



Generalised Anxiety Disorder Among Higher Secondary School Students

KEYWORDS

anxiety, Scared Scale, performance, student, behaviour

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ABSTRACT

Common psychiatric illness among school children is anxiety. Anxiety disorders are often co morbid with other mental illnesses, particularly clinical depression, which may occur in as many as 60% of people with anxiety disorder¹. Aim: To screen for generalised anxiety disorder among higher secondary school students using SCARED scale. Method: Descriptive was study done in 400 higher secondary students from two schools students and their parents were interviewed using SCARED scale child version and parent version. Results: Our study shows that 11.8% of the children have generalised anxiety disorder. Prevalence in females is 13% and in males is 10.5% respectively. Conclusion: The prevalence of anxiety among school children is higher in our study compared to the previous studies with prevalence being higher in females. Prevalence of generalised anxiety disorder is in accordance with previous studies.

INTRODUCTION:

One of the most common psychiatric problems prevailing among adolescence in this era is the anxiety disorders¹. Adolescence is a peculiar period between a dependent child and an independent adult. They comprise of 15% of the total population in developed countries and 22.8% in India. Though many are affected, it is solely under diagnosed. This is because both the parents and the practitioners themselves ignore the early signs and symptoms and hence no appropriate treatment². These traits can continue through adulthood and may become permanent and difficult to treat. Early onset symptoms (<13 years) have more chronic and persisting course^{3,4}. The symptoms may appear subtle, but they can lead on to serious and chronic illness. Though the spectrum of anxiety disorders in adolescence varies, the critical part is it causes significant emotional stress among family members and also academic under achievement in the individual.

AIM AND OBJECTIVE

To screen for generalised anxiety disorder among higher secondary school students using SCARED scale child version and parent version.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

Descriptive study was done by Department of Paediatrics, Kilpauk Medical College Hospital, and Chennai in higher secondary students. Institutional Ethics committee approval, School Management permission to conduct the study in school premises and informed consent was obtained. 400 Higher secondary school students (11th standard) from 2 schools were recruited for the study. SCARED scale, Child version and Parent version questionnaire was used to access 3 months situation. One to one interview was taken with students; parents were interviewed in teacher parent meeting individually.

RESULTS

400 higher secondary students from 2 schools were questioned, equal gender distribution in the ratio of 1:1. Analysis reveals that prevalence of generalised anxiety disorder is 47 (11.8%) in child version. Distribution of generalised anxiety disorder in gender, male 21 (10.5%), female 26 (13%). Parent version shown prevalence of generalised anxiety disorder is 49 (12.2%) which is 0.5% higher in female students than child version female students. Analysis of gender distribution as per child version of SCARED scale shows that generalised anxiety disorder is more in females than males. It is 10.5% in boys according to child and parent version and in girls it is 13% (child version) and 14% (parent version).

Table 1 Distribution of study results in gender

Version	Generalised anxiety disorder	
	Male	Female
Child version	10.5%	13%
Parent Version	10.5%	14%

DISCUSSION

Our study showed higher prevalence of anxiety in school children of about 22% in child version and 23.5% in parent version compared to others. The higher prevalence of anxiety in our study may be due to the fact that the students we studied are highly ambitious students with high competition.

Table 2 Comparison of study results

	Our study		Sibnath deb et al ⁴
Gender	Child version	Parent version	Anxiety
Boys	19%	20%	24%
girls	25%	27%	22%

Table 3 Comparison of Study results

Studies	Male:female ratio
Sibnath et al ⁴	1.06
Ayesha sarvat et al ⁵	1.75
Our study	4: 5 (child version), 3.5:5 (parent version)
www.mentalhealth.samsha.gov	1.4 (F:M)

The gender difference in anxiety in our study is 4:5 (M:F) in child version and 3.5:5 (M:F) in parent version. Mental health survey study in UK showed higher prevalence in girls. This higher prevalence in girls may be due to the Indian cultural background and they worry about everything including competence.

Table 4 Comparison of Study results

Study	Generalised anxiety disorder prevalence
E Emerson et al ⁶	0.6%
Lucknow study	0.14%
Srinath et al	0.3%
Khalid et al ⁸	48.9%
Raakhee.A.S and Aparna.N et al ⁽⁹⁾	13%
Our study	11.8 % (child version) 12.3 % (parent version)

Our study showed a prevalence of generalized anxiety disorder of 11.8 % in child version and 12.3 % in parent version almost similar to Raakhee .A.S and Aparna.N et al⁸. Only study by Khalid et al in Kerala showed more than us. Other studies showed an average of only 0.11%.

CONCLUSION:

Our study showed higher prevalence of anxiety disorders in the study population. This study implies more studies are to be conducted like this study and children with anxiety disorders are to be identified at earlier stage and properly counselled and treated if necessary. This is the need of the hour and to improve both the academic and general outcome of children.

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