



# Prevalence of Mental Health Problems in Adolescents

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## INTRODUCTION

Mental health: Emotional, psychological, and social well-being is often seen as a concern for adults, but in fact, nearly half of teens in the United States have mental disorders and about 20% of these are classified as “severe.” Mental health problems can be a big problem for students in terms of academic and social success at school. Education systems around the world approach this topic differently, both directly through official policies and indirectly through cultural views on mental health and well-being. These programs are in place to effectively identify and treat mental disorders using therapy, medications, or other relief tools. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, about 46% of American teenagers between the ages of 13 and 18 will suffer from some form of mental disorder.

## DESCRIPTION

About 21% will suffer from a disorder classified as “severe,” which means that the disorder impairs their daily functioning, but nearly 2/3rd of these adolescents do not receive formal mental health care. The most common types of disorders in adolescents, as reported by the NIMH, are anxiety disorders (including generalized anxiety disorder, phobias, post-traumatic stress disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder and others), with a lifetime prevalence of approximately 25% adolescents aged 13-18 years and 6% of these cases are reported as difficult. Mood disorders (major depressive disorder, dysthymic disorder and/or bipolar disorder) come next with a lifetime prevalence of 14% and 4.7% for severe cases in adolescents. An equally common disorder is attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, which is classified as a childhood disorder but often persists into adolescence and adulthood. The prevalence of ADHD in American adolescents is 9% and 1.8% for severe cases. One of the consequences of this high prevalence is the high suicide rate among adolescents. In a 2021 study conducted by the NIMH, mental health problems were identified in one third of suicide deaths studied, with the most common diagnoses of attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder or depression. Suicide

was the second leading cause of death among individuals for years in the United States over the period 2011-2019. More teenagers and young adults die from suicide than from cancer, heart disease, AIDS, birth defects, stroke, pneumonia, flu and chronic lung disease combined. There are, on average, more than 3,000 attempts by students in grades 9-12. According to the APA, the percentage of college students accessing mental health care has increased in recent years, ranking anxiety ratio as the most common factor, depression second, stress third, problems family members such as the fourth and academic performance. Relationship problems such as fifth and sixth. Mental disorders can interfere with learning in the classroom, such as these include poor attendance, difficulties with academic performance, poor social integration, difficulties adapting to school, problems with behavior regulation and attention and concentration issues, all of which are critical to student success.

## CONCLUSION

Secondary school students who screen positive for psychosocial dysfunctions report three times more days of absence and delay than students who do not take the dysfunction test. This leads to much higher dropout rates and lower overall academic performance. In the United States, only 40% of students with emotional, behavioral and mental disorders graduate from high school, compared to a national average of 76%. Some of these disorders can also cause students to put their studies ahead of their own health, which in turn only worsens their health.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author is grateful to the journal editor and the anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments and suggestions.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

<b>Received:</b>	28-June-2022	<b>Manuscript No:</b>	IPQPC-22-14128
<b>Editor assigned:</b>	30-June-2022	<b>PreQC No:</b>	IPQPC-22-14128 (QC)
<b>Reviewed:</b>	14-July-2022	<b>QC No:</b>	IPQPC-22-14128
<b>Revised:</b>	19-July-2022	<b>Manuscript No:</b>	IPQPC-22-14128 (R)
<b>Published:</b>	26-July-2022	<b>DOI:</b>	10.36648/1479-1064.22.30.66

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**Citation** Singh K (2022) Prevalence of Mental Health Problems in Adolescents. Qual Prim Care. 30:41824.

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