

Body Shamming Stress on Adolescents Leading to increased Rate of Suicide among Them

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Abstract— BACKGROUND: adolescence, transitional phase of growth and development between childhood and adulthood. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines an adolescent as any person between ages 10 and 19. This age range falls within WHO's definition of young people, which refers to individuals between ages 10 and 24. Body shaming is the act of saying something negative about a person's body. It can be about your own body or someone else's.

Objective: The objective of this research is to find out the prevalence of body shamming among adolescents and the stress they face leading to increased rate of suicide among them.

Methods: The study was conducted with 50 students of 3 different schools of Ranchi, Jharkhand; with children of age 10-19. Within the schools, the participants were selected from classes 6th to 12th, Further systematic random sampling was done to select participants from each class.

Results: A total of 75 percent of the population responded yes to be shamed about their appearance. It is to be seen that shamming is more among girls in co-ed as well as single gender schools. Suicidal tendency is prevalent in both genders in huge numbers, but girls have the urge more.

Conclusion: it was observed that the overall percentage of each issue is higher compared to the global reports. There is a need to address the problems urgently or else suicide rates would be increasing day by day.

Index Terms: Body shamming, Suicide, Mental health.

INTRODUCTION

WHO defines 'adolescents' as individuals between 10-19. It is a unique stage of human development and an important time for laying the foundations of good health. Adolescents experience rapid physical, cognitive and psychosocial growth. This affects how they feel, think, make decisions, and interact with the world around them. Puberty now typically begins before the adolescence years, particularly in girls.

Adolescence is viewed as a transitional period between childhood and adulthood. 9 out of 10 adolescents face body shamming and its stress each year, which eventually leads to suicidal tendency among them.

There are more adolescents in the world than ever before: 1.2 billion, totaling one sixth of the global population. This number is expected to rise through 2050, particularly in low- and middle-income countries where close to 90% of 10- to 19-year-olds live.

Body shaming is the act of saying something negative about a person's body. It can be about your own body or someone else's

Body shaming can lead to mental health issues including eating disorders, depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and body dysmorphia, as well as the general feeling of hating one's body.

Adolescents experience different kind of criticisms on their body some of them are about weight, height, body hair, acne, attractiveness, food, clothing and many more.

Body shaming has myriad negative consequences on mental health. Here are some important ones:

- Adolescents who are body shamed have a significantly elevated risk of depression. It may lead to eating disorders.
- Body shaming worsens outcomes for obese women attempting to overcome binge eating.
- Body shaming can cause dissatisfaction with one's body, which then can cause low self-esteem.

Additional mental health concerns associated with body-shaming include:

- Anxiety
- Body dysmorphic disorder
- Depression

- Higher risk of self-harm or suicide
- Poorer quality of life (due to body dissatisfaction)
- Psychological distress

The Mental Health Foundation polled 4,505 adults in March and revealed that one in eight (13 per cent) of them had considered taking their own lives because of concerns relating to body image.

More than a third of respondents said their body image left them feeling anxious (34 per cent) or depressed (35 per cent).

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this research is to find out the prevalence of body shaming among adolescents and the stress they face leading to increased rate of suicide among them.

METHODS

Total number of participants

The study was conducted with 50 students of 3 different schools of Ranchi, Jharkhand; with children of age 10-19.

Inclusion area

The study was conducted with 3 different schools, 2 of same-gender school and one of co-ed.

Population type

School going adolescents aged 10-19 years.

Within the schools, the participants were selected from classes 6th to 12th, Further systematic random sampling was done to select participants from each class. The students were gathered in a room and briefed about body shaming in a online session and various aspects.

After assuring them about total confidentiality, they were handed out the excel spread sheets with questionnaires.

Out of total 200 students who participated,60% (i.e. 120), children reported facing body shaming ‘most of the time’, 30% of the population said as ‘mostly’ and 7% said ‘rarely’ and only 3% children reported as ‘never’ or ‘sometime’.

The questionnaire was made with a question if they have a suicidal feeling after these comments. Sadly

58%(i.e. 116) children said “yes” to the, urge to ‘suicide’ after people shaming them.

RESULT

Table 1: Distribution of adolescents according to body shaming victimization.

Body shaming	Boys school (n=50)	Girls school (n=50)	Coed school n=50(girls)	Coed school n=50(boys)	Total (n=200)	Percentage %
Yes	32	42	37	39	150	75%
No	18	08	13	11	50	25%

Table 2: Type of criticism faced by the adolescents.

Type of criticism faced	No. of girls facing the problem (n=100)	No. of Boys facing the problem (n=100)
Obesity/underweight	34	42
Acne	18	12
Pale skinned	08	0
Dark skinned	07	03
Short height	06	15
Tall heighted	02	02
Uneven teeth	10	03
Enhanced breast/ flat chested	05	N/A
Excessive sweat/odor	03	14
Voice change	07	09

Table 3: Number of adolescents having the strong urge to suicide

Gender	Percentage of students having the urge
Girls	52%/100 have the urge to suicide
Boys	22%/100 have the urge to suicide

RESULTS

After completing the statistics, it is seen that Girls face more body shaming than boys, and also the maximum amount of shaming is seen in co-ed schools as compared to single gender ones(Table 1).

In the type of criticism the maximum amount of shaming is done on the grounds of body weight. Both boys and girls face huge amount of criticism on being obese or underweight. Also short height and sweat is a prevalent problem among Boys (Table 2).

In doing the survey It’s found that 74% of the adolescents have the urge to suicide, which is quite a number.

DISCUSSION

In this study, the total percentage of prevalence of Body shaming is seen as 71% in Boys and 79% in girls, which is much higher than the findings of Michaela M Bucchianeri 1, Aimee J Arikian, Peter J Hannan, Marla E Eisenberg. Where they found the appearance based shaming to be 38.2 and 30 percent. The larger population of adolescents is seen to be victims of obesity and acne, which is so hard to them letting them think about suicide.

The findings even proves wrong the the findings of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine, which claims only 19% adolescents have the urge to suicide, instead its seen in the above survey that more than 70% have the urge to suicide.

From a practical perspective, it suggests that widely applied campus-based efforts to encourage positive body image (such as Body Project that are most often concerned with preventing eating disorders, might also be able to buffer new students' risk of both weight gain and depression as well. In addition, importantly, this study shows that men students are also vulnerable to the enculturated effects of body shame on depressive symptom risk while new to campus, so interventions should target both genders. It also reinforces the suggestion that shifting health promotion strategies that emphasize total wellness and body self-esteem, and understand that weight and weight gain are shaped by the social environment as well as the physical one, could be ultimately more effective for helping first year students better manage their weight. Other recommendations for reducing body shame and stigma include: youth-targeted media, provider training, and (importantly for universities) creating policies that address and prohibit weight discrimination. While students with larger bodies experience more body shame and more depression, a significant percentage of all students report feelings of shame to a level that makes them want to avoid public notice related to their bodies.

CONCLUSION

Most of the victims reported avoiding people therefore avoiding going to school. Their own friends are reported to be shaming each other, feeling inferiority complex, lack of confidence to socialize is seen as very common thing among the students. Some changes are meant to be incorporated among the schools such as good counselors to talk out

through, educating in health lectures about accepting of the body, conducive growing environment for the adolescents. More researches are to be written about the children of Indian subcontinent which is surprisingly low, and hope to see a change on the body shaming harassment for the kids in nearing future.

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