

8th International conference on
Neurological Disorders and stroke

March 20,2023 | Webinar

Josephine Muchiri , J Neurol Disord 2023, Volume 11

Homotypic comorbidity of anxiety disorders among children and adolescents

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Statement of the problem: Anxiety is the ninth leading cause for mental illness and disability for adolescents aged 15-19 years and sixth for those aged 10-14 years (World Health Organization [WHO], 2020). Anxiety disorders are highly comorbid with a chronic waxing-waning course across the lifespan, which affects children negatively. Identifying the specific comorbidities is crucial to informing treatment programs.

Purpose of the study: The purpose of this study was to investigate the prevalence and comorbidities of anxiety disorders among youth aged 8-16 years from low social economic backgrounds in Kenya.

Methodology: A total of 163 youth completed the Screen for Child Anxiety Related Emotional Disorders (SCARED), a 41 item questionnaire assessing for separation anxiety, generalized anxiety, panic disorders, social anxiety and significant school avoidance.

Conclusion: Some anxiety disorders dissipate from childhood to adolescence although with increased age, some new anxiety disorders may develop and some persist from childhood to adolescence. Homotypic comorbidity of anxiety disorders is thus high and assessments must investigate the co-occurring anxiety disorders for effective interventions.

Biography

Josephine Muchiri has her expertise in clinical psychology, research and mentoring young people. She has years of experience in research, evaluation, teaching and clinical work involving psychometric testing, interventions and therapeutic work both in hospital and education institutions. She is passionate about empowering young people to attain their highest potential, by overcoming their current limitations.

Received: September 09, 2023; **Accepted:** September 11, 2023; **Published:** March 22, 2023
