Self-estimate and stress strategies for stress in adolescents

Autoestima y estrategias de afrontamiento al estrés en adolescentes

ABSTRACT. Objectives: To determine the relationship between self-esteem and stress-related strategies adopted by 10- and 19-year-olds from a state school in the district of San Martín de Porres in Lima - Peru. Methods: Descriptive, correlational study of non-experimental design and cross-section, the sample of which consisted of 240 schoolchildren. The technique used was the survey and as the instruments Rosemberg's scale of self-esteem and scale of coping against stress (ACS). Results: 66.3% of adolescents had high self-esteem and 77.5% used coping strategies focused on solving the problem. Regarding the relationship of variables the result shows a p: 0.000 (<0.05), asserting the relationship. Conclusions: There is a significant relationship between the degree of self-esteem and the stress coping strategies adopted by adolescents.

Keywords: Self-esteem, Coping strategies, Stress, Adolescents.

RESUMEN. Objetivo: Determinar la relación entre autoestima y estrategias de afrontamiento al estrés adoptadas por adolescentes de 10 y 19 años de una institución educativa estatal del distrito de San Martín de Porres en Lima - Perú. Metodología: Estudio descriptivo, correlacional de diseño no experimental y corte transversal, cuya muestra estuvo conformada por 240 escolares. La técnica utilizada fue la encuesta y como los instrumentos la escala de autoestima de Rosemberg y escala de afrontamiento frente al estrés (ACS). Resultados: 66.3% de adolescentes presentó autoestima alta y 77.5% utilizaba estrategias de afrontamiento enfocadas a resolver el problema. Respecto a la relación de variables el resultado muestra un p: 0,000 (<0.05), afirmando la relación. Conclusiones: Existe relación significativa entre grado de autoestima y las estrategias de afrontamiento frente al estrés adoptadas por los adolescentes.

Palabras clave: Autoestima, Estrategias de afrontamiento, Estrés, Adolescentes.

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INTRODUCTION

During infancy and childhood, parents are responsible for forming good self-esteem in their children. Nevertheless, self-esteem depends on the circumstances and experiences that every person has lived since childhood, which allows them to achieve success in the activities of daily living, experience positive feelings and emotions that help them maintain or improve their self-esteem. Low self-esteem is expressed through a posture of self-depreciation, relating to conscious or unconscious actions of self-destruction. Thus, a person who despises himself/herself, even if he/she achieves the maximum successes that could make him/her happy in any aspect of his/her life, will renounce that happiness by self-destructive conduct. Even adolescents with low self-esteem and major depression have a greater chance of suicidal thoughts.2 3

Globally, depression is the third leading cause of morbidity among adolescents; while suicide is the third leading cause of death between 15 and 19 years old. This is related to the consumption of alcohol, tobacco, and cannabis. In the case of women, it is related to adolescent pregnancy. In this regard, in Peru 13.6% of adolescent girls were ever in a gestational state, which represents more than 193,000 adolescents.3 4

In this regard, it is important to pay attention to the stress coping strategies used by young people. Thus, a study conducted in Mexico reports that 16-year-old adolescents adopt coping strategies such as: worrying, having a lack of coping, performing activities that reduce tension, ignoring the problem, self-incrementing, and looking for relaxing fun. Likewise, in Peru, studies with adolescents found that the coping style most used by males is focused on the problem, while females are focused on emotion. Another style used is avoidance seeking self-distraction.8 10

On the other hand, several studies carried out in Guatemala, Spain and the United States conclude that the majority of adolescents had high self-esteem and low risk of alcohol consumption.11 15

The interest arises to investigate the relationship between self-esteem and coping with stress because the references consulted define low self-esteem as a person who believes that it is worth nothing or very little, in some cases, they expect to be betrayed, humiliated, underestimated by others, and when they anticipate the worst, they attract the bad. Constantly, they have feelings of insecurity and inferiority, leading them to feel jealousy or envy for others, which they hardly accept, and manifest it with negative attitudes such as fear, sadness, aggressiveness, depression, anxiety and resentment towards others.16

Similarly, average or relative self-esteem is that which is characterized by high self-confidence. In this type of self-esteem, you have a certain type of dependence on others, their assessment and comments, so self-esteem can be affected, because receiving a good criticism will cause the self-esteem to rise, but a bad assessment will serve for confidence in their own decay.17 Therefore, in order to adapt to the different changes in his life, the person creates coping mechanisms, innate or acquired, which allow him/her to react to any change that may occur in his/her environment.18

In this respect, the theorist Calixta Roy refers that adaptation is a process of the human being with its environment; in addition, a person manages to adapt when he/she reacts positively to any change that may occur in his/her environment; this adaptive response stimulates the integrity of the person, leading to good health. The main objective of the adaptation model is to facilitate the person’s adaptation through the strengthening of coping mechanisms and forms of adaptation.20

On the other hand, coping strategies are of two types: problem-centered and emotion-centered (focused on relieving those stimuli that can cause that sense of stress). In addition, it is called action-centered coping. For example, if a right-handed baseball player is anxious to play left-handed pitchers, a proper strategy would be to gain experience. With the above, we can say that emotion-centered strategies are those that focus on ordering emotions in order to control stress.21 22 In view of the above, a study was carried out to establish the relationship between self-esteem and stress coping strategies adopted by adolescents aged 10 and 19 at a public educational institution in the district of San Martín de Porres in Lima, Peru.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was quantitative approach, correlational level, non-experimental and cross-sectional design. The population consisted of 165 adolescent students between the ages of 10 and 19 who were enrolled in a state educational institution in the district of San Martín de Porres in Lima - Peru during 2017.

The technique used for data collection was the survey and the instrument applied was the questionnaire, the Rosenberg Self-esteem scale, which consists of 10 items, five of which are stated positively and five negatively. The instrument was validated by expert judgement and a pilot test with 15 adolescents was carried out to determine reliability. According to Cronbach’s alpha analysis, 0.873 was obtained. In addition, the Adolescent Coping Strategy Scale (ACS) against stress was used, which consists of 79 items with a Lickert scale score; this instrument is internationally validated and at the same time, it was validated by three expert judges. In order to determine the reliability, a pilot test was carried out on 15 people obtaining a high reliability (Cronbach alpha: 0.931).

The analysis of results was performed with the statistical package Spss version 22, data analysis was performed using descriptive statistics and hypothesis testing through chi-square.
RESULTS

The study included 240 adolescents between the ages of 11 and 18, 22.5% of whom were 15 years old and 61.3% of whom were women.

While it is true, the majority of adolescents have high self-esteem, there are 13.3% of them who have low self-esteem.

DISCUSSION

Regarding the self-esteem of adolescents, it was found that the highest percentage have high self-esteem, which resembles the result obtained in a similar study conducted in Chimbote, where 53.2% of adolescents had a high level of self-esteem. This is of benefit for the adolescent since when counting on a high self-esteem, they feel sure of their way of acting; in this way to carry out activities that help them to leave satisfactorily the problems or tasks that are presented to them, being able to include the related thing with their academic performance. With low self-esteem, the adolescent has a greater predisposition to perform activities that may cause physical or psychological harm.

Regarding the stress coping strategies adopted by adolescents, most adopt strategies focused on solving the problem. These results are similar to those obtained in a study carried out in Lima where 76.37% of adolescents used coping strategies focused on the problem.

According to the theoretical basis during adolescence, stress situations in adolescents are presented by circumstances beyond their control. Typical stressors in adolescents are hormonal changes, increased sexuality, independence, changes in the relationship with parents, development of new skills, fulfillment of social expectations, gender roles, pressure from other adolescents, changes in school, among others.
In conclusion, adolescents need to improve and regulate their self-esteem and ability to cope with stress. Here, parents should support their children by giving them advice, being their friends, not pressuring them, but preparing them for the future with a good perspective of daily life, while teaching them how to face the problems of the environment.

Teachers and health personnel in general are recommended to develop workshops for parents, as well as a school for parents in which they receive information about the characteristics of low self-esteem in adolescents, in order to avoid the consequences of this problem. At the same time, develop informative and demonstrative workshops that allow adolescents to develop their skills and abilities, so that they can know and use appropriate coping strategies. Therefore, for the diverse families of adolescents, it is recommended to carry out activities as a family, respecting the ideas and thoughts of each member and valuing each one as a person.

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