

Association of Sociodemographic Factors and Loneliness of Adolescents in China

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Abstract : Background: Loneliness is the feeling of being isolated, which is becoming increasingly common among adolescents. A cross-sectional study was performed to determine the association between loneliness and different demographics. Methods: To identify the presence of loneliness, the UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3) was employed. The "Questionnaire Star" in Chinese version, as the online survey on the official website, was used to distribute the self-rating questionnaires to the students in Beijing from Grade 7 to Grade 12. The questionnaire includes sociodemographic items and the UCLA Loneliness Scale. Results: Almost all of the participants exhibited "caseness" for loneliness, as defined by UCLA. Out of 266 questionnaires, 2.6% (7 in 266) students fulfilled the presence criteria for a low degree of loneliness. 29.7% (79 in 266) of adolescents met the criteria for a moderate degree of loneliness. Moreover, 62.8% (167 in 266) and 4.9% (13 in 266) of students fulfilled the presence criteria for a moderately high and high degree of loneliness, respectively. In the Pearson χ^2 test, there were significant associations between loneliness and some demographic factors, including grade ($P<0.001$), the number of adults in the family ($P=0.001$), the evaluation of appearance ($P=0.034$), the evaluation of self-satisfaction ($P<0.001$), the love in family ($P<0.001$), academic performance ($P=0.001$) and emotional support from friends ($P<0.001$). In the multivariate logistic analysis, the number of adults (2 vs. ≤ 1 , OR=0.319, $P=0.015$), time spent on social media ($\geq 4h$ vs. $\leq 1h$, OR=4.862, $P=0.029$), emotional support of friends (more satisfied vs. dissatisfied, OR=0.363, $P=0.027$) were associated with loneliness. Conclusions: Our results suggest the relationship between loneliness and some sociodemographic factors, which raise the possibility to reduce the loneliness among adolescents. Therefore, the companionship of family, the encouragement from friends and regulating the time spent on social media may decrease the loneliness in adolescents.

Keywords : loneliness, adolescents, demographic factors, UCLA loneliness scale

Conference Title : ICP 2023 : International Conference on Psychology

Conference Location : Beijing, China

Conference Dates : October 02-03, 2023