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More Money, More Problems? The Effect of Family-Based Psychoeducation on Depression and Anxiety in Affluent Adolescents

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Cover Page Footnote

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More Money, More Problems? The Effect of Family-Based Psychoeducation on Depression and Anxiety in Affluent Adolescents

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BACKGROUND

Early studies have demonstrated that affluent teenagers have anxiety, depression, and substance abuse rates similar to that of teenagers from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Family-focused psychoeducation alleviates symptoms of depression and anxiety in adolescents, but its efficacy has not yet been evaluated in affluent teens.

OBJECTIVES

To explore the efficacy of family-based psychoeducation to improve mental health outcomes in affluent teens.

METHODS

A literature search using the search engines PsychInfo, Google Scholar, PubMed for peer-reviewed articles from 2012-2015. Key words used included: "adolescents, anxiety, depression, affluence, family-based psychoeducation."

RESULTS

The scholarly evidence revealed that adolescents from affluent families have high levels of depression, anxiety, and stress. Affluence alone was not found to be a risk factor for mental illness; rather, "competitive norms" and perceived parental pressure in affluent communities act as mediating factors that could lead to negative adolescent adjustment (Kaslow et al, 2012). One study demonstrated that this relationship could be buffered by organized activity involvement (Randall, Bohnert & Travers, 2015). Family-based interventions proved to be effective for depression and anxiety in the adolescent population (Bhasin, Sharma, and Saini, 2010).

CONCLUSION

Based on this review of evidence-based literature, it is hypothesized that family-focused psychoeducation can be used for prevention and early detection of mental illness in affluent adolescents by acting on the mediating factor, perceived parental pressure. Further studies are warranted to test this hypothesis. By using the current evidence to guide practice, mental health outcomes can improve in this population often overlooked by healthcare providers.