Assessment of Self-Esteem and its Correlation with Happiness in Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

Background: Adolescence is critical process allowing individual to leave childhood and enter into autonomous adulthood. Self-esteem has a strong relation to happiness, health and well-being. Although the research has not clearly established causation, we are persuaded that high self-esteem does lead to greater happiness. Low self-esteem is more likely to lead to depression. Most of the research till date was conducted in adult population, very few studies are on adolescents.

Objective: Assessment of self-esteem and correlate with psychological well-being in adolescents.

Methods: 400 school going adolescents were enrolled and questionnaire regarding self-esteem and happiness score were given, later assessed and correlated.

Result: Majority of students (84%) were having moderate self-esteem score; 53.75% had normal happiness score. Mean self-esteem score was increasing with age, girls were having more self-esteem score than boys. Significant positive correlation was observed between self-esteem score and happiness score.

Conclusion: Adolescents with high self-esteem are happier than adolescent with low self-esteem. Improvement in self-esteem will be useful to reduce mental health issues in teenagers.

Keywords: Adolescent, School Health, Self-Esteem, Happiness

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and one’s sense of well-being go hand in hand. Well-being is the state of being comfortable, happy and healthy. Happiness is a mental or emotional state of well-being defined by positive or pleasant emotions ranging from contentment to intense joy. Happy mental states may reflect on the judgment made by a person about his/her overall well-being. The Subjective happiness score is used to quantify happiness.

It has been noticed that high self-esteem has a positive implication on psychological well-being. Improving self-esteem improves well-being. This study helps us study the quantitative correlation between self-esteem and happiness.

**Material and Method**

After institutional ethics committee clearance, the proposed study was conducted for 2 years in department of paediatrics of tertiary care institute, Pune. It as a cross-sectional study included 400 school going adolescents aged between 11-15 yrs (8th, 9th, 10th standard) in Pimpri Chinchwad Corporation area (PCMC). Those who agree to participate in the study by giving written assent and consent, apparently healthy students without any chronic illness were included. Age group above 16 yrs., below 11 yrs., Adolescents suffering from endocrine disorder, chronic diseases and cardiovascular, respiratory, musculoskeletal, renal diseases. Are not included in this study.

**Study Protocol**

A study proforma in English was used to collect data. Rosenberg self-esteem scale and subjective happiness scale questionnaires were also used. Each question of the scales was well explained to the students for better understanding.

**Result**

### Table 1.Age and gender wise distribution of cases in the study

| Age (Yrs.) | No of cases | Percentage |
|------------|-------------|------------|
| 12         | 3           | .8         |
| 13         | 120         | 30.0       |
| 14         | 174         | 43.5       |
| 15         | 98          | 24.5       |
| 16         | 5           | 1.3        |
| Total      | 400         | 100.0      |

| Sex        |            |            |
|------------|------------|------------|
| Boys       | 224        | 56         |
| Girls      | 176        | 44         |
| Total      | 400        | 100.0      |

It was observed that majority of adolescents in the present study were of 14 years (43.5%) age followed by 13 years (30%) and 15 years of age (24.5%). It was seen that 56% students were Boys and 44% were Girls.

### Table 2.Distribution of Self-esteem and Happiness scores in the study adolescents

| Self-esteem score | No of cases | Percentage |
|-------------------|-------------|------------|
| Low (0-14)        | 37          | 9.25       |
| Moderate (15-25)  | 336         | 84         |
| High (26-30)      | 27          | 6.75       |

| Happiness score |            |            |
|-----------------|------------|------------|
| <4.5 (Less happy)| 87         | 21.75      |
| 4.5-5.5 (Normal)| 215        | 53.75      |
| 5.6-7 (More happy)| 98        | 24.5       |
| Total           | 400        | 100        |

In this study, 84% students were having moderate self-esteem score (15-25) while 9.25% were having low self-esteem (0-14) and 6.75% had high self-esteem score (26-30).

It was observed that majority of the students (53.75%) had normal happiness score (4.5-5.5) while 24.75% students were more happy having high happiness score (5.6-7). But 21.75% students were less happy having low happiness score (<4.5).

### Table 3.Comparison of self-esteem score according to age in the study

| Age (Years) | N  | Mean | SD  | f-value | p-value |
|-------------|----|------|-----|---------|---------|
| 12          | 3  | 17.00| 2.646| 1.39    | 0.24    |
| 13          | 120| 19.43| 3.854|         |         |
| 14          | 174| 19.13| 3.937|         |         |
| 15          | 98 | 20.08| 3.177|         |         |
| 16          | 5  | 20.20| 4.087|         |         |

It was observed that the mean self-esteem score was increasing with age but the difference observed was not statistically significant (p=0.24).

### Table 4.Comparison of self-esteem score according to sex in the study

| Sex     | Self-esteem score | MW test | p-value |
|---------|-------------------|---------|---------|
|         | N  | Mean | SD  | z-value | p-value |
| Boys    | 224| 19.09| 3.484| 2.14    | 0.032   |
| Girls   | 176| 19.91| 4.010|         |         |

It was observed that mean self-esteem score among Boys was 19.09±3.484 while in girls it was 19.91±4.010. The
difference of self-esteem score between boys and girls was statistically significant (p=0.032).

Significant positive correlation was observed between self-esteem score and happiness score with coefficient of correlation (r-value) 0.453 (p=0.001). Happiness score is increasing proportionately with Self-esteem score which is statistically significant (P<0.0001).

Discussion

This study was conducted to assess and correlate self-esteem and happiness in 11-16 yrs. adolescents. Total 400 adolescent students of 8th, 9th and 10th standard from private schools were included in this study. Self-esteem was assessed by using Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale while well-being was assessed by using Subjective Happiness Scale. These scales are pre tested and validated worldwide.

It was observed that mean self-esteem score was increasing with the age but observed difference was not statistically significant (F=1.39, p=0.24). Similar findings were also observed by Meera Padhy in their study.

It was observed that mean self-esteem score among boy students was 19.09±3.484 while mean score of girls was 19.91±4.010 and the difference observed was statistically significant (p=0.032). Similar findings were also observed by Meera Padhy in their study.

Correlation between self-esteem score and happiness score showed positive correlation with coefficient of correlation as 0.453 indicating children with high self-esteem are happier and children with low self-esteem are less happy. Similar results were obtained by Meera Padhy stating significant correlation between self-esteem and subjective wellbeing and observed correlation coefficient of 0.61. The results in this study are in line with the findings of Park and Jeong who also found that self-esteem was significantly and positively related with all the six subscales of psychological wellbeing. Paradise and Kernis and Freire and Tavares also found a significant and positive relationship between self-esteem and psychological wellbeing.

Conclusion

Majority of the adolescents (84%) in the present study were having moderate self-esteem score. Most of the adolescents (53.75%) have normal happiness score (4.4-5.5) indicating their psychological well-being. Self-esteem score was proportionately increasing with the age of adolescents. Adolescent girls are having better self-esteem than boys. The self-esteem was found to be significantly and positively related with happiness. This suggests that as self-esteem increases subjective happiness i.e., wellbeing.

Efforts should be made to improve self-esteem (e.g. life skills education) which will be useful to improve happiness index and in turn psychological well-being in adolescents. Improvement in self-esteem will be useful to reduce mental health issues in teenagers.

Conflict of Interest: None

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