

Children's Mental Health & Academic Performance

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Research Problem

According to the research done by DeSocio and Hootman (2004), the number of children with mental health disorders in the United States has been steadily increasing since the 1970s; currently, 21% from ages nine to seventeen.

- Having a mental health disorder compromises the quality of life for children: academically, socially, and cognitively
- The majority of children who need mental health services do not receive them at all.

Research Question

How does a mental health disorder in male and female elementary school aged youth affect academic achievement?

Purposes of Review of Literature

- 1) To investigate the relationship between elementary aged children with mental health disorders and their academic achievement.
- 2) Add to existing research
- 3) To increase awareness of different academic success intervention techniques for school counselors

Theoretical Framework

Conflict Theory

According to Conflict Theory, if an organization or structure of a school is set up in a competitive manner, conflict is bound to occur.

As applied to our review of the literature, there are limited resources to meet the needs of different types of students. This can create a competitive environment that can lead to conflict.

It is assumed that conflict takes place in any type of social group (White & Klein, 2002)

Methods

- Ebscohost
- We selected studies that pertain to students with mental health disorders and how it affects academic success
- Key words: elementary, mental health, academic success, intervention, emotional disturbances, school based services
- Selected years: 2007-2014
- Preliminary review of the literature identified 15 relevant articles to our Research Question that focused on following topics:

- Social and school support play a vital role with assisting students with mental health disorders.
- Intervention is shown to significantly help students with mental health disorders
- Students with mental health disorders are at risk of lower academic achievement.
- Students identified as at-risk at an early age are more likely to struggle with mental health disorders in the future.
- Standardized test scores tend to be lower for students with mental health disorders.

Table Summary

- All 15 studies were completed between 2007 and 2013
- 14 of the studies were conducted in the U.S., and 1 was conducted outside of the U.S. (Chile).
- Methods:
- Mix of qualitative, quantitative and one of the studies was review of the literature
- Data from school counselors, teachers, students, & parents
- Thirteen studies were cross-sectional and two were longitudinal
- The majority of our articles 8/15 focused on benefits of intervention
- 6 articles focused on the need for intervention for students with mental health disorders
- The remaining article focused on training school counselors on how to perform intervention

Themes

- Our research shows that there is a benefit to academic intervention for children with mental health disorders. With academic intervention, academic performance improves
- The need for intervention Our research shows that there is a lack of academic intervention in schools for children with mental health disorders, and a need for more interventions.
- Our research shows there needs to be training for school counselors on how to conduct interventions with students with mental health disorders.

Limitations of the Review

- The majority of the participants in studies were Caucasian.
- The majority of reviews were cross-sectional

Best Practice Recommendations

- Training of school counselors/teachers to be better prepared to work with children with mental health disorders
- Screening at a young age for mental health disorders. Research shows that mental health disorders that are identified earlier, the better outcomes for the students.
- School-wide awareness of mental health disorders similar to anti-bullying involvement
- More funding for schools awareness campaigns
- Parent education to support school interventions

Conclusion

Research shows that mental health disorders negatively affect school performance. However, with proper intervention, academic performance can improve in children with mental health disorders. There needs to be more funding/ training for mental health services at schools. Also, our research showed that the earlier the intervention takes place, the more successful students with mental health disorders become.

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