



Peer Support Utilization in Adolescent Mental Health First Aid Training Clubs: A Six-Month Analysis in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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Abstract

Adolescents in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia face significant mental health challenges due to socioeconomic factors and lack of access to professional care. Mental health first aid (MentalHF) training is a promising intervention for early recognition and support. The study employed a mixed-methods approach involving surveys and focus group discussions with participants from ten clubs. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis to identify patterns of peer support utilization. Peer support utilization rates in the clubs varied significantly, with an average rate of 72% for active interventions such as listening and problem-solving sessions. Themes identified included trust-building among peers and enhanced self-efficacy but also challenges related to stigma and confidentiality issues. The findings suggest that peer support is a crucial component in adolescent MentalHF training, contributing positively to mental health outcomes and reducing stigma associated with seeking help for mental distress. Further research should explore the scalability of peer-led MentalHF clubs and potential interventions to mitigate identified challenges. Policy makers can consider incorporating peer support models into existing mental health programmes. Treatment effect was estimated with $\text{text}\{\text{logit}\}(\pi) = \beta_0 + \beta^T p X_i$, and uncertainty reported using confidence-interval based inference.

Keywords: *African Geography, Adolescent Mental Health, Peer Support Networks, Mental Health First Aid, Community-Based Interventions, Randomized Controlled Trials, Qualitative Analysis*

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