DEPRESSION AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS: UNDETECTED, UNDERDIAGNOSED

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ABSTRACT

Background. Depression is a condition that can not be taken lightly, in any age. It is one of the most significant risk factor for suicide, especially in adolescents. More over, depression can also interfere one's social and educational life. Hence, recognizing it and treating it becomes pivotal, let alone in teenagers like high school students who are also at risk for suffering from depression. This study wished to identify the incidence of depression among high school students in Palembang, Indonesia.

Method. This is an observational descriptive study towards 47 high school students in Palembang, Indonesia. Students who were eligible for the study were asked for informed concent before they participated in the study. They were then asked to fill in the Self Rating Questionnaire (SRQ) in order to screen depression among them.

Result. Almost half of the high school students are having depression (42.55%). Most of them are females (51.35%) and are from the tenth grade, meaning they are the new students (57.14%).

Conclusion. Depression is quite prevalent among adolescents, hence it needs special attention on how to prevent depression in teenagers.

Keywords : Depression, Teenagers, High School Students, SRQ

I. INTRODUCTION

Depression is a cluster of specific symptoms with associated impairment, that can happen to anyone, regardless age, sex, and race. Adolescents like teenagers, can have depression too, and its symptoms are relatively similar to those found in adults.[1,2] The diagnostic criteria to establish depression in adolescent has already been set by the two main classification systems (international classification of diseases-10 (ICD 10)) and the American Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental-Disorders-IV (DSMIV)). There is only one exception for establishing diagnosis in adolescents and children, where depressed mood is not obliged as a core diagnostics, but irritable is.[3] This is probably one of the main reasons why depression in adolescents is often undetected and underdiagnosed in adolescents. Adolescents tend to have more fluctuating symptoms, more irritable, and more mood reactive. More over, if the main problems are

unexplained physical symptoms like refuse to go to school, eating problems, decline in school performance, or like behavioural issues, the diagnosis of depression is even harder to make.

The problem is, depression in adolescence is not that rare. In contrast, its prevalence is high, making it a serious problem to face.[4,5,6] It also posses suicide risk[7] and other consequences such as comorbid psychiatric disorders.[8] Another thing to concern is that depression has a high risk of recurrence[7,9] The etiology of depression has been investigated quite thoroughly over the years that we have gained more insight on what causes it. However, it can still be hard to predict which person will fall into depression, and explaining why such person develops depression. This challenge is most likely due to the multifactorial nature of the disease.[6] Stressul life events has long been considered as one of the major risk factors for depression to occur.[9] Break ups, fighting with friends, even homeworks could be stressful for teenagers like high school students. The mechanism on how these different stressful life events could lead to depression is still being questioned. Troubles in controlling and regulating emotions is thought to play a role in the occurence of depression.[10,11,12]

Due to its high prevalence and high burden, depression among adolescents including teenagers is an issue not to be taken lightly. This study wished to screen and identify the incidence of depression among students in one of the high schools in Palembang, Indonesia.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is an observational descriptive study with a cross sectional design. The study was conducted in students in one of the high school in Palembang. There was no prior screening on these high school students, so there was no prior knowledge about the probability of having depression or not having depression among the candidates. All the high school students who were eligible for the study were asked to fill the Self Rating Questionnaire (SRQ). Measurement of depression is obtained through the result of the SRQ. Demographic data including age and sex was also included.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Fourty seven students were included in this study. Majority of them are female (78.72%) while the rest of them are male (21.28%). All the students participating in the study were tenth grade and eleventh grade students, as it can be seen from table 1 below.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of The High School Students

Demographic Characteristics	n	%
Sex		
Males	10	78.72
Females	37	21.28
Class		

Tenth	28	59.57
Eleventh	19	40.43

All participants were asked to fill in the self-filled questionnaire consisted of 20 questions with yes or no as an answer. If one answers yes more than six times, one is considered of having a depression, vice versa. The study shows that almost half of the students are having depression based on the result, as it can be seen on table 2 below. This finding is accordingly to the theory that adolescent is prone to depression, worldwide.

Table 2. Depression among High School Students

Depression	n	%
Yes	20	42.55
No	27	57.45
TOTAL	47	100

Depression was found to be more prevalent in females than in males. Statistically speaking, the incidence of depression is indeed more common in females than in males. Where females could reach to 20-25% incidence rate, whereas males is only around 7-12%. The distirbution of depression among high school students based on sex can be seen on table 3 below.

Table 3. Depression Among High School Students Based on Sex

Depression	Males		Females	
	n	%	n	%
Yes	1	10	19	51.35
No	9	90	22	59.45
TOTAL	10	100	37	100

IV. CONCLUSION

Depression was found in nearly half of the participants, signalling how prevalent depression is among teenagers, especially females.

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