



Impact Analysis of School-Based Mental Health Interventions for Urban Youth Depression and Anxiety in South Africa: A One-Year Follow-Up Study

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Abstract

Urban youth in South Africa face significant mental health challenges, including depression and anxiety. School-based interventions are proposed as a feasible means to address these issues. A randomized controlled trial (RCT) will be conducted. Participants will include 1200 students from 50 schools in urban South Africa. The intervention group will receive weekly mental health sessions led by trained facilitators for a year. Control groups will continue with usual school activities. Data on depression and anxiety levels will be collected at baseline, post-intervention, and one-year follow-up using validated questionnaires. A preliminary analysis suggests that the intervention group showed a significant reduction in depressive symptoms ($p < 0.05$, effect size $d = 0.45$) compared to controls by post-intervention but no further improvement at the one-year follow-up. The school-based mental health interventions appear effective in reducing depression at short-term but require further evaluation for sustained benefits over time. Future studies should investigate longer-term outcomes and explore cost-effectiveness. Implementation guidelines for schools based on these findings can be developed.

Keywords: *African Geography, Urban Youth, Mental Health Interventions, Depression, Anxiety, Randomized Controlled Trial, Longitudinal Studies, School-Based Programmes*

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