

Psychiatric, Psychological and Behavioral Problems in Egyptian and Saudi Adolescent Orphans: A Comparative Study

Omnia Raffat Amin, M.D Akmal Mostafa Kamal, M.D. Mohammed Ezzat, M.D. Mohammed Nasr, M.D. and Mohammed El Sayed ,M.D.

Abstract

Objective: to determine psychiatric, behavioral and psychological problems in Egyptian and Saudi adolescent living in orphanages in a comparative study. **Method:** 50 Saudi adolescent orphans (25 boys and 25 girls) and 50 Egyptian adolescent orphans (25 boys and 25 girls), 50 controls Saudi and 50 controls Egyptian psychiatrically free adolescent were also randomly selected. Psychiatric and psychological assessment using: complete psychiatric sheet, psychometry for psychopathy and aggression, ego strength, rigidity, locus of control, and SAKS which included Sexual Deviation, Relation with others, Negative attitude toward institutions, and Abnormal Behaviour. **Results:** (44%) of girls and (44%) of boys showed Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). Also, (40%) of Egyptian boys and girls showed ADD. There was a statistically significant difference between orphans and controls Saudi girls regarding all items of psychological assessment. Orphans and control Saudi boys showed a statistically significant difference for ego strength, , psychopathy, sexual deviation, and negative attitude toward home, abnormal behaviour and relation with others. There was a statistically significant difference between orphans and controls Egyptian girls and boys regarding all items of psychological assessment except for locus of control. Egyptian and Saudi orphan boys differed in all items of psychological assessment except for rigidity. Egyptian and Saudi orphan girls differed in for ego strength, , sexual deviation, and negative attitude toward home, abnormal behaviour and relation with others. **Conclusion:** Saudi and Egyptian adolescent orphans showed psychiatric, psychological and behavioural problems, ADHD was the highest psychiatric diagnosis in both Saudi and Egyptian orphans, Orphans had disturbances in ego strength, psychopathy, sexual deviation, locus of control, negative attitude toward others, abnormal behavior and relation with others, There was cultural related difference in psychometric assessment for orphans.

Key Words: Orphans, Ego strength, Psychopathy, Caregivers.

Introduction:

Although all child welfare institutions are unique, the long term impact of institutional life on a child's growth and development has been well described for more than a century in many different countries (Gunnar et al. 2000). Variations in the normal progression of child's development while residing in an institution have been attributed to multiple factors including but not limited to malnutrition, emotional neglect via caretakers, and lack of developmentally stimulating experiences. Studies were not able to differentiate between the impact of general lack of stimulation while residing in institutions and the specific consequences of absence of a child's primary attachment figure (Rutter 1995). Length of time residing in an institution is positively correlated with a child's risk of presenting with developmental, behavioural, and emotional concerns. Quality of care provided in an institution is also correlated with children's

positive outcome; because orphanages associated with improved child health and development outcomes typically provide children with adequate nutrition and health care (Weitzman & Albers 2005). Little is known about the extent of psychiatric disorders among youths in institutions and no study has examined the onset of psychiatric disorders in these youths. McCann et al. (1996) found that 67% of orphans met psychiatric diagnoses mostly conduct disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Auslander et al. (2002) reported that 31% of youth orphans have internalizing and externalizing problems. Miller (2005) found that some orphanages' children are aggressive to themselves or others. They have developmental, emotional, and behavioural disturbances. An increasing number of youths are being identified as suffering from behavioral problems that cause difficulties in their family and peer relations which