

# **Recognition of depression in children in general hospital-based paediatric units in Kenya: practice and policy implications**

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## **Abstract**

**Background:** Physical disorders are commonly comorbid with depression in children attending general medical facilities. However, the depression component is rarely recognised. **Methods** A questionnaire on sociodemographics and history of presenting medical conditions was administered together with the Children's Depression Inventory (CDI) to all 11-year-old to 17-year-old children attending at nine medical facilities. **Results** In all, 408 children were recruited from 9 health facilities. Whereas the clinicians diagnosed a mental disorder in only 2.5% of the sample studied, 41.3% had CDI scores that suggested mild to moderate depression. The highest proportion of children with depressive symptomatology was found at the Kenyatta National and Teaching Referral Hospital. **Conclusion** Although prevalence rate for depression among children is high, detection rates remain low. This finding has clinical practice and policy implications within and outside Kenya.