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Differences In Emotional Mental Health Between Boys and Girls

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ABSTRACT

Emotional mental health that often occurs during adolescence is anxiety and academic stress. The aim of this research is to determine the differences in emotional mental health between male and female adolescents. The design of this research was cross sectional, taking the entire population as a sample with a total of 319 male adolescents and 319 female adolescents. research site for junior high school number 5, Blitar City, East Java, Indonesia. This research instrument uses the SDQ (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire). The results showed that the emotional mental health of male adolescents was 69% normal, borderline 12.2%, and abnormal 18.8%. Meanwhile, the emotional mental health of young women is 59.6% normal, borderline 19.4%, and 21% abnormal. The results of the Mann Whitney test obtained a p-value of $0.033 < 0.05$, so it can be concluded that there are differences in the emotional mental health of female and male adolescents. The level of emotional mental health of adolescents is mostly in the normal category for both male and female students. Emotional mental health in adolescents is a phenomenon that must receive special attention from schools through Guidance and Counseling teachers and education through the School Health Unit.

Keywords: adolescents; gender; emotional mental health

Background

Mental health is a fundamental aspect of individual well-being that includes psychological and emotional balance. Mental health is a person's ability to manage feelings and face daily difficulties in a healthy and constructive way (1). This includes the ability to handle stress, adapt to change, and function effectively in social and academic life. Good mental health enables individuals to overcome challenges better and demonstrate optimal performance in various aspects of life, including education and work. The global prevalence of sufferers of emotional mental disorders is in the age range 10-19 years and covers 16% of the global burden of disease and injury (2). Based on SKI data for 2023, 10% of sufferers of emotional mental disorders fall into the teenage age group. Sufferers of emotional mental disorders in Indonesia are 9.8%, while in East Java Province it is 6.5%.

Mental-emotional problems in teenagers are quite serious problems because they have an impact on development, reducing their productivity and quality of life. Seeing the wide range of risk factors and impacts that may occur, it is only natural that families, especially parents, should be more aware of this condition by carrying out emotional mental health checks so that mental emotional problems in teenagers can be followed up immediately to avoid mental disorders in the future (3). Differences in mental health or ability to respond to problems in male and female adolescents can be influenced by various biological, social and psychological

factors. Although each individual is unique, there are some general differences that are often observed between teenage boys and girls in how they deal with stress, emotions, and life problems (4).

Adolescents, especially those in the 13-18 year age range, face various challenges that can affect their mental health. Adolescence is a critical period marked by significant biological, psychological, and social changes (5). Students often have to juggle academic pressure, complex social interactions, and personal issues that can lead to stress and emotional distress (6). As part of the future generation that must be developed to advance religion, nation and state, teenagers face additional challenges in the form of demands to excel and maintain the good name of their school and family. Emotional instability during this period can lead to negative behavior such as fights between students, difficulty receiving advice from teachers, and legal action. It is important for students to not only focus on physical health but also mental health(7). Good mental health allows students to face academic loads better, function effectively in social environments, and reach their full potential in education (8)

Differences between adolescent boys and girls in mental health and ability to respond to problems are largely due to differences in how they are taught to manage feelings, as well as hormonal, cultural, and social influences. Teenage girls tend to be more emotionally open and seek social support, while teenage boys may be more likely to suppress their feelings and avoid talking about problems. Although there are general differences, each individual has a unique way of managing their problems, and it is important to provide appropriate support for both(9).

Based on a preliminary study of the results of interviews conducted with teachers at Junior High School Number 5 Blitar "although there are differences in the way men and women deal with their feelings, but facing greater social pressure, mental problems during adolescence, both groups experience significant emotional and psychological pressure, women tend to be more open in talking about.

Methods

The research design used was descriptive comparative research with a cross sectional approach with the sample size of this study being 319 male adolescents and 319 female adolescents. Data on emotional mental health in adolescents was taken using the SDQ (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire) questionnaire. This research ethical testing at the health research ethics commission of the Patria husada health Institute of Health Science and was declared ethically sound with certificate 06/PHB/KEPK/280/12.24.

Results

Distribution of data from respondents regarding the value of perceived strengths and difficulties

Table 1. Distribution of data from respondents regarding the value of perceived strengths and difficulties

Statements	Normal		Borderline		Abnormal	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Boys						
Emotional symptoms	145	45,5	98	30,72	76	23,78
Behavior Problems	100	31,34	95	29,78	124	38,88
Hyperactivity	97	30,4	101	31,66	121	37,94
Peer Problems	106	33,22	119	37,3	94	29,48
Positive social behavior	111	34,79	117	36,67	91	28,54

and empathy

Girls

Emotional symptoms	83	26	106	33,3	130	40,7
Behavior Problems	135	42,31	98	30,72	86	26,97
Hyperactivity	117	36,67	109	34,16	93	29,17
Peer Problems	82	25,7	96	30,1	141	44,2
Positive social behavior and empathy	106	33,22	119	37,3	94	29,48

Based on table 1, male respondents had behavioral problems as many as 124 respondents (38.88%) and hyperactivity as many as 121 respondents (37.94%). Of the female respondents who had emotional problems as many as 130 (40.7%) and problems with peers as many as 141 (44.2%)

The Value of Adolescents' Mental Emotional Health

Table 2. The Value of Adolescents' Mental Emotional Health

Mental Emotional Health	F	%
Boys		
Normal	220	69
Borderline	53	16,6
Abnormal	46	14,4
Girls		
Normal	190	59,6
Borderline	73	22,8
Abnormal	56	17,6
The Mann Whitney difference test obtained a p-value of 0.033<0.05		

Based on table 2, 220 male respondents (69%) had normal emotional mental health, 53 respondents (16.6%) were borderline, and 46 respondents (14.4%) were abnormal. Meanwhile, most female respondents had normal emotional mental health, namely 190 respondents (59.6%), borderline 73 respondents (22.8%), and abnormal as many as 56 respondents (17.6%). Based on the Mann Whitney difference test, a significance value (p) of 0.033 was obtained, namely <0.05 . So it can be concluded that there are differences between the emotional mental health of female and male adolescents

Discuss

Emotional Mental Health in Adolescent Boys

In this study, it was found that 220 male respondents (69%) had normal emotional mental health, 53 respondents (16.6%) were borderline, and 46 respondents (14.4%) were abnormal. Adolescents are those who are in the transition period from children to adults. Adolescence is a dynamic phase of development and experiences many changes and problems in adolescent life. These changes include physical, mental, social and emotional changes (10). Emotional development during adolescence usually has great energy and fiery emotions, while self-control is not yet perfect. Teenagers also often experience feelings of insecurity, unease, and worry about loneliness (11).

Changes and problems that occur during adolescence, if not well controlled, can trigger emotional mental problems in adolescents (12). Mental emotional is a condition where a person experiences psychological distress, psychological changes occur in certain circumstances but

can return to normal, however, if this mental emotional problem is not handled properly it will have a bad impact on the adolescent development process (13). Emotional mental problems are a condition experienced by individuals characterized by emotional changes and, if continued, will develop into a pathological condition. In men hormonal changes can also affect emotional mental health, but the impact may be less pronounced than in women. Men's emotional responses to biological factors are more likely to be influenced by other factors such as genetics and neurobiology (14).

Men tend to have their emotions in a more controlled manner, perhaps even masking their feelings of depression. Social factors also play a role, where gender stereotypes can create additional pressure on women to conform to social expectations, while men may feel burdened by norms that require them to be strong and not show weakness. The importance of interpersonal relationships in responding to factors causing depression also differs between women and men. Men may be more likely to seek practical solutions or withdraw socially (14).

From the results of research on male respondents based on answers to statements on the SDQ questionnaire, it was found that 124 male respondents (38.88%) had behavioral problems and 121 respondents (37.94%) had hyperactivity. Abnormal value means a child or teenager who has behavioral and emotional problems, which in this situation is categorized as a major concern and must undergo further examination (15). categorize mental problems in adolescents into two, namely internalization and externalization. Internalized emotional mental problems are exemplified by temperament, confusion, anxiety, excessive worry, pessimistic thinking, withdrawn behavior, and difficulties in establishing relationships with peers (isolated, rejected, and disturbed) (16). Meanwhile, externalizing mental problems include a temperament that is difficult to control, inability to solve problems, impaired attention, hyperactivity, conflicting behavior (not wanting to follow rules, not liking being reprimanded/given input), and aggressive behavior. The results of this research showed that the question with the highest average answer was statement number 5, namely "I become very angry and often cannot control my anger", behavioral problems that are often shown by teenage boys such as hitting, fighting, or teasing and explosive anger. With these symptoms, it is necessary to provide assistance and guidance to provide guidance on good behavior.

Emotional Mental Health in Adolescent Girls

From the research results, it was found that most female respondents had normal emotional mental health, namely 190 respondents (59.6%), borderline 73 respondents (22.8%), and abnormal as many as 56 respondents (17.6%). Adolescence is a developmental stage that occurs between the ages of 11 and 20 years. During this period, teenagers experience changes which include changes in biological, way of thinking, social and emotional aspects (17). The ability of teenagers to adapt to these changes will greatly influence the overall health of teenagers. Puberty is a term commonly used for the biological changes that occur in adolescents as a result of sexual maturity. During this period, hormonal changes occur which encourage physical growth and development as well as maturity of the reproductive organs(18). These changes can influence the way teenagers view themselves and how they behave. Apart from that, the development of achieving independence and identity in adolescents is also very prominent due to increased thinking patterns, as well as the development of decision-making abilities (19).

During development, teenagers' emotions often become unstable. Teenagers often have difficulty controlling their emotions due to the big changes experienced during this transition period. This can trigger conflicts within themselves and with their environment. The adolescent development crisis leads to the formation of a sense of identity(17). Identity formation in adolescents is influenced by peer groups which will make adolescents feel accepted and provide status for them(19). During their development, adolescents have developmental tasks that must

be fulfilled, however, some adolescents experience difficulties in fulfilling these developmental tasks (20). During this period, teenagers will be faced with various kinds of problems that will affect their ability to achieve their developmental tasks (21) Teenagers' inability to overcome obstacles well can have an impact on the emergence of emotional mental health problem.

Women are more sensitive to interpersonal relationship problems, while men are more sensitive to external problems (for example teenagers like Hobby). Apart from that, there is the fact that hormonal factors have a strong role in mood changes (22). Regarding stress levels in women and men in dealing with depression, the focus generally is on psychological and social factors. Several studies show that women tend to be more susceptible to stress due to social pressure and multiple role demands. Women tend to seek social support and talk about their emotional experiences. Women's coping strategies may be more focused on social interaction and verbal expression whereas men may tend to use coping strategies that are more related to isolation or physical activity. Expressing emotions through words can be more difficult for men. Women tend to experience depression more easily. This is because women have higher neuroticism than men. High neuroticism makes a person more likely to experience stress and rumination. Women often rely on social support and sharing experiences as a way to overcome depression

In the research, it was found that all female respondents were in the early teenage stage (12-17 years). Changes in behavior, attitudes and values occur more rapidly in early adolescence than in the late stages of adolescence. Rapid and important physical development is accompanied by rapid mental development, especially in early adolescence. All these developments give rise to the need for mental adjustments and the need to form attitudes, values and interests (18). This theory is in line with research, where in this research, at the early teenage stage, teenagers experience doubts about the role they have to play so that this can trigger high emotions in teenagers which will affect teenagers' mental health.

In this study, 130 female respondents (40.7%) had problems with emotional symptoms, and 141 respondents (44.2%) had peer problems. Emotional symptoms are a biological and psychological condition in a series of actions. Adolescents with behavioral emotional symptoms have complex characteristics and often the behavioral characteristics are also shared by children of the same age, such as worrying a lot, often complaining of pain in several parts of the body and often crying or being unhappy. The results of this research showed that the statement with the highest average answer was statement no. 13, namely "I often feel unhappy, sad or cry", this is because the teenager does not have friends or family members who are trusted to listen to the problems he is facing. So teenagers tend to always feel unhappy or sad.

Differences in Emotional Mental Health of Adolescent Girls and Boys

The results of the research show that there are differences between the emotional mental health of adolescent girls and adolescent boys. Adolescence is a unique and formative period because various physical, emotional and social changes occur, including exposure to poverty, abuse or violence which make teenagers vulnerable to mental health problems. Adolescence is a tumultuous time. At this time the mood can change very quickly. These extreme mood swings in teenagers are often caused by the burden of homework, school work, or daily activities at home. Even though teenagers' moods change quickly, it is not certain that this problem is an indication or psychological problem (23).

The World Mental Health Federation formulates the definition of mental health as a condition that allows for optimal development both physically, intellectually and emotionally, as long as it is in accordance with the circumstances of other people (24). Mental emotional problems that are not resolved well will have a negative impact on the development of the teenager in the future, especially on character maturation and trigger mental emotional

development disorders. Mental-emotional development disorders will have an impact on increasing behavioral problems in adulthood. Mental health must be maintained and cared for as much as possible to prevent mental disorders (25). If mental health is disturbed it will make life less comfortable, such as being easily stressed, tired and bored. A person can be said or categorized as mentally healthy if that person avoids or does not experience symptoms of mental disorders or neurosis and mental illness or psychosis (26).

The difference in emotional responses between women and men to the factors that cause depression is a complex phenomenon and involves biological, psychological and social factors. Studies show that women tend to be more susceptible to depression, partly due to hormonal and genetic differences. Women are also often more open about expressing their emotions, which can influence the level of awareness of depressive symptoms. Overall, understanding the differences in emotional responses between women and men to the factors that cause depression is important for developing more specific and effective approaches in preventing and treating depression in both sexes. In general, women tend to be more emotional and focused on interpersonal relationships, while men are more analytical and solution-oriented (14).

Gender identity involves awareness, understanding, knowledge, and acceptance of being male or female. Women tend to have more sensitive and sensitive feelings than men (17). Suggests that teenage girls experience depression more often than boys. This is because biological changes, namely puberty, social relationships, body image and eating disorders are the causes of depression in women (27). Changes in behavior, attitudes and values occur more rapidly in early adolescence than in the late stages of adolescence. Rapid and important physical development is accompanied by rapid mental development, especially in early adolescence. All these developments give rise to the need for mental adjustments and the need to form attitudes, values and interests.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The results showed that the emotional mental health of male adolescents was 69% normal, borderline 12.2%, and abnormal 18.8%. Meanwhile, the emotional mental health of young women is 59.6% normal, borderline 19.4%, and 21% abnormal. The results of the Mann Whitney test obtained a p-value of $0.033 < 0.05$, so it can be concluded that there are differences in the emotional mental health of female and male adolescents. The level of emotional mental health of adolescents is mostly in the normal category for both male and female students. Emotional mental health in adolescents is a phenomenon that must receive special attention from schools through Guidance and Counseling teachers and education through the School Health Unit.

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