

EFFECT OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIP, GENDER AND LOCALE ON MENTAL HEALTH OF ADOLESCENTS

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims to study the effect of family relationship on mental health of adolescents. Adolescent period is the crucial factor to build personality and mental health. Family and social environment affects the mental health. Mental health is defined as the person's ability to make positive self evaluation, to perceive the reality, to integrate the personality, autonomy, group oriented attitudes and environmental mastery. Family relationship has important influence on person's mental health. The objectives were to study the effect of family relationship, gender and locale on mental health of adolescent boys and girls. It was hypothesised that family relationship, gender and locale would affect the mental health of adolescents. A sample of 200 (100 boys and 100 girls) was selected from different colleges located in Handia (rural area) and Prayagraj (urban area) .These subjects were administered family relationship inventory and mental health inventory. The collected data was analysed with the help of t test. The findings of the study reveal that gender and locale has no effect on mental health but the family relationship has significant effect on mental health of adolescents. Adolescents who have good mental health, who are successful and well developed came from families where positive relationship existed between them and their parents whereas adolescents who are discouraged and rejected at home lack concentration in social work. They had poor mental health.

KEYWORDS : *Mental health, family relationship, adolescents , locale*

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Mental health includes our emotional, psychological and social well being. Mental Health has been mentioned as

the ability of a person to balance one's desires and aspirations to cope up with life stresses and to make psychosocial adjustment (Bhalerao et al 2008). It affects how we think, feel and act. 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 to old age. Mental Health as defined by World Health Organisation is a state of well being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities can cope with the normal stress of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to his or her community. According to WHO, mental health includes " subjective well being, perceived self efficacy, autonomy, competence, inter-generational dependence and self actualization of one's intellectual and emotional potential among others.

If a person is possessing good mental health, he/she may take various responsibilities of a family and work place, understand the complications, try to solve them, plan for future and may adjust with others by become mutually strong. Therefore, mental health is thought to be the urgent need of the society.

Mental health depends upon many factors and situations such as severe illness, financial problems or the death of a loved one can have an effect on overall health of the individual. Other factors affecting mental health are work

environment, gender, locale, marital status, family structure, family relationship etc. The relationship we experience with the family has a great influence on our well being i.e. mental health. Strong positive relationship helps us build trust and feel supported. Children first learn about relationship from their own families. Families give them a model from which they start to discover how to build relationship throughout their lives. A warm and safe family environment help them to have good mental health. Healthy family relationship can foster a feeling of love and security in all members. Family relationship provide resources that can help an individual cope with stress, engage in healthier behavior and enhance self esteem leading to higher well being. An increasing body of research demonstrate that negative family relationships can cause stress, impact mental health and even cause physical symptoms (Amato & Sabolewski (2001)). They reported that non-supportive families can detract from someone's mental health or cause a mental illness to women. Chronic stress can detract from both mental and physical health. Over time, this stress can lead to development of mental health issue such as anxiety & depression.

Gender has been found affecting mental health. Daver examined data from various studies to conclude that common mental illness are more prevalent among women than in men. Williams and Paw also found significant gender differences.

Locale is also thought to be an important determinant of mental health. Gupta and Kumar (2008) found the significant difference in mental health or urban and rural women.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Mental Health- Mental Health is the person's ability to make positive self evaluation, to perceive the reality, to integrate the personality, group oriented attitudes and environmental mastery.

Family relationship- A family relationship can be defined as any combination of filiation or conjugal relationships that join two people directly or through a third party. It refers to the association, connection, interaction and bond between family members.

Adoloscence- whose age ranges from 15-17 years

Locale- Rural areas and Urban areas

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following were the objectives of the study:

1. To study the effect of family relationship on mental health of adolescent boys and girls.
2. To study the effects of gender on mental health of adolescent.

3. To study the effect of locale on mental health of adolescents.

HYPOTHESIS

1. There would be significant difference in mental health of adolescents having good or poor relationships.
2. There would be significant difference in mental health of boys and girls.
3. There would be significant difference in mental health of rural and urban adolescents.

METHOD

Sample – Sample comprised of 200 adoloscents (100 boys and 100 girls) with the age range of 15-17 years. Sample was down with purposive random sampling technique from different colleges located in Handia (rural area) and Prayagraj district (urban areas).

TOOLS

In the present study, two measures were used.

1. **Mental Health Inventory-** To collect the data relating to mental health, Mental Health inventory constructed by Dr. Jagdish Singh and A.K. Srivastava were used. It consists of 56 items. In this inventory, items were selected from six areas- positive self evaluation , perception of reality, integration of personality, autonomy, group oriented attitudes and environmental competence. Four alternative responses are given with each statement to express the opinion by the respondents. High scores on these dimensions lead to good mental health.
2. **Family Relationship Inventory (FRI)** prepared by Sherry and Sinha (1987) on the basis of Brunken and Crite's family relationship inventory in the Indian situations. The inventory is intended to identify the individuals who feel emotionally accepted, over protected or rejected by their parents. However, in the present study , only acceptance tendency is considered. FRI includes 150 items with true and false alternatives. This inventory has high reliability and validity. A high score in each area shows high degree of one's feelings or being accepted and concentrated by his or her parents.

PROCEEDURE

Survey method was employed to collect the data through inventories by adopting random sampling technique. The sample size of the study was 200 (100 boys and 100 girls) with the age range of 15-17 years. The respondents were contacted at their schools. The instructions for both tools had been read to the participants and sufficient probing was made. Sufficient time was given for completion of the test.

RESULTS

The obtained data was subjected to statistical analysis to find the impact of family relationship, gender and locale on mental health of adolescents. On the basis of mental health scores of adolescents, Mean, SD and t scores have been computed and reported in tables.

Table I showing mean mental health of good and poor family relationship subjects:

	N	Mean	SD	Sed	t	
Good family relationship	100	176	5.06	8.7	5.34	significant
Poor family relationship	100	129	4.8			

Table no I shows mean mental health scores of adolescents having good family relationship is 176 and poor family relationship is 129. The obtained t value is 5.34 which is significant at both .05 and .01 level of significance, thus showing that the mean mental health of adolescents having good family relationship is higher than that of mean score of adolescents having poor family relationship. The t value 5.34 shows that there is significant difference between adolescents having good and poor family relationships.

Table-2 showing mean mental health scores of boys and girls.

	N	Mean	SD	Sed	t	
Boys	100	170	5.02	5.1	1.97	NS
Girls	100	162	4.9			

Table 2 reveals mean mental health score of boys is 170 and girls is 162. The obtained t value 1.97 is not significant, thereby indicating that there is not significant difference in mental health of boys and girls, thus rejecting the hypothesis that there would be significant difference in the mental health of boys and girls.

Table 3 showing mean mental health score of rural and urban adolescents

	N	Mean	SD	Sed	t	
Rural	100	163	4.01	3.7	1.97	NS
Urban	100	170	4.06			

Table 3 shows that mean mental health score of rural area residents is 163 and of adolescents residing in urban areas is 170. T test was applied to see the significance of the difference between these two group means and was obtained as 0.87 indicating that there is no significant difference in the mental health of subjects living in rural and urban areas, thus rejecting the hypothesis that there will be significant difference in mental health of subjects living in rural and urban areas.

DISCUSSION

It is evident from the review of the literature that mental health is affected by many factors such as sex, family environment, social environment, socio-economic status,

family structure, family size, relationships etc. Research evidence clearly suggest that mental health is affected by family relationships, gender and locale. Adoloscents having good family relationships have good mental health. They have high degree of self confidence, self acceptance, self identity and feeling for worth whileness, realization of one’s potentials. They have a broad outlook on the world.

The present finding shows that gender has no significant effect on mental health. The findings also reveal that locale does not have any effect on mental health. Mental health of adolescents living in rural areas is similar to that of adolescents living in urban areas.

Family relationship has been found to be having significant effect on mental health. Adoloscents having good family relationship are found to be having good mental health. They have ability to understand and share other people’s emotions, the ability to concentrate at work and interest in several activities.

CONCLUSION

Taking into account the results of this study, the following conclusion is drawn i.e. the gender and locale has no effect on mental health of adolescents. Boys and girls have similar mental health. The adolescents living in rural and urban areas have same mental health but the family relationship has significant impact on mental health. Persons having good family relationships have good mental health.

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