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Stress among school going adolescents & homoeopathic management

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Abstract

We define Stress as an internal state which can be caused by physical demands on the body or by environmental and social situations which are evaluated as potentially harmful, uncontrollable, or exceeding our resources for coping. Stress is definitely a big word with even bigger impact; however, this can be dealt with small changes that we bring in our day to day life. Stress is experienced in all levels of human life irrespective of age and is most prevalent amongst students nowadays. It is essential to identify the cause of the stress so that it can be addressed conscientiously and efficient interventions can be outlined. Students in secondary education settings face a wide range of ongoing stressors related to academic demands. Stress is always seen as subjective process and encompasses individual's personal analysis and counter to a threatening event. Psychological impact of this Stress is one of the most important condition. Homoeopathic medicines provide rapid, gentle and permanent cure on this sensitive issue of Adolescents. This study is aimed to find the level of stress experienced by the school going adolescents and to prove the efficacy of Homoeopathic Constitutional medicines among such cases.

Keywords: Adolescent stress, academic stress, homoeopathy, mental health

1. Introduction

Academic pressure has increased over the past few years, there are examinations, assignments and many other activities that a student has to shuffle through. Not only the design but teachers and parents also burden the students with a lot of pressure to score high marks. These expectations make the students work mechanically and end up in creating more stress. Along with academics, the parents and the institutions insist the students to participate in extracurricular activities too, the current expectations from the students is to be an allrounder. Lack of proper channels for counseling leads to more confusion and the students are unable to choose a career for themselves even after rigorous studying patterns. This demanding attitude from parents and teachers leave the students bewildered and builds up stress. Teenage and high school plays fundamental role in shaping a child's personality and outlook towards life.

Adolescence is a period when individuals become independent from their parents. The period of adolescence itself was well recognized as a period of 'stress and storm' as an adolescent has to undergo a lot of physical and mental changes during this stage ^[1]. Psychologists refer adolescence as Transition Stage as this is the period where the adolescents transform from a child to an adult ^[2]. Apart from the home environment adolescents spend most of their time in their school. School environment, curriculum design, examinations and social support definitely would influence the level of stress experienced by the adolescents.

Heavy academic workloads and the feeling of being in race to meet another deadline constantly frightens adolescents. Parental pressure on children to shine in their study and perform well in extracurricular activities is remarkably high. Compelling need to excel in studies, often prone to abuse, does injure the morale and is one of the greatest causes of stress, failure and breakdown. The race amongst parents to prove that their child is an allrounder makes them end up as victim rather than successful. Lack of support is major reasons for stress amongst students, lack of interaction with parents and teachers keep on building on doubts and confusions that a child might have eventually leading to stress. Prolonged stress can lead to physical and emotional disorders, further resulting in anxiety and depression.

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1.1 Factors of stress

Factors of stress generally fall into four categories: physical, emotional, social and behavioral. However, in the student's life, examination also has a great impact, thus examination is considered as fifth factor in the study. Many of these factors come and go as a result of short-term stress. However, factors that are associated with more long-term, sustained stress can be harmful. Consequences can include fatigue, poor morale and ill health. High levels of stress without intervention or management can contribute to mental health problems (e.g. depression, anxiety, interpersonal difficulties etc.), Behavioral changes (e.g. drug abuse, restlessness, appetite disorders etc.) and sometimes involve medical consequences (e.g. headaches, bowel problems, heart disease, etc.).

1.2 Tool

The items were framed by referring to the authors cited in the forgoing pages, few statements through review of literature on the subject and also by discussions with experts in the field. These sources have provided the base for the development of tools. Before constructing the tools, theoretical constructs were formed consisting of the 4 hypothetical factors. Students Stress Rating Scale developed by Dr. M. Balamurugan and Dr. D. Kumaran, University of Madras, was utilized to elicit the level of stress among the respondents. The scale has 35 items with 7-point response ranging from Every day to Never. In Students' Stress Rating Scale (SSRS), there were five hypothetical factors namely Physiological, Intellectual, Emotional, Examination and Behavioral Stress.

2. Homoeopathic Concept:

In § 214 Dr. Hahnemann starts to tell us that a patient with a mental-emotional disease must be perceived the same way as other patients and then he tells us something more specific:

"What I have to teach about the cure of mental and emotional disease comes down to very little; they are to be cured in exactly the same way as all other disease, not differently ; i e. with a remedy, a disease agent capable of producing in the body and psyche of healthy people symptoms as similar as possible as those of the case".

In § 226 he says:

"In mild psycho-somatic disease you can help them, before it has extended themselves too much, we can help them greatly with psychotherapy and good living".

2.1. Mental Diseases

"Mental diseases are one-sided diseases of Psoric origin, though they are of whole psychosomatic entity, the derangement of mental disposition increases while of the corporeal symptoms decline (§ 215).

2.2. Mental diseases of psycho-somatic type (§ 225)

These are the mental diseases that arise as a result of prolonged emotion disturbances. Different psychological depressions like continued anxiety worry, vexation, wrongs and frequent occurrence of greater fear: fright. Such diseases may be of recent origin and may not have developed fully into corporeal diseases. But if left untreated they may damage body.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Source of Data

The study about Stress among the school going adolescents was conducted on the students, who are studying in Higher Secondary Schools in the Salem City, Tamil Nadu.

3.2. Methods of Collection of Data

Inclusion Criteria: Students of Age group between 15yrs to 18yrs of both sexes.

Exclusion Criteria: Students undergoing treatment for any other chronic diseases.

3.3. Sample Size and Method of Selection

The study begins with distribution of questionnaire to 162 school students doing their 11th & 12th standard in Higher Secondary Schools located at Salem City, Tamil Nadu, were screened. Informed consent taken from school authority, teachers, parents and adolescents. Adolescents are explained how to fill form. The questionnaire after completion with time period of 5 days is taken back from adolescents. The sample size of 30 was selected using inclusion and exclusion criteria. The diagnosis was made on the basis of symptom presentation. Follow up of cases were recorded for a period of five months.

3.4. Intervention: A complete case history was collected by using a specifically designed proforma and recorded. Then the analysis, evaluation of symptoms and Totality of patient were derived according to the Homoeopathic concept and guidelines which is followed in the Vinayaka Mission's Homoeopathic Medical College & Hospital. By considering Psychiatric assessment and Totality of patient, the rubrics were derived from various Repertories, symptom similimum was compared with drugs explained in Homoeopathic Materia Medica finally a remedy was selected and administered to every individual case. For the assessment of each case Students Stress Rating Scale [SSRS] was used. Follow up was taken for a period of five months. After following up of cases the inferences were drawn by analysis of the outcome.

3.5. Statistical Analysis

The statistical analysis of data was done using Paired-t test for the various scores obtained by SSRS in the beginning and at the end of study. The statistic test 't' follows patient's t distribution with [n- 1 =29] degrees of freedom. Here, tabulated value of 't' at 5% level of significance is 2.045 and 1% level of significance is 2.756 for 29 degrees of freedom. Since the calculated value is 18.899 which is greater than the table at 5% & 1%, which shows there is reduction in symptoms after giving Homoeopathic Medicines.

3.6. Suggestions

From the statistical analysis it is evident that adolescent students do suffer stress due to various reasons. Along with the prescribed Homoeopathic Medicines, the following suggestions would help the adolescent school students to reduce their level of stress with the active support of the environment.

- Appointing Professional Psychologists as counselors in all schools.
- Giving importance to the desired extra-curricular activities of the students.
- Creating ideal school environment for the students.
- Providing Mental & Physical refreshment programs like ‘Yoga’ to enhance the mental & physical health of the adolescent school students.
- Focusing on Life-skills training to the adolescents which would help them to handle the tough situations positively.
- Having periodical parents-teachers meet to discuss on the ‘holistic’ development of the student rather than discussing only about academic progress.

showed marked improvement, 13 cases (43.33%) with moderate improvement, 9 cases (30%) with mild improvement and 2 cases (6.66%) showed no improvement. [Illustrated in-Fig.4.] Students Stress Rating Scale [SSRS] Questionnaire was used to assess the patients. Follow up was recorded for a period of Five months.

4. Results and Discussion

The study was conducted to find the Effectiveness of Homoeopathic medicine in Stress among students in higher secondary school. Out of thirty cases, Male 18 (60%), Female 12(40%) - [Illustrated in Fig.1.], Age group 15 years 5 cases (16.67%), 16 years 6 (20%), 17 years 9(30%) 18 years 10(33.33%)-[Illustrated in Fig 2.], The Homoeopathic medicines which covered the totality in these cases were: Aethusa Cy & Arsenicum album each Five cases, Nux vomica five cases, Anacardium Ori Three cases, Medorrhinum Two cases, Phosphorus Two cases, Natrum muriaticum Three cases, Helliborus Nig Two cases, Baryta carbonica, Hydrogenium and Tarentula each one case [Illustrated in Fig 3.]. As the final outcome, 6 cases (20%)

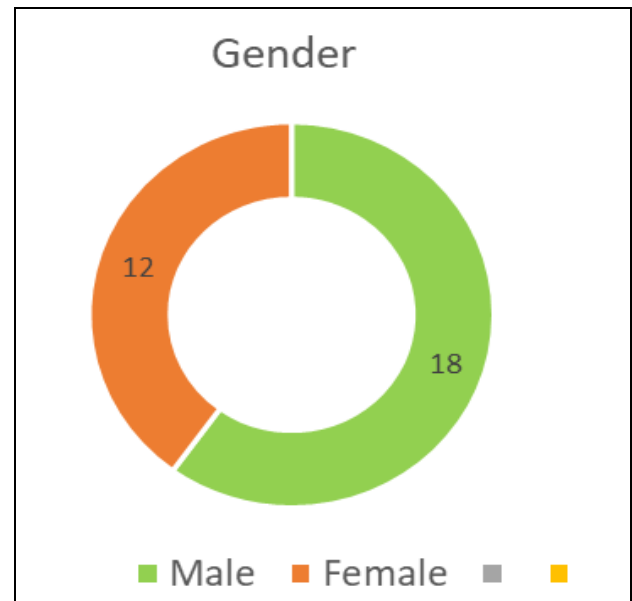


Fig 1: Shows Distribution of Gender Ratio

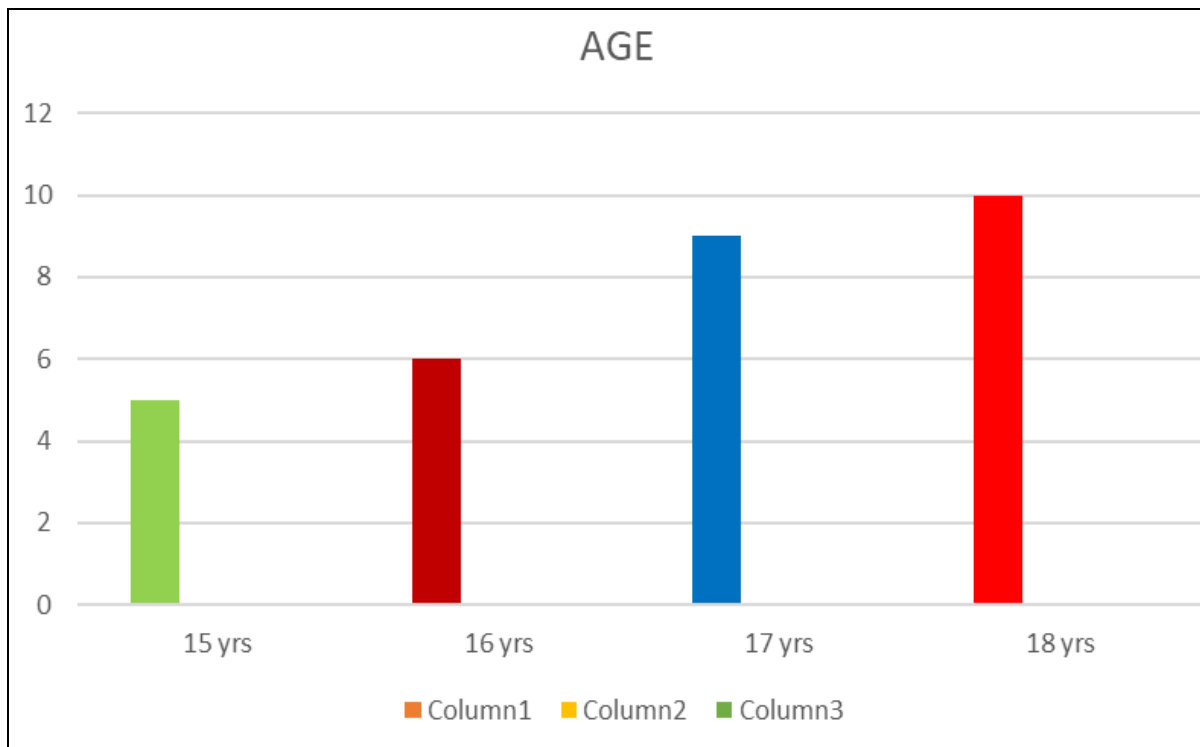


Fig 2: Shows Distribution of Age

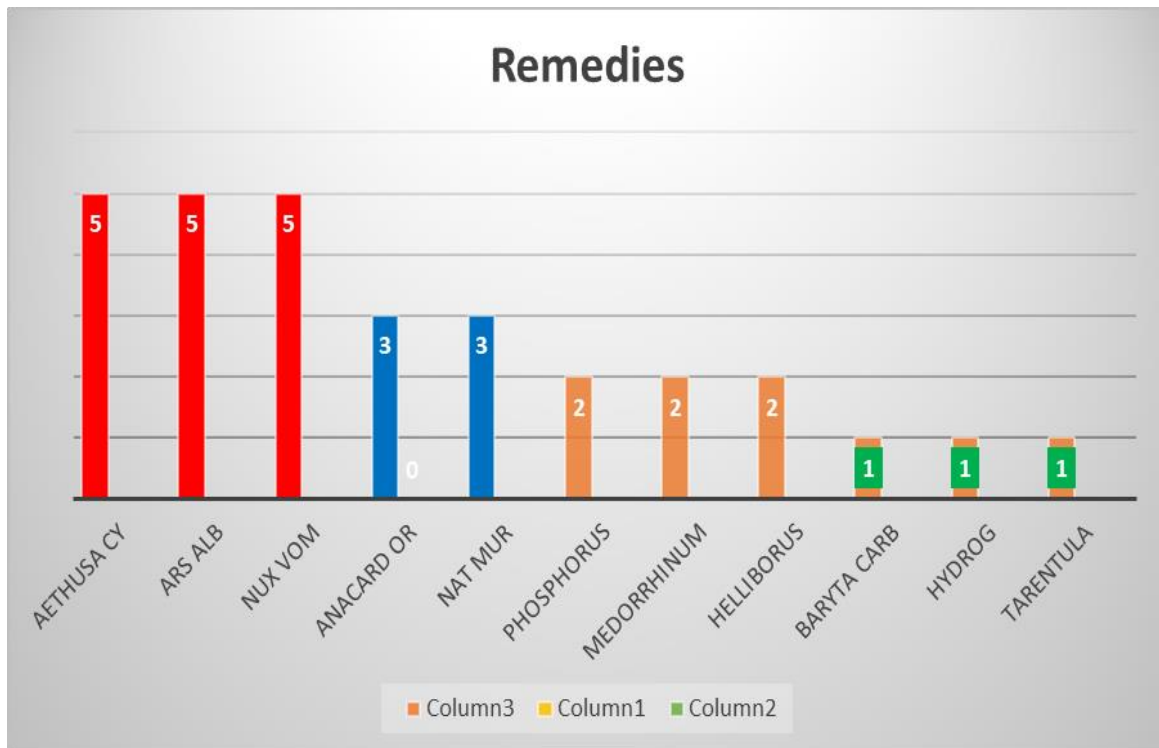


Fig 3: Shows Distribution of Remedies given to Cases

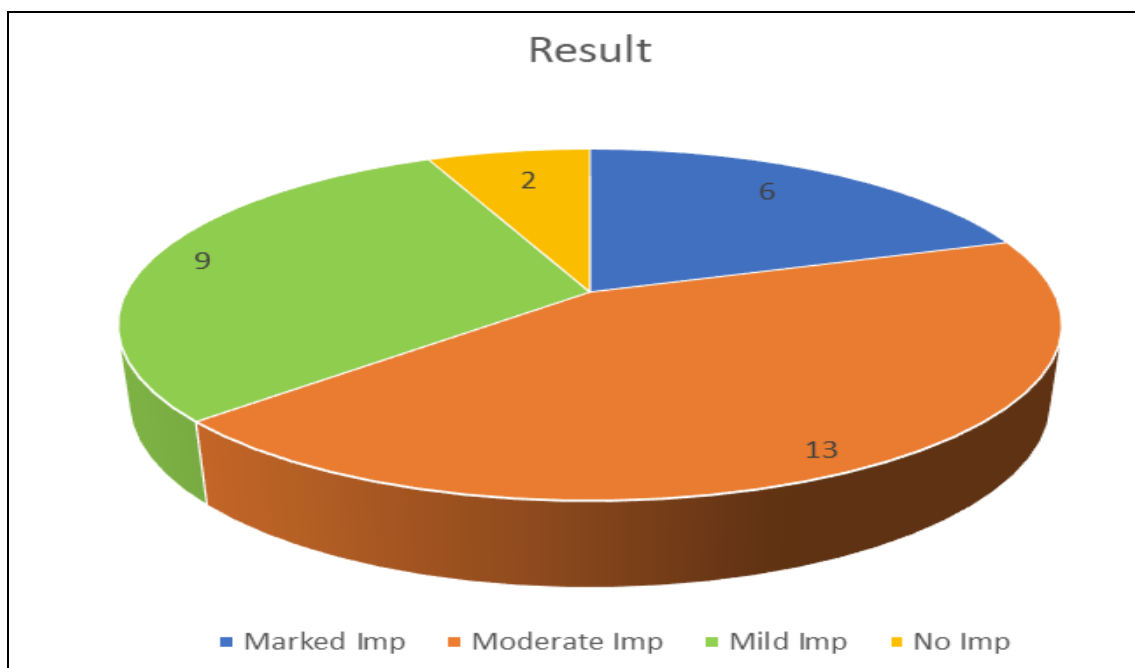


Fig 4: Shows Final Outcome of Stress Study

5. Conclusion

This study has established that adolescent school students especially in their higher secondary education face stress in many aspects. The reason behind is Parent’s expectation of their child to be only a ‘winning horse’, which makes the situation worse. By discussion between adolescents, parents and teachers, with full consideration to the wishes and ambitions of the adolescents, we could avoid such situations. Thus, this study emphasis that neglected stressed feelings among adolescents may leads to larger destruction but by the proper intervene and management with Homoeopathic remedies, we could overwhelm the Stress among school going Adolescents.

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