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Home, School Environmental Factors and Peer Pressure Contributing to Stress Among Adolescents in Colombo district Sri Lanka - Preliminary Results

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Psychosocial adversities at home, school, peer pressure and other factors contribute to stress amongst adolescents. Adolescent stress levels can be assessed by the Adolescent Stress Questionnaire (ASQ) [Byrne et al. (2007)]. The main objective of the study is to determine factors that contribute to stress amongst adolescents in Colombo District. 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. Stress at home, school and peer pressure were assessed by analyzing the ASQ scores.

The mean age for study sample was 15.21 years ± 0.50 SD. 51% were females. 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 ± 4.66 SD Vs) than in the non-stressed group (13.79 ± 3.76 SD) (p < 0.0001). The mean score for stress of school performance was significantly higher in the stressed group (20.21 ± 4.827 SD Vs 13.70 ± 3.765 SD; p < 0.0001). The mean score for stress of teacher interaction and stress of peer pressure was significantly higher in the stressed group than in the non-stressed group (p < 0.0001).

Measures to avoid or minimize stress factors may significantly reduce stress. Awareness should be created amongst parents, care givers, teachers and peers to reduce stress amongst adolescents who are passing through a vulnerable period of their lives.