

The prevalence of depressive symptoms in early adolescence in Cyprus and the associations of depressive symptoms with sociodemographic characteristics: A cross-sectional descriptive

correlational study

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INTRODUCTION

Childhood and adolescence are critical stages for mental health development, marked by rapid brain growth and the formation of cognitive and socioemotional skills (WHO, 2018). Depression during this period can significantly affect children's well-being (Clayborne et al., 2019), with global rates of major depressive disorder reaching 8% among 10–19-year-olds (Shorey et al., 2022). Alarming, severe depressive symptoms rose from 24% to 37% between 2001 and 2020.

Prevalence rates vary worldwide, from 7.1–19.4% in Europe to 30.2–40% in Asian countries (Chi et al., 2020).

Several factors contribute to depression, including genetics (Alshaya, 2022), temperament (Viswanathan et al., 2024), cognitive vulnerability, family and sociodemographic context, academic stress, bullying, and social media use (Ye et al., 2023).

According to Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1977), children are shaped by interactions within multiple environmental systems, with the family being central to early development. These dynamic interactions between the individual and their environment play a key role in the onset of depressive symptoms.

OBJECTIVE

The present study aimed to accomplish two objectives: a) to examine the prevalence of depressive symptoms among early adolescents in Cyprus and b) to explore potential associations between the individual and family characteristics of participants and depressive symptoms.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Children's Depression Inventory-2 (CDI-2) was used to detect depressive symptoms. Descriptive statistics were performed for all sociodemographic characteristics and depressive symptoms and are reported as frequencies, mean values, and standard deviations. Chi-square tests were used to examine differences between categorical variables and clinical depressive symptoms. Multivariate logistic regression models were used to estimate the odds ratios and 95% confidence intervals of depressive symptoms associated with sociodemographic characteristics both before and after controlling for potential confounders.

RESULTS

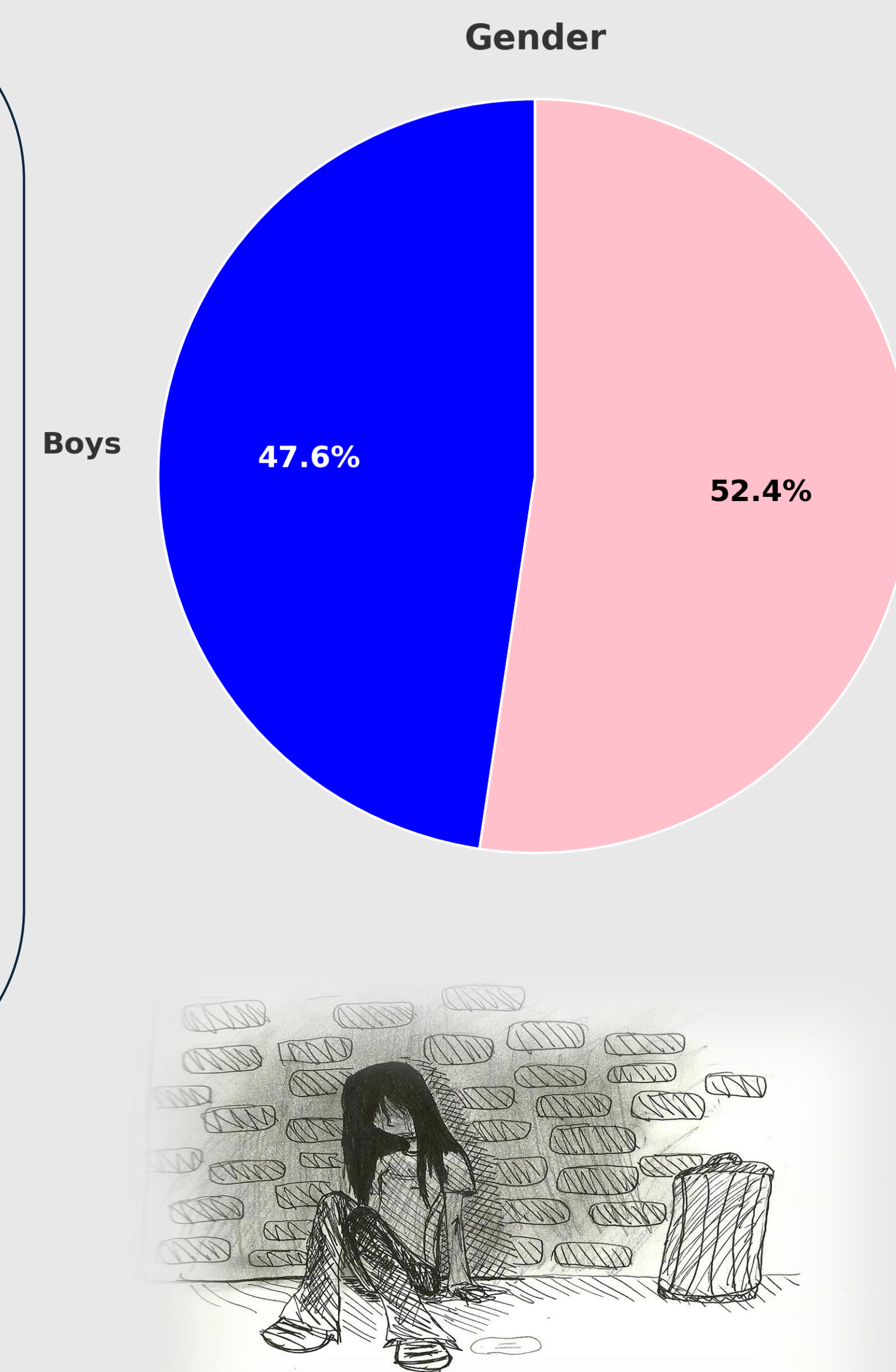


Table: Socio-demographic characteristics of the sample (N=552)

	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Age		
10-11	431	78
12-13	121	22
M±SD= 11.18± 0.42		
Place of residence		
Urban area	202	36.6
Rural areas	162	29.3
Sub-urban area	188	34.1
Parental status		
Married	485	87.9
Divorce	61	11.1
Widower	6	1.1
Father Ethnicity		
Cypriot	476	86.2
Creek	28	5.1
Other Ethnicities	48	8.7
Mother Ethnicity		
Cypriot	428	77.5
Creek	23	4.3
Other Ethnicities	101	18.3
Family Incomes		
19500	113	20.5
19501-39501	137	24.8
39501-49000	144	23.1
≥49001	158	28.6

CONCLUSIONS

The prevalence of depressive symptoms among early adolescents in Cyprus, as presented in our study, provides valuable insights into the relationship between mental health and sociodemographic characteristics. This study enhances our understanding of childhood depression in early adolescents in Cyprus and emphasizes the importance of comprehensive approaches to promote mental well-being in this population.

HIGHLIGHTS

What are the implications for practice?

- Holistic mental health care should address co-occurring conditions such as ADHD, recognizing the higher risk of depression in children with these disorders.
- To effectively address the unique challenges related to cultural identity and social inclusion, mental health assessments and interventions need to be culturally sensitive, especially when dealing with children who have nonnative fathers.

Relevance to Mental Health Nursing

This study has important implications for the field of mental health nursing as it highlights the relevance of early recognition and culturally appropriate interventions for depressive symptoms in children. By shedding light on this aspect, it has the potential to enhance the provision of more effective and empathetic care by mental health nurses

Prevalence and Risk Factors for Depressive Symptoms (CDI-2 ≥ 20)

•Overall prevalence:

- 14.3% of participants (n = 79) reported depressive symptoms.

•Sex differences:

- Girls: 17.3% (n = 50)
- Boys: 11.9% (n = 29)
- Statistically significant difference ($p < .05$)

Mental health or neurodevelopmental disorder:

- Diagnosed: 39.1% (n = 9)
- Not diagnosed: 12.4% (n = 62)
- Highly significant difference ($p < .001$)

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