

CHAPTER 27

CHILDREN'S STRESS SYMPTOMS – A BETWEEN-GROUP COMPARISON

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Children and adults are exposed to daily stressors and stress outcomes. Research has usually focused on adults, which underlies the need to study children's experiences. A cross-sectional quantitative study exploring children's stress reactions was conducted with one hundred and twelve 5-8 year olds, 58 boys and 54 girls, from different schools in the Lisbon area to address the question: what are the stress symptoms experienced by school-age children?. The analyses focused on gender, age, family income, and type of school attended. Data were collected in school settings using parents' demographic questionnaire and children's reports (ESI child stress scale). Depressive reactions decrease with age and are significantly different between school-group children. 19.6% of children reported high stress scores, suggesting that child stress should be addressed and further researched. We pinpoint the importance of assessing children's own perceptions and indicate some limitations that should be considered in future studies.