

Mental Health Screening among Malaysian Indian Adolescents amid COVID-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 health crisis is widespread across the globe and it is the cause of severe mental health issues. Due to the prevalence of mental health adversities among Indian adolescents in Malaysia, further investigation is required on this matter. However, there is a lack of literature on mental health issues among Malaysian Indian adolescents during this health crisis. Therefore, the present study is an attempt to assess the state of mental health among Indian adolescents during this COVID-19 health crisis and to determine the effectiveness of the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12) factor structure as a screening tool. Furthermore, the study also examined the association between demographic elements and GHQ-12 factors. A cross-sectional study comprised of 257 Indian adolescents were recruited using the snowball sampling method to complete the GHQ-12. The value of the reliability analysis was 0.847, which suggests that the scale employed in this study is highly reliable. The three factors of mental health issues that were studied comprised of social and emotional dysfunction, psychological distress, and cognitive disorder. The results were extracted from factor analysis with an overall variance of 56.4%. Contrary to expectations, the findings revealed that nearly 70.4% of the sampled adolescents were psychologically healthy and 29.6% of the adolescents exhibited psychological distress. Significant association was found between parent's education background and all the three factors. Female respondents were negatively and significantly associated with the cognitive disorder factor. This study expanded the comprehension of mental health issues and revealed that the GHQ-12 is suitable tool to assess mental health among Indian adolescents. Further studies with a larger sample size is needed to evaluate the state of mental health among Malaysian Indian adolescents and the effectiveness of GHQ-12 as a screening tool.

Keywords: COVID-19, GHQ-12, Indian adolescent, Mental health, Malaysia