Abstract

Background: Studies on mental health problems during childhood and youth development phases have reported that families of children diagnosed with a depressive disorder tend to be dysfunctional. These dysfunctions have been shown to be mediating factors for children to develop psychiatric disorders in the future.

Objective: This study was designed to investigate whether perceived parenting behavior and parental psychiatric disorders have any relationship with youth presenting with major depressive disorder.

Methodology: The study sample had a total number of 250 purposely selected youth attending the Youth Clinic at Kenyatta National Hospital in Nairobi.

Results: This study found associations between major depressive disorders (MDD) in the youth and co-morbid psychiatric disorders among the youth: conduct disorder (OR = 2.93, 95% CI 1.04 to 8.26, p = 0.035), any anxiety disorder (OR = 2.41, 95% CI 1.20 to 4.87, p = 0.012), drug abuse (OR = 3.40, 95% CI 2.01 to 5.76, p < 0.001), alcohol use (OR = 3.29, 95% CI 1.94 to 5.57, p < 0.001), and suicidal behavior (OR = 5.27, 95% CI 2.39 to 11.66, p < 0.001).

The results also indicate that a higher proportion of youth between 16 and 18 years had major depressive disorder than the youth below 16 years or above 18 years of age (OR = 2.66, 95% CI 1.40 to 5.05, p = 0.003).

Multivariate analysis shows that both rejecting maternal behavior (AOR = 2.165, 95% CI 1.060 to 4.422, p = 0.003) and maternal MDD (AOR = 5.27, 95% CI 1.10 to 14.76, p < 0.001) are associated with MDD in youth.