

Home environmental factors contributing to stress among adolescents in Colombo district Sri Lanka - Preliminary results

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Adolescents are often subject to stress associated with psychosocial adversities at home, at school and many other factors including peer pressure. The Adolescent Stress Questionnaire (ASQ) devised by Byrne et al. (2007) has been used in many populations in the world to assess adolescent stress levels. The main objective of the study is to determine home environmental factors that contribute to stress amongst adolescents in Colombo District using the ASQ. A descriptive cross sectional study was conducted on adolescents aged 14 to 16 (n=70) attending government schools. Baseline data were obtained and the ASQ was administered after validating it in Sinhala Language. Stress at home was assessed by questions measuring conflicts between adolescent and parents, between parents, arguments at home, lack of trust from adults, over expectations from parents, hassling by parents about the external appearance, not been taken seriously by parents, having to abide by petty rules, little or no control over one's life and others. The mean age for study sample was 15.21 years \pm 0.50 SD. Females were 51% of the sample. Subjects were divided into stressed and non-stressed groups based on the ASQ score. 34.28 % were stressed in relation to home environment. The mean home environment score was significantly higher in the stressed group (28.79 \pm 4.66 SD) than the mean score in the non-stressed group (13.79 \pm 3.76 SD) ($p < 0.0001$). Factors in the home environment significantly contributed to stress among adolescents. Measures to avoid or minimize stress factors in the home environment may significantly reduce stress among adolescents. Parents and care givers should be made aware of these factors to reduce stress amongst adolescents.

Key words: Adolescent, Home environment, Stress