

ABSTRACT

Background: Adolescents in developing countries including Ghana, are vulnerable to STIs, HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, suicide and self-harm due to the high prevalence of mental health problems in their age bracket.

Objective: This study examined the prevalence of common mental health outcomes such as anxiety and depression in SHS adolescents.

Method: The study recruited 259 adolescent males and females aged 10-21 years old, attending West African Senior High School from one to form three in the Adenta Municipality, using the simple random sampling technique. Three Standardized questionnaires were used to collect data; the Student –Life Stress Scale Inventory (SLSSI), Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS- 42), the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA) and a self- designed socio-demographic questionnaire was used to gather a cross-sectional quantitative data from the selected participants.

For statistical analysis, Stata version 15 was used to process data. Three significant tests were used in this study to answer the research questions; fisher's exact test, was used to test for association between depression, anxiety and demographic variables, simple and multiple linear regression was calculated to test for association between academic stress, peer and parent attachment relationship to anxiety and depression.

Results: The results indicated that anxiety and depression was common in the student population with females reporting slightly higher forms than males. Academic stress was seen only as a strong predictor of depression levels among the students but not anxiety. Lastly, parent and peer attachments relationships did not influence anxiety and depression significantly and rather served as protective factors against anxiety and depression, even though students with male parents reported severe anxiety and depressive symptoms as well

as students whose mothers had some form of education also reported severe forms of anxiety. Finally, it was found that, as adolescent age, their level of anxiety reduces.

Conclusion: The study concludes that since mental health problems are prevalent in the population of SHS adolescents, it is critically imperative to implement and provide therapeutic care with structured mental health support programs to adolescents experiencing anxiety and depression as this could be beneficial in improving their mental state.