

Depressive Trends in Children and Adolescents Suffering from Beta-Thalassemia

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Abstract : Objective: To determine the risk factors and frequency of depressive trends in children and adolescents suffering from Beta-Thalassemia. Background: Thalassemia is a chronic disease affecting 10,000 people in 60 countries. Many studies show that prolonged medical conditions cause depression. Due to the invasive procedures and suffering, Beta-Thalassemia cause great psychological distress to both children and their caregivers. The study shows 14-24% prevalence of psychiatric problems in Thalassemic patients. Method: Sample consisted of 195 registered patients of A.M.T.F (Female=95 and Male=100). Based on age range the sample was divided into two groups, Group A = children (4-9 years) and Group B = adolescent (10-16 years). A detailed interview with a self-made screening measure was administered on parents to find out the level of depression in patients. Statistics: Chi-square and t-test was applied in order to analyze the data. Results show high prevalence of depression, depression n= 131(66.83%), no depression n=65(33.16%). Analyses reflect that age influences the level of depression Adolescent (71.05%) and Children (64.16%). The analysis also shows a difference in level of depression between both genders. (t=2.975, p < .05). Conclusion: There is a high possibility of developing depressive trend in children affected with Beta Thalassemia; especially females. Therefore, there is a dire need for psychological screening and appropriate treatment in order to improve physical; as well as mental health.

Keywords : childhood depression, chronic illness, psychopathology, Thalassemia

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