandigarh

DR. VANDANA SHARMA

Assistant Professor in Education, Indo Global College of Education, Mohali (Punjab)

ABSTRACT *The present study examined the relationship of depression with affective dysregulation and family environment in a sample of 100 adolescents (50 males and 50 females) studying in Government Schools of Chandigarh. For the collection of data Zung Self-Rating Depression Scale, Affective Dysregulation Inventory and Family Environment Scale were used. Statistical techniques like Pearson product moment correlation and stepwise multiple regressions were used. Results of the study revealed that depression was found to be positively correlated with affective dysregulation among male and female adolescents. Independence dimension of family environment found to be negative correlate of depression among males but in females, organization, active-recreational orientation, expressiveness and intellectual-cultural orientation were all significantly and negatively correlated with depression. In case of male adolescents, affective dysregulation emerged as the best predictor of depression but in female adolescents, affective dysregulation and organization were found to be predicting depression independently as well as conjointly.*

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is an important developmental stage where most of the adolescent experience a vast variety of physical and psychological changes. The image of adolescence as a time of storm and stress, intense moodiness, and preoccupation with the self has permeated both professional and lay perspectives on this developmental period. The belief that significant difficulties, including depression during the adolescence represent normal development has two major effects on research and practice; first, the difficulties during adolescence were not considered as an important developmental variation and second, the adolescent problems were often not treated because of the belief that the adolescent would grow out of them (Petersen et al., 1993).

Heath and Camarena (2002) posited that certain individuals possess "depressogenic" beliefs and dysfunctional attitudes which make them vulnerable to depression. One such dysfunctional attitude is a negative attributional style which is characterized by the individual ascribing adverse-uncontrollable events to themselves. This pattern is apparent to the keen observer and in the affected individual it produces cognitive symptoms of depression e.g. feelings of failure, guilt, hopelessness and worthlessness (Wagner, Berenson, Harding & Joiner, 1998).

Research on depressed mood has been concerned with depression as a symptom and refers to the presence of sadness, unhappiness or blue feelings for an unspecified period of time. Depressed mood is typically measured through adolescents' self-reports of their emotions, either through measures specifically concerned with mood (Petersen, Schulenberg, Abramowitz, Offer & Jarcho, 1984) or through items included in checklists of depressive symptoms (Kovacs, 1980).

Affective dysregulation is marked inability to control one's emotional reaction as well behavioral responses and susceptibility to irritability accompanied with negative affect (Mezzich, Tarter, Giancola & Kirisci, 2001). The construct of affective/emotional dysregulation increasingly have been used to explain the psychopathology especially adolescent

depression across the life-span. The previous researches showed high correlation between affective dysregulation and depression among the adolescents (Weinberg & Klonsky, 2009; Yap, Allan & Sheeber, 2007).

Depression affects growth and development of adolescent as results of invalidate family environment and social relationships. Depressive family environment often leads to depression among the family members. Family history of depression is a major cause of adolescent depression (Bhatia & Bhatia, 2007). Familial vulnerability to depression is commonly encountered and encompasses both psychological and biological etiological factors. Some psychological theorists have linked depressive illnesses to specific genes (Kendler, Kessler & Walters, 1995). However, other researches argue that much of the depression that would appear to run in families' results from the basis of family dysfunction rather than a genetic cause. In reality, it is a combination of factors, rather than a single cause, which is likely to be found in most cases of depression in adolescents (Lowe & Gibson, 2005).

Depression among adolescents is increasing dramatically these days due to various psychosocial factors and challenges in daily life. The present study is an attempt to investigate the role of affective dysregulation and family environment in relation to depression among adolescents. It is also an attempt to incorporate the gaps and limitation in earlier researches.

DELIMITATIONS

- The study was delimited to Government Schools (co-educated) of Chandigarh only.
- The study was delimited to adolescents with age ranges from 15-17 years.

OBJECTIVES

Following were the objectives of the present study:

- To examine the relationship of depression with affective dysregulation among adolescents.
- To examine the relationship of depression with dimensions of family environment among adolescents.
- To examine the predictors of depression from among

the independent variables of affective dysregulation and dimensions of family environment among adolescents.

HYPOTHESES

On the behalf of above stated objectives following hypotheses were formulated for the present study:

- There is no significant relationship between depression and affective dysregulation among adolescents.
- There is no significant relationship between depression and dimensions of family environment among adolescents.
- None of the independent variables of affective dysregulation and dimensions of family environment contributes significantly in predicting depression among adolescents independently as well as conjointly.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The sample was consisted of 100 adolescents (50 males and 50 females) with age range of 15-17 years pursuing schooling from Government School in Chandigarh was selected randomly. Participation was voluntary and informed consent. There was no previous psychiatric history and substance abuse. Ethical consideration was under observation during the data collection.

Tools

- Zung Self-Rating Depression Scale (Zung, 1965)
- Affective Dysregulation Inventory (Mezzich, Tarter, Giancola & Kirisci, 2001)
- Family Environment Scale (Moos & Moos, 1994)

Procedure

After making all the arrangements and clarifying the instructions of the concerned tests Affective Dysregulation Inventory, Zung Self-Rating Depression Scale and Family Environment Scale were administered on selected sample in groups and these were given one by one. After completion of testing procedure, data was collected carefully.

Statistical Techniques

Pearson's product moment correlation method was used to find out the relationship of depression with affective dysregulation and dimensions of family environment. Stepwise multiple regression analysis was done to identify the potential predictors of depression from among the independent variables of affective dysregulation and dimensions of family environment in a sample of adolescents. Data was analyzed with the help of SPSS 16.0 version.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Interpretations of results have been done hypothesis wise:

Table 1: Intercorrelation Matrix of Depression with Affective Dysregulation and Different Dimensions of Family Environment among Male Adolescents (N = 50) and Female Adolescents (N = 50)

		MALES											
		Dep	AD	C	Exp	Con	Ind	AO	ICO	ARO	MRE	Org	Ctrl
FEMALES	Dep	-	.331**	.077	-.123	-.059	-.242*	-.071	-.027	.141	.153	.131	.050
	AD	.665**	-	-.070	.008	-.133	.172	.109	.096	.192	.003	-.118	.146
	C	-.089	-.090	-	.087	.341**	-.162	.110	.213*	-.059	.291**	.190	.350**
	Exp	-.331**	-.349**	-.030	-	.055	.020	-.038	.224*	-.065	.147	-.109	.220*
	Con	.219*	.110	-.131	-.305**	-	-.088	-.140	-.040	-.233*	.071	-.227*	.022
	Ind	-.165	-.323*	-.049	-.003	.134	-	.364**	.192	-.182	.011	.153	-.174
	AO	-.021	-.129	-.178	.010	-.028	-.142	-	.038	.178	.017	.255**	.029
	ICO	-.235*	-.055	.081	.030	.008	.047	-.070	-	.093	.338**	.025	.182
	ARO	-.361**	-.539**	.011	.508**	-.087	.243*	-.052	-.143	-	.196*	-.099	.209*
	MRE	-.063	.081	.254**	-.214*	-.219*	.029	-.136	.239*	-.292*	-	.094	.177
	Org	-.491**	-.442**	.416**	.052	-.258**	.171	.001	.225*	.036	.125	-	-.176
	Ctrl	.234*	.248*	-.009	.259**	-.188	-.159	-.075	-.061	-.013	.024	-.322**	-

**p< .01, *p< .05

Note: Depression (Dep), Affective Dysregulation (AD), Cohesion (C), Expressiveness (Exp), Conflict (Con), Independence (Ind), Achievement Orientation (AO), Intellectual-Cultural Orientation (ICO), Active-Recreational Orientation (ARO), Moral-Religious Emphasis (MRE), Organization (Org), Control (Ctrl)

The perusal of Table 1 shows the intercorrelations of different variables of the present study among adolescents. Here, significant correlations are described for male and female adolescents separately. Among males, affective dysregulation ($r = 0.331, p < .01$) is positively correlated with depression whereas independence ($r = -0.242, p < .05$) dimension of family environment came out to be negative correlate of depression. It indicates that presence of affective dysregulation (inability to control once emotions and susceptible to irritability in behaviour) and lack of independence in family environment leads to depressive symptoms for male adolescents.

In case of females, affective dysregulation ($r = 0.665, p < .01$) is significantly positively correlated to depressive symptoms. Indeed, organization ($r = -0.491, p < .01$) active-recreational orientation ($r = -0.361, p < .01$), expressiveness ($r = -0.331, p < .01$) and intellectual-cultural orientation ($r = -0.235, p < .05$) are significantly negative correlates of depression. Also, depression was positively correlated with conflict ($r = 0.219, p < .05$) and control ($r = 0.234, p < .05$) dimensions of family environment. It showed that presence of affective dysregulation, conflict, control in the family and lack of organization, active-recreational orientation, expressiveness and intellectual-cultural orientation in the family environment leads to depression among female adolescents.

Table 2: Multiple R and R² Change at Different Successive Steps and Standard coefficients for different variables (Male Adolescents: N = 50)

Predictor Variable	R	R ²	R ² Change	df ₁	df ₂	F	B	SE	t
1. Affective Dysregulation	.331	.110	.110	1	48	5.91	.331	3.15	10.43**
Depression (Criterion Variable)									

** $p < .01$

To frame out the potential predictors of depression among the independent variables for the present study, stepwise multiple regression analysis was done. Table 2 reveals that affective dysregulation ($R = 0.331, p < .01$) is positively emerged as the best potential predictor for depression among male adolescents. It accounts for 11% ($R^2 = 0.110$) of the variance in depression (criterion variable). The results revealed the significant effect of affective dysregulation ($b = 0.331, t = 10.43, p < .01$) on depression. It indicates that depression could be best predicted in the form of presence of affective dysregulation among male adolescents. The regression equation suggests that male adolescents may experience depressive symptoms mostly when they experience difficulties in regulating their emotional responses that might be induced by anxiety, frustration, psychological conflicts, circumstantial factors etc.

Table 3: Multiple R and R² Change at Different Successive Steps and Standard coefficients for different variables (Female Adolescents: N = 50)

Predictor Variables	R	R ²	R ² Change	df ₁	df ₂	F	B	SE	t
1. Affective Dysregulation	.665	.442	.442	1	48	38.04	.665	2.93	8.12**
2. Organization	.700	.490	.048	1	47	22.59	-.224	5.90	5.88**
Depression (Criterion Variable)									

** $p < .01$

The perusal of Table 3 depicts that affective dysregulation is most salient predictor of depressive symptoms among female adolescents. Affective dysregulation ($R = 0.665, p < .01$) is significantly positively correlated to depression. Further regression analysis shows that organization ($R = 0.700, p < .01$) as dimension of family environment is second variable which is negatively correlated with depression among female adolescent. Further Table 3 revealed that the regression prediction for depression as criterion variable (dependent variable) for females as follows:

Affective dysregulation ($b = 0.665, t = 8.12, p < .01$)

Organization ($b = -0.224, t = 5.88, p < .01$)

This trend shows that female adolescents experience depressive symptoms induced by affective dysregulation and lack of organization in their family. Such families are invalidating the familial cohesion and harmony that cause a feeling of suppressed emotions which reflected as affective dysregulation among them.

The earlier studies also found congruence with results of present study. It is evident that deteriorated family systems may provide such invalidating environment that is associated with adolescents' feelings of loneliness, depressive mood and unhealthy growth to adolescents (Johnson, LaVoie & Mahoney, 2001). Further researches revealed that lack of emotional regulation induce difficulties in controlling emotional reactions, mood variation which leads to depression as a major psychopathology among adolescents and familial transmission play a vital role in this process (Hilt, Hanson & Pollak, 2011; Mason, Schmidt, Abraham, Walker & Tersyak, 2009).

MAIN FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- Affective dysregulation was found to be positively correlated with depression among male and female adolescents. In case of females, relationship between affective dysregulation and depression was stronger as compared to males.
- Independence dimension of family environment came to be negative correlate of depression among males and but in females, organization, active-recreational orientation, expressiveness and intellectual-cultural orientation were • all significantly and nega-

tively correlated with depression. Also among females conflict and control dimensions of family environment was positively correlated with depression.

- In case of male adolescents, affective dysregulation emerged as the best potential predictor of depression but in female adolescents, affective dysregulation and organization (dimension of family environment) both were found to be predicting depression independently as well as conjointly.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of major findings, depressive psychopathology is mostly caused by affective dysregulation among both male and female adolescents. In case of female adolescents besides emotional causes, lack of organization and harmony in the family environment emerged to be salient predictor of depression. While making a framework or treatment modality for adolescents, affective dysregulation, familial functioning and gender based intervention must be targeted. The findings of the present study have implications for all those who play more prominent role in the overall development of adolescents' i.e. family members, teachers, school administrators, counselors and psychologists etc.

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