

Comparative Analysis of the Mental Health of Physically Disabled and Normal Adolescents in Prayagraj in India

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Abstract— Adolescence is a very significant period in a young person's life. It is a time when youth are growing and establishing individual identities. It is also a critical time for learning essential life skills. Mental health describes a level of psychological well-being, or an absence of a mental disorder. Mental health can also be defined as an expression of emotions, and as signifying a successful adaptation to a range of demands. People with disabilities often experience a sense of social isolation and loneliness, which can also lead to depression and other mental health issues. The main objectives of this research study were to determine the difference in the mental health of adolescents from normal and physical disabled groups. Allahabad (Prayagraj) has been selected purposively for research. The total sample size was 80 adolescents comprised of 40 girls between the age group of 13 to 19 years. The data was collected by using purposive sampling method. A standardized mental health battery developed by Singh (2016) was administered. Data was analyzed by frequencies/ percentages and t test. It is concluded that, maximum numbers of respondents were under average mental health in normal population whereas maximum numbers of respondents were having poor mental health in disabled population. The results further reveal significant difference in the mental health among adolescents belonging to normal and disabled population in the study area.

Keywords: Mental Health, Physical Disabled and Normal Adolescents

I. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a very significant period in a young person's life. It is a time when youth are growing and establishing individual identities. It is also a critical time for learning essential life skills. Adolescents acquire skills through various means and test them out in activities and interactions with others. However, unless the adolescent is under a structured leadership program the cultivation of these skills will not materialize.

Mental health describes a level of psychological well-being, or an absence of a mental disorder. Mental health can also be defined as an expression of emotions, and as signifying a successful adaptation to a range of demands. Mental health may include an individual's ability to enjoy life, and create a balance between life activities and efforts to achieve psychological resilience according to the perspective of 'positive psychology'.

Adolescence is a psychological- biological stage of development between childhood and adulthood. During this period many developmental changes takes place that are not only physical but social and emotional also. It usually starts with puberty and ends when a person gains a reasonable degree of parental independence. Adolescence marks the

developmental transition from childhood to adulthood, a time when many important social, economic, biological, and demographic events set the stage for adult life. Adolescence is a period of rapid development and is occupied with many problem including clumsiness and awkwardness. It is the period when the child moves from dependency to autonomy. It demands significant adjustment to the physical and social changes.

Adolescence is associated with notable changes in mood sometimes known as mood swings. Emotional and attitudinal changes which are characteristic of adolescence, often take place during this period, and this can be a cause of conflict on one hand and positive personality development on the other, struggles with adolescent identity and depression usually accrued when an adolescent experiences loss. The changing relationship between the adolescent and their parents affected the emotionality of the adolescent a great deal. Adolescents experienced turmoil in their relationship with friends'. Teen depression can be extremely intense at the time because of physical and hormonal changes. Emotional instability is part of being as teenager, their changing mind, body and relationship often present them as stressful personality.

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The World Health Organization defines mental health as "a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community". It was previously stated that there was no one "official" definition of mental health. Cultural differences, subjective assessments, and competing professional theories all affect how "mental health" is defined. Adolescent mental health are the capacity to achieve and maintain optimal psychological functioning and well-being. It is directly related to the level reached and competence achieved in psychological and social functioning. Mental health is a balance between all aspects of life: social, physical, spiritual, emotional and economic. Handling stress, relating to others and decision-making are all functions of mental health.

World Health Organization suggests that nearly half the world's population is affected by mental illness with an impact on their self-esteem, relationships and ability to function in everyday life. An individual's emotional health can also affect physical health and poor mental health can lead to problems such as substance abuse.

Mental health is how a person thinks, feels and acts in life. It reflects on how people view themselves and others and their own lives. Knowing how everything in our lives is a reflection of our mental health, it is understandable why mental health is an integral part of one's overall health. Mental health is a balance between all aspects of life: social, physical, spiritual, emotional and economic.

For centuries there has been a stigma surrounding the mental health industry, labeling those unfairly who do seek treatment as 'weak', 'fragile', 'sensitive', or 'crazy'. Individuals with physical disabilities already have deep-rooted fears of being rejected and identified only for their disabilities. Seeking treatment for their mental health as well as their physical health can be difficult to accept, especially when the assistance could come with another label. A physical disability refers to a condition that limits bodily function in some way. It can be the result of a medical issue you were born with, or an accident/illness later in life.

Researchers have found that persons with acquired physical disabilities, who adjust more successfully to their disabilities, are physically and psychologically healthier. On the contrary, the difficulty of an individual to accept his/her physical disability has been associated with poor physical health and several psychopathological symptoms. Surveys show that people with disabilities often experience a sense of social isolation and loneliness, which can also lead to depression and other mental health issues. Inaccessible environments and misunderstanding from non-disabled individuals can sometimes lead to feeling left out, isolated or even shunned. Disability can make it extremely difficult for people to find a job, leaving a significant void in their life. Work plays a big role in how we perceive ourselves. The longer someone is unemployed, the more they may feel hopeless and down on themselves. Unsurprisingly, it has been found to increase a person's likelihood of developing anxiety or depression.

Recent research links loneliness to a number of other health concerns, including a greater risk for premature death, dementia and heart disease, as well as decreased immunity. The mental and physical impact of loneliness and isolation can be tremendous. When someone feels discriminated against because of their disability; this can have a large effect on their mental health. Research shows that this discrimination can often start young – "Disability exerts a detrimental effect on adolescent mental health, and a large proportion of this appears to operate through bullying." It can be name-calling, teasing, physical bullying or excluding the person from friendship groups, sporting teams or events.

With these backdrops, the researcher ventured into studying level of mental health of adolescents belonging to normal and physically disabled population particularly to encourage the parents, teachers and policy makers to introduce the concept of mental health at all levels with the following objectives.

- 1) To find out the level of mental health in normal adolescents.
- 2) To determine the level of mental health in physical disabled adolescents.
- 3) To compare the level of mental health in physical disabled and normal adolescents.

II. METHODOLOGY

An exploratory research design was adopted for the study and Allahabad (prayagraj) has been selected purposively for research. The survey method was selected by using purposive sampling for the collection of data. The total sample size was 80 adolescents' girls between the age group of 13 to 19 years. The sample consisted of two types of samples. One is from normal population and other from physical disabled population. To collect the data from disabled population, the lists and name and contact details of disabled population was obtained from District Social Welfare Board and data was collected according. The data was collected by using purposive sampling method. A standardized mental health battery developed by Singh (2016) was administered. Data was analyzed by frequencies/ percentages and t test.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results derived from the study entitled "Comparative analysis of the mental health of physically disabled and normal adolescents in Allahabad " are analyzed statistically and the findings are portrayed under following sub-heads with tables and graphical figures and discussed in the following paragraph.

A. Distribution of adolescents on the basis of their level of mental health

This section defines the percentage distribution of respondents on the basis of their level of mental health.

Category of Mental health	Range	Range	Normal population	
			F	P
Excellent mental health	P ₉₀ and above	116 and above	4	10
Good mental health	P ₇₀ to P ₈₉	91-116	12	30
Average mental health	P ₇₀ to P ₈₉	65-90	17	42.5
Poor mental health	P ₇₀ to P ₈₉	39-64	7	17.5
Very poor mental health	P ₇₀ to P ₈₉	Below 38	-	-

P= Percentage, F=Frequency

The table 1 reveals that majority of respondents maximum 42.5 per cent of respondents belonged normal population were having average mental health followed by good mental health (30%) and poor mental health (17.5%). Only small numbers of respondents 10 per cent were falling under the categories of excellent mental health in normal population. None of the respondents were under very poor mental health categories under normal population in the study area.

This may be due to fact that mental health has a huge impact on every aspect of your life. Good mental health means appreciating your achievements and accepting your shortcomings. Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel and act as we cope with life. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and

adolescence through adulthood and it varies one person to another.

Category of Mental health	Range	Range	Physical Disabled population	
			F	P
Excellent mental health	P ₉₀ and above	116 and above	1	2.5
Good mental health	P ₇₀ to P ₈₉	91-116	7	17.5
Average mental health	P ₇₀ to P ₈₉	65-90	14	35
Poor mental health	P ₇₀ to P ₈₉	39-64	18	45
Very poor mental health	P ₇₀ to P ₈₉	Below 38	-	-

P= Percentage, F=Frequency

The table 1 reveals that majority of respondents maximum 45 per cent of respondents belonged physical disabled population were poor mental health followed by average mental health (35%) and good mental health (17.5%). Only small numbers of respondents 2.5 per cent were falling under the categories of excellent mental health in physical disabled population. None of the respondents were under very poor mental health categories under physical disabled population in the study area.

So it is clear from the above table that maximum numbers respondents were under poor mental health and only a small proportion of respondents in both groups were excellent mental health. This may be due to fact that people with physical disabilities, both congenital (from birth) and acquired (from accidents and injuries), face numerous challenges in their everyday life that can bear negatively on their mental health. Tasks that some people do on autopilot are major stressors for someone who is unable to walk, stand, climb, reach, or perform other typical physical movements on their own. Balancing medications, doctor's appointments, adaptive equipment, and constantly worrying about the logistics of getting anywhere takes a physical and emotional toll on a person that can over time lead to mental illness. In addition to being more prone to mental illness, people with physical disabilities are also less likely to seek treatment due to a serious and dangerous stigma surrounding mental health.

Type of sample	Normal population		Physical disabled population		Cal. Value t	Tab. Value t
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
Female	85.15	20.78	70.55	20.82	5.21*	2.743

39 degrees of freedom

*Significant $P < 0.05$

NS Non significant $P \geq 0.05$

Table 2 respectively shows the comparative analysis of mental health of adolescents belonging to normal and disabled population. The table clearly depicts a significant difference in the mental health among adolescents belonging to normal and disabled population as the calculated value of 't' was found to be 4.31 which was higher than the tabulated value of 't' at 5 percent probability level with 39 degree of freedom signifying that adolescents belonging to normal population experienced more sound mental health as compared to the adolescents belonging to disabled population

which might be due to the reason that adults with cerebral palsy are at a higher risk for developing mental illnesses. Focusing primarily on depression and anxiety, a study revealed adults with CP (no intellectual disabilities) had almost a 2- to 3-fold increase in the likelihood of being diagnosed with these two conditions than adults without CP. For the general public, these results may seem shocking, but for individuals with physical disabilities and caregivers, the data comes as no surprise. Individuals with physical disabilities sustained from birth injuries, illnesses, or accidents later in life, are often so focused on their physical needs it can be easy to neglect their mental health.

IV. CONCLUSION

It is concluded that, maximum numbers of respondents were under average mental health in normal population whereas maximum numbers of respondents were having poor mental health in disabled population. The results further reveal significant difference in the mental health among adolescents belonging to normal and disabled population in the study area.

A. Limitations of the Study

- The study was limited to the respondents of Allahabad.
- The study was limited to the adolescents only.

B. Recommendations

- As the physical disabled adolescents are the most valuable and vulnerable section of our society so the positive and effective approach should be adopted to boost their mental health helps them to have a good and stress-free life.
- Mental health concept should be introduced to the students of school and college levels using rigorous and comprehensive programme by the policy makers to minimize the mental and social problems experienced and expressed by adolescents in both categories.
- Importance of mental health in today's context should be popularized by psychologist, psychiatrist, counsellors and social workers at various levels (family, school, organization, society) through camps, drives and media to build up an appropriate environment in respect of developmental stage for disabled adolescents.

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