

Original article:

A study to screen separation anxiety disorder among higher secondary school students

Kumar P¹, Jayachandran K¹, Heber Anandan², Sathyamurthi B³

1. Assistant Professor, Department of Pediatrics, Mohan Kumaramangalam Medical College, Salem, Tamilnadu, India

1. Professor, Department of Pediatrics, Government Kilpauk Medical College, Tamilnadu, India

2. Senior Clinical Scientist, Dr.Agarwal's Healthcare Limited, Tamilnadu, India

3. Professor, Department of Pediatrics, Government Kilpauk Medical College, Tamilnadu, India

Corresponding author : Heber Anandan, Dr.Agarwal's Healthcare Limited, No.10, South By-pass road, Vannarpettai, Tirunelveli – 627003
Tamilnadu, India

Abstract:

Introduction: Separation anxiety is the only anxiety disorder restricted to infancy, childhood, or Adolescents. They have excessive fear or anxiety concerning their separation from home or their caregivers.

Aim: To screen for separation anxiety disorder among higher secondary school students using SCARED scale child version and parent version.

Method: Descriptive was study done in 400 higher secondary students from two schools students and their parents were interviewed using SCARED scale child version and parent version.

Results: Our study shows that 9% of the children have separation anxiety disorder. Prevalence in females is 10.5% and in males is 7% respectively.

Conclusion: The prevalence of anxiety among school children is higher in our study compared to the previous studies with prevalence being higher in females. Prevalence of separation anxiety disorder is higher than in previous studies. There is no gender difference in separation anxiety disorder which is in accordance with previous studies.

Keywords: Scared Scale, separation anxiety disorder, behaviour, performance

Introduction:

One of the most common psychiatric problems prevailing among adolescence in this era is the anxiety disorders (1,2). Adolescence is a peculiar period between a dependent child and an independent adult. They comprise of 15% of the total population in developed countries and 22.8% in India. Though many are affected, it is solely under diagnosed. This is because both the parents and the practitioners themselves ignore the early signs and symptoms and

hence no appropriate treatment (3). These traits can continue through adulthood and may become permanent and difficult to treat. Early onset symptoms (<13 years) have more chronic and persisting course (4,5). The symptoms may appear subtle, but they can lead on to serious and chronic illness. Though the spectrum of anxiety disorders in adolescence varies, the critical part is it causes significant emotional stress among family members

and also academic under achievement in the individual.

Aim and objectives

To screen for separation anxiety disorder among higher secondary school students using SCARED scale child version and parent version.

Materials and methods:

Descriptive study was done by Department of Paediatrics, Kilpauk Medical College Hospital, and Chennai in higher secondary students. Institutional Ethics committee approval, School Management permission to conduct the study in school premises and informed consent was obtained. 400 Higher secondary school students (11th standard) from 2 schools were recruited for the study. SCARED scale, Child version and Parent version questionnaire was use to access 3 months situation. One to one

interview was taken with students; parents were interviewed in teacher parent meeting individually.

Results

400 higher secondary students from 2 schools were questioned, equal gender distribution in the ratio of 1:1. Analysis reveals that prevalence of Separation anxiety disorder is 36 (18%) in child version. Distribution of generalised anxiety disorder in gender, male 15 (7.5%), female 21 (10.5%). Parent version shown prevalence of Separation anxiety disorder is 42 (21%) which is 3% higher than child version. Both gender shown 1.5% increase in separation anxiety disorder in parent version than child version. Analysis of gender distribution as per child version of SCARED scale shows that Separation anxiety disorder is more in females than males.

Table 1 Distribution of study results in gender

Version	Generalised anxiety disorder	
	Male	Female
Child version	7.5%	10.5%
Parent Version	9%	12%

Discussion

Our study shows prevalence of 9.0% in child version and 10.5 % in parent version of separation anxiety which is higher than usual as this may attributed to working parents, nuclear family and urbanisation. Other studies showed an average of about 3.75%.

Our study showed no gender difference in separation anxiety disorder which is similar to Susan Jo Perlmutter et al in their study also showed no gender difference (10).

SEPARATION ANXIETY DISORDER

Study	Separation Anxiety Disorder
Susan Jo Perlmutter et al (10)	3.5-5.4 %
Saint Louis behavioral medicine institute	4%
Chaudhury et al	0.94%
E Emerson et al	3.7%
Raakhee.A.S and Aparna.N et al (9)	4.0%
Our study	9.0 % (child version) 10.5% (parent version)

Studies	Male :female
Susan Jo Perlmutter et al (10)	No gender difference
Our study	No gender difference

Conclusion:

Our study showed higher prevalence of Separation anxiety disorder in the study population. This study implies more studies are to be conducted like this study and children with anxiety disorders are to be

identified at earlier stage and properly counselled and treated if necessary. This is the need of the hour and to improve both the academic and general outcome of children.

References:

1. Carle. Schwartz, Nancy Snidman, Jerome Kaan, Adolescent Social Anxiety as an Outcome of Inhibited Temperament in Childhood. Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry Volume 38, Issue 8 , Pages 1008-1015, August 1999.
2. Costello EJ, Epidemiology In March JS, ed. Anxiety Disorders in Children and Adolescents. New York: Guilford;1995:109-124.
3. Treating Anxiety Disorders in Youth: Current Problems and Future Solutions. Washington DC: Anxiety Disorders Association of America (ADAA); 1999:6376.
4. Cohen P, Cohen J et al (1993) An epidemiological study of disorders in late childhood and adolescence-I: age- and gender-specific prevalence. J Child Psychol Psychiatry 34:851–866.
5. Keller M et al (1992) Chronic course of anxiety disorders in children and adolescents. J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry 31:595–599

6. Deb, Sibnath , Chatterjee et al. (2010) Anxiety among high school students in India : comparisons across gender, school type, social strata, and perceptions of quality time with parents. Australian Journal of Educational and Developmental Psychology. 2010;10(1):18-31.
7. Sarwat A, Ali SMI, Ejaz MS. Mental health morbidity in children: A hospital based study in child psychiatry clinic. Pak J Med Sci 2009;25(6):982-985.
8. Bernstein GA, Hektner JM, Borchardt CM, McMillan MH. Treatment of school refusal: one-year follow-up. J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry.2001;40:206-13.
9. Raakhee.A.S, Aparna.N. A Study On The Prevalence Of Anxiety Disorders Among Higher Secondary Students. GESJ: Education Science And Psychology 2011
10. Susan Jo Perlmutter. Childhood Anxiety Disorders [Internet]. Acnp.org. 2000 [cited 10 May 2016]. Available from: <http://www.acnp.org/g4/gn401000163/ch159.html>