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RESEARCH ARTICLE

A STUDY ON DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS PRESENT IN STUDENTS WITH INTELLIGENT DISABILITY

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Depression is an increasingly prevalent public health concern, affecting an estimated 350 million people globally. The 2011 World Mental Health Survey of 17 countries found that approximately one in 20 people have experienced a depressive episode. Depressive symptoms have a considerable impact on mortality risk for suicide and cardiovascular and other diseases as well as impaired cognitive and social functioning. Substantial evidence shows that people living with physical disabilities are at least three times more likely to experience depression compared to the general population. **Aim:** To study the depressive symptoms present among students with intellectual disability in the age group 10 to 18. **Methods:** A cross sectional observational study was conducted among 50 sample students with mild to moderate level of disability in Kozhikode district, Kerala using simple random sampling. **Result:** From the study it was found that out of 50 sample population, 40% have mild depressive symptoms, 32% have moderate depressive symptoms, 16% have severe depressive symptoms and 12% have minimal depressive symptoms. It was also found that about 70% of the sample populations do not have any associated diseases. It was also found that among the participants 64% of the sample population has genetic disability.

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INTRODUCTION

According to International Classification of Functional Disability (ICF), physical disability is a state with remarkable defect, limitation or inability of certain organs or processes of the body, which create hurdle in carrying out normal physical movements and thus affect normal functioning in different areas of life Chang, Johnson et al. (2008) 1. Individual having any kind of disability has faced the problem in interacting with the society at one time or the other. Disability results in the limitation of performance in one or more activities that are essential for the daily living. This means the individual is incapable of some degree of independence Reynell. (1970) 2. Disability limits the individual's opportunity and creates frustration. It also creates a sense of prejudice among disabled and able bodied. The degree of disability of a person is measured on the basis of the demands of the surroundings in which he or she is living and his or her inability to meet those demands. From a vocational and educational perspective, there are three categories of disabled namely, those who are capable of being full educated and productive and are able to compete with the able-bodied; those who are partially productive because they cannot acquire speech and skills required to compete with the able-bodied; and those with serious disability who remain totally unproductive. However, the disabled individual can raise himself/herself from a lower to higher level as a result of social conditioning, technical change or fashion. The disabled individual may likewise regress to a

lower level due to personality maladjustment Jennings (1988). Disabled individuals have problem of adjustment in a society that labels anyone that does not fit the description of the normal individuals. This led Cusforth (1951) 4 to conclude that society's negative reaction to the disabled was entirely responsible for their emotional problem. Depression is an increasingly prevalent public health concern, affecting an estimated 350 million people globally. The 2011 World Mental Health Survey of 17 countries found that approximately one in 20 people have experienced a depressive episode. Depressive symptoms have a considerable impact on mortality risk for suicide and cardiovascular and other diseases as well as impaired cognitive and social functioning.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This is a cross sectional observation study conducted among students with intellectual disability in Kozhikode district of Kerala. A total of 50 students were selected through simple random sampling method. The inclusion criteria comprised of all students with intellectual disability (mild to moderate) within the age group 10 to 18. The exclusion criteria comprised of students having severe intellectual disability, those who were not willing to participate and those who were not comfortable with the interview process. An initial interactive session was held after which a professional rapport was able to build up. The Survey was conducted with the help

of standardized interview schedule. The response was collected through keen observation and interaction with students, caretakers, parents and teachers. The interview schedule was divided into three parts. The first part of the interview schedule consist of demographic details such as age of the child, gender, job of mother, job of father, number of siblings, if siblings posses disability, if any other family members posses disability, if the child is having any other diseases and if the child's disability is acquired or genetic. The second part of the interview schedule is provided with 10 standardized questions by WHO to measure severity of disability. The third and final part of interview schedule consists of 27 standardized questions formulated with help of Beck's Depression Scale. Item analysis was conducted to standardize the questionnaire and 6 questions were removed. The interviewer discussed the questionnaire thoroughly before data collection to decrease interviewer bias and variability. The data were analyzed and results were recorded using frequencies, tables and graphs. The Chi- square test was used for categorical variables. A p-value of ≤ 0.05 was taken as the criteria of significance for all purposes.

RESULTS

Our responses comprised of a total of 50 students with intellectual disability. In the study, 76% of the sample is male and 24% is female. It is observed that 85.71% of the mothers of the special child are unemployed.

Table 1. Severity of depression

Severity of depression (Beck's depression scale)	Number of individuals
Minimal (0-13)	6(12%)
Mild (14-19)	20(40%)
Moderate (20-28)	16(32%)
Severe (29-63)	8(16%)
Total	50

From the study it was found that out of 50 sample population, 40% have mild depressive symptoms, 32% have moderate depressive symptoms, 16% have severe depressive symptoms and 12% have minimal depressive symptoms.

It was also found that about 70% of the sample populations do not have any associated diseases and was 64% of the sample population has genetic disability. It was also seen that parent child relation and number of siblings in the family played an important role. Economic status of the child also tends to play a significant role. It was also found that education level of both parents were low.

DISCUSSION

The prevalence of depression was moderately high among the participants in our study. It was observed that several important socio demographic variables have significant association with depression of the child. There were few students with several severe depressive symptoms like suicidal tendencies. It was observed that even though several self promotional actives and counselling sessions have been provided to students, few of the students have very low self esteem.

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