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Age comparisons in the prevalence and severity of anxiety disorders among children and adolescents from Nairobi, Kenya.

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This was a comparative study to assess age differences in the prevalence and severity of anxiety disorders (ADs) using the Screen for Child Anxiety Related Emotional Disorders (SCARED)-Child version. The sample were 163 students (8-16 years) derived from Kabiria and Kawangware primary schools, in Dagoretti Constituency, Nairobi County Kenya. Quantitative data analysis using the statistical package for social sciences version 20 revealed presence of ADs ($M \geq 25$) for most respondents ($M_{8-16 \text{ years}} = 33.67, 79.1\%$). The severity and prevalence per age group were $M_{8-10 \text{ years}} = 37.36, 83.3\%$; $M_{11-13 \text{ years}} = 35.80, 87.7\%$ and $M_{14-16 \text{ years}} = 30.58, 72.5\%$. The analysis of variance revealed statistically significant age differences in severity of the ADs between the 8-10 and 14-16 year old ($p=0.005$) and the 11-13 and 14-16 year old ($p=0.024$) but not the 8-10 and 11-13 year old ($p=0.570$). Separation anxiety and panic disorder were the most prevalent with higher prevalence rates among the 8-10 year old ($SEP = 83.3\%, PD = 81\%$) pointing to high comorbidity rates that start early. Social anxiety ($M=8.28$) and generalized anxiety ($M=7.68$) were more severe for the 11-13 year old. Overall, the results indicated early age of onset of ADs with severity moderated by increased age, but also a waxing and waning course across the lifespan. Findings thus highlighted the importance of early intervention to curb chronicity.

Biography

Josephine is a doctoral candidate undertaking a clinical psychology degree at Daystar University in Nairobi Kenya. She has worked as a lecturer for the last 20 years and she is also a clinical psychologist at Nuru counseling center in Daystar University. She recently completed her doctoral dissertation and is awaiting graduation for the same, later this year.

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