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Early Recognition of Depression in Children

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Background and Purpose: Early diagnosis of depression in children, ages seven to 11 years old, can be challenging as some early symptoms may be confused with normal cognitive, emotional and physical manifestations of children at various developmental stages. The purpose of this project is to conduct an integrative review of primary research relevant to childhood depression and synthesize the findings with the goal of determining what is currently understood about early symptoms of depression in children ages seven to 11 years old.

Methodology: A comprehensive review of the literature was conducted to answer the research question, “How does the primary care provider identify depression in children ages seven to 11 years old?” The framework of this paper is based on Dorothy Johnson’s Behavioral System Model as these theoretical assumptions are compatible with a medical, as well as nursing, perspective.

Results: The studies in this integrative review have identified anxiety and somatic symptoms such as headaches and abdominal symptoms as potential early signs of depression in young children. The studies also yielded environmental factors that are associated with childhood depression such as parental depression and peer relationship.

Conclusion: With the information gather from this integrative review, advance practice nurses will be more aware about the issue on depression in children ages seven to 11 years old and the importance of early identification. This review provided information on the early identification of possible markers of depression with the hopes that this information will help advance practice nurses in the management of childhood depression and prevent the disorder from progressing to a depressive disorder.

Biography

Rosemarie has completed her Bachelors of Science in Nursing at the age of 21 years from Silliman University and is now finishing her Masters in Nursing. She is specializing in Family Nurse Practice. She is currently working as an oncology nurse at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center.

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