

## MENTAL HEALTH AND IMPULSIVITY AMONG ADOLESCENTS

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the relationship between mental health and impulsivity among adolescent. The sample for the study consisted of 60 adolescents. For collecting the data simple random sampling has been applied. Mental Health Inventory by Jagdish and A.K. Srivastava and Impulsiveness scale by S.N. Rai has been administered as a measuring tool. Correlation technique was planned for the analysis of the data. Results revealed that mental health and impulsiveness are negatively correlated with each other.

**Keywords:** Mental Health, Impulsivity.

### INTRODUCTION

The present age is an age of competition. Everybody wants to achieve success in a very short span of time. The general motto of the present youth is to make money and establish themselves by any means. Aggression, violence and suicides are increasing among the students as reported by Kay, LiXiao, Nokkaew and Park (2009) that poor mental health has been recognized as the leading cause of suicidal behavior, a sense of helplessness and lower academic achievement. Mental health is an important part of a person's life besides physical, spiritual and financial well being. It is believed that a healthy mind is the major source for an individual in attaining satisfaction in life. The world health organization (WHO) reported (2003) says, "Mental health as an individual's state of wellbeing when he realizes his abilities, as the ability to cope with normal stresses of life, to work productively and fruitfully and can contribute to his community. Mental health means a harmonious working of the mind, which results in well adjusted personality".

According to national mental health services, Knowledge Exchange Network (KEN), "Mental health refers to how a person thinks feels and acts when faced with life situations. It is how people look at themselves, their lives and the others people in their lives....., and explore choices". Impulsivity typically refers to a tendency to engage in behavior that involves rashness, a lack of foresight or planning, or that occurs without reflection or careful deliberation (Dawe et al., 2004). Adolescence itself is a time of deep turmoil. Definitely impulsive behavior of adolescent, may affect the mental health of the individual. In the context of experimental behavioral science, impulsivity is commonly viewed as a trait shown by some subjects that, when presented with a variety of outcomes; choose poorer immediate rewards rather than greater delayed rewards (Ainslie, 1975). From the behavioral perspective, impulsivity can be defined as a wide range of actions that are poorly conceived, prematurely expressed, unduly risky, or inappropriate to the situation and that often results in undesirable outcomes (Evenden, 1999). American Psychiatric Association (2000) defines impulsivity as the failure to resist an impulse or drive a temptation to perform an act that is harmful to the person or to others. More simply, it is described as the inability to delay gratification or the inverse of self-control (Monterosso & Ainslie, 1999).

Based on the literature, impulsivity is a common characteristic of delinquent crimes (Borum, 2000; Lipsey & Derzon, 1998; Palucka, 1998) A large portion of these acting out adolescents are males who in comparison to young girls, are more likely to have less impulse control (Erickson & Chambers, 2007). In 1996 speech at the National Children on Mental health Initiative, Donna Shalala secretary of the U.S. Department of health and human services said "Mental health is just as important as physical health, may be even more so". In this modern age impulsive tendency, restlessness and distractibility are very common in adolescents. The presence of aggression and conduct problems are strongly predictive of adolescent antisocial behavior. Impulsive behavior creates many problems such as truancy, stealing, substance abuse and sneaking out from the house at night. Adolescents are inattentive and will often manifest cognitive impulsivity. Abikoff and Klien (1992) stated that unfortunately adolescents with persistent symptoms of attention deficit hyper active disorder are likely to have associate academic difficulties and about 50% will have significant conduct problems. Impulsive behavior is one important factor for suicide or suicidal attempt. The objective of the present study is to investigate relationship between impulsivity and mental health among adolescents.

## METHOD

### Sample:

The sample comprised of 60 adolescents the age group of 16 to 20. Simple random sampling has been employed for the data collection.

### Tools:

To measure mental health, mental health inventory developed by Jagdish and A.K. Srivastava and Impulsiveness Scale by S.N.Rai and Alka Sharma has been administered as a Measuring tool.

### Procedure:

The Hindi version of Mental Health Inventory and Impulsiveness Scale was administered individually in a single setting. The researcher orally read the instructions and then inventory were personally given to them. After answering, the inventory was taken back and analyzed using the statistical methods.

### Statistical Analysis:

1. Mean and SD were calculated for comparative groups.
2. Correlation method of Carl Pearson was applied for observing the relationship between mental health and impulsiveness.

## RESULT

**Table 1**  
**Correlation between mental health and impulsiveness among adolescents**

Variables	N	Mean	S.D	Correlation ( r)
Mental Health	120	19.35	17.95	-0.53**
Impulsiveness		497.8	3.59	

\*\* Statistically significant at  $p < .01$

Result table clearly indicates that mental health and impulsivity was significantly negatively correlated (-0.53) with each other. Due to impulsiveness some adolescents become moody aggressive and withdrawn. The present correlation indicates that as mental health increases, impulsivity decreases and vice versa.

## DISCUSSION

Negative correlation was found between mental health and impulsive tendency among adolescents. Untreated mental health disorders can lead to school failure, family conflict drug abuse, violence and even suicide. Bower (2004) revealed that every year approximately 50 in 1000 adolescents experience the torment of major depression. A study of Geanellos (1999) inferred that rising rates of attempts of suicide particularly among youth aged between 15 - 19 years is due to emotional disturbance. Abikoff and Klien (1992) reported that conduct problems are often associated with other factors that may be difficult to remedy such as personality disturbance in the parents, marital discord and social disadvantages. The challenge is to distinguish those adolescents who have difficulties along a continuum of normality from those who have a clinical syndrome warranting interventions. It is high time to study and analyze the hidden factors of aggression, disobedience, decline in school performance, impulsivity, conduct problems, anti social behavior and sometimes depression that may be seen among adolescents. Recent research suggests that the onset of the depression in early adolescence is associated with a substantial risk of developing bipolar affective disorder later. Some depressed adolescents almost certainly attempt to modify their symptoms with alcohol, marijuana and other drugs. Parents and teachers must identify such types of mental illness or aggressive behavior. They should serve as an ideal role model for the development of the personality in early childhood. Thus early prevention, identification and early treatment of mental disorders are essentials for attaining good mental health. School, family and society all are the most important pillars for good mental health. For the development of any nation, mentally healthy people are an indispensable asset. Student support services, counseling services, government and non- government organizations, psychologist, health care providers all should come forward to facilitate good mental health among individuals and in the communities.

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