

The relationship of stress, alcoholism and sexual behavior with mental health among secondary school students: A study in Sabah, Malaysia

Abstract

Several studies have proved that there is a significant relationship between depression, prolonged stress and mental health. The purpose of this study is to find out the relationship between stress, addiction to alcohol and sexual behavior to mental health among multiethnic secondary school students in Sabah. About 500 secondary school students, of mean age 16.06 from Sabah, Malaysia participated in the survey. The survey design was adopted using validated instruments including Symptom Checklist-90 (SCL-90), Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS), Adolescent Alcohol and Drug Involvement Scale (AADIS) and Sexual Behavior Questionnaire. The findings of the survey indicate that there is a positive significance correlation between stress and mental health ($r = .774, p < .001$). The results also show that addiction to alcohol is not correlated with mental health ($r = 0.159, p > .05$), sexual behavior is positively correlated with mental health ($r = .646, p < .001$) and there is a significant difference among ethnic groups in Sabah ($F(9, 490) = 4.295, p < 0.01$). Conducting seminars & workshops to teachers and setting up of student counselling services with the help of mental health professionals are recommended to overcome mental health issues.