

## Abstract

**Background:** Adolescents account for nearly one fifth of Sri Lankan population. They are in a transition period from childhood to adulthood where mental, behavioral and physical changes have huge impact.

**Objective:** To assess the levels, patterns and associated factors of aggression among school-going adolescents of Grade 10 in the Negombo Educational Division.

**Methods:** A school-based descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 640 Grade 10 students from schools within the Negombo Educational Division using cluster sampling method proportionate to size of the student population. Pre-tested self-administered questionnaire consisting of the globally used Buss and Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ), and a questionnaire on associated factors were used. Scoring system was developed. Cut-off score for aggression was identified using Receiver Operating Characteristic in a separate sample. Analysis was conducted using SPSS 21. Associations were identified using Chi-square test and fisher's test for categorical data and independent two sample t test for quantitative data with significance level at 0.05.

**Results:** Majority participants were 15 years old ( $n=433, 67.7\%$ ), female ( $n=339, 53.0\%$ ), Sinhalese ( $n=523, 81.7\%$ ) and Catholic ( $n=353, 55.2\%$ ). Mean score for aggression was  $82.8(SD=14.1)$ . Levels of high aggression with score  $>92$  was found in  $27.2\%(n=175)$ . High level of aggression was more among females compared to males ( $p<.001$ ). Physical aggression was more in males ( $p=.002$ ) while anger and hostility were more in females than males ( $p<.001$ ). There were no significant differences by sex for verbal aggression. Other significant positive associations with high aggression level are internet use, having trouble sleeping, often feeling lonely, consumption of alcohol in past 30 days, distant relationship with siblings, several modes of punishment of participant by parents, parental abuse towards partner, inadequate parental time spent with participant, various modes of being made fun of and being bullied, and presence of people in participant's neighborhood that may hurt them or their family ( $p<.05$ ).

**Conclusions & Recommendations:** Prevalence of high aggression was  $27.3\%$  with females having higher figure than males. Poor parenting, bullying, not having quality sleep and punishments were associated with high aggression. Study recommends focusing on interventions

targeting good parenting, developing life skills and teacher training on psychosocial health and counselling.

**Keywords: Aggression, Adolescents, Aggression questionnaire**