Forum: General Assembly Sixth Committee

Issue: The question of the increase of depression amongst young people in competitive societies

Student Officer: Alice Jeong

Position: Head Chair

Introduction

As time passes, developments in societies, communities, and environments in which adolescents endure become more competitive. Adolescents now face with great competition in every aspect of their life, ranging from social lives to academics. Due to the continuous stress, pressure, and emotional distress that these competitive environments generate, depression amongst the youth is quite common in this day and age. Depression amongst the youth is known to be a very detrimental health issue that leads to teens continuously feeling emotions of distress, hostility, sadness, and lack of interest. Due to depression, and its constant feelings of sadness, adolescents who experience depression will often find themselves raging at someone, showing signs of aggression, and creating suicidal thoughts and/or attempts.

The suicide rates of adolescents has been rapidly increasing each year and researchers revealed that one of the main reasons as to why adolescents are so prone to depression in this day and age is due to their increased pressure. Whether the pressure and stress comes from school or in their household, each year the number of suicides amongst the younger generation remains to be increasing at a relatively rapid pace. In addition, taking into account of the fact that adolescents have yet to reach their full maturity yet, their abilities to tolerate mental and emotional distress is much weaker than the older generation, causing them to be even more prone in comparison to the older generation.

Depression amongst the younger generation is more prone to occur in this day and age where competition, stress and pressure dictates the lives of adolescents and plagues the welfare of many of them. Traumatic scenarios in which causes the younger generation to have a depressive episode. It could consist of dealing with financial distress in their household or being cyber bullied by peers at school, scenarios in which causes adolescents to have depression can vary in many different ways. Impractical and unreasonable expectations at home, school, or in social groups that are continuously thrown at adolescents can lead to extremely destructive thoughts/feelings. Depression amongst the younger generation is increasing at a rapid pace, researchers revealing that one out of five teenagers is afflicted by clinical depression. In addition depressive episodes can occur to an individual with the combination of many disorders such as the bipolar disorder (manic-depression), that can cause one to feel constant changes between depression and euphoria without their control. Depression can also be
hard to notice as adults have the mindset that adolescents are at the age of experiencing mood swings, thinking that their unusual behavior is in fact normal. In combination with this unawareness from the older generation, adolescents themselves are not quite aware and/or understand their emotions. Adolescents are often unaware of the symptoms of depression and is oblivious that it is imperative that they need to get assistance and/or clinical treatment. Symptoms can vary in vastly different ways such as: lack of motivation, abusing substances, thoughts/attempts of suicide, etc. In order to deal with these depressive emotions as well as suicidal thoughts, adolescents will often try out alcohol and/or drugs, or become sexually active in order to bury their disorder. Thus, in order to prevent growing rates of depression patients and suicide rates amongst the younger generation, it is imperative that solutions must be created in order to alleviate this issue.

**Definition of Key Terms**

**Depression (Clinical Depression or Major Depressive Disorder)**

Depression is a severe emotional disorder. The suffer from depression would consequently bring subsequent symptoms that greatly influences one’s way of acting, thinking, feeling, and etc. It is also known that adolescents who suffer from depression will even impact the way individuals work, eat, and sleep. With this very severe yet common disorder in this day and age, comes a vast variety of different forms of depression. Persistent depressive disorder (also known as dysthymia) is a severe disorder that consists of one having to go through long periods of depressive emotions. Researchers revealed that persistent depressive disorder lasts for approximately two years. Psychotic depression is a highly severe depressive disorder that co-occurs with a form of psychosis. Psychosis is when one experiences sees false sights (hallucinations), hears false sounds, or obtain false beliefs (delusions). If adolescents suffer from psychotic depression, symptoms usually are about illness, poverty, or guilt. Thus, adolescents suffering from not only psychotic depression but many forms of other depression will highly impact their personal, social, and academic life. The last depressive disorder is the seasonal affective disorder is a depressive disorder that only occurs during the colder seasons of the year, seasons in which warmth or sunlight is rare to be seen. This type of seasonal depression is quite common amongst the younger generation, as with this depression co-occurs with increased sleep, increased weight gain, and inactivity in social life. While suffering from depression, adolescents are often experiencing the thought of suicide and seriously considers attempting suicide in real life. Thus, depression is a severe mental disorder that increased the suicidal rates amongst the younger generation.

**Suicidal Prevention Hotline/Depression Hotline**

Suicidal prevention hotlines or depression hotlines are networks that provides emotional support to those who are in need. Suicidal prevention hotlines or depression hotlines are free to access, usually is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, providing absolutely confidential support throughout the entirety of the conversation. The purpose of a suicidal prevention hotline/depression hotline is to prevent suicidal rates and provide sufferers of depression a source of communication and emotional support. Often
times, adolescents may feel hopelessness while they experience symptoms of depression. However, suicidal prevention hotlines and/or depression hotlines can support teenagers that depression can be in fact be treated and guide them towards resources that can cure their suffering. Another role that these suicidal prevention hotlines and/or depression hotlines have is that they can guide adolescents to fully be aware and understand the thoughts and emotions that crosses their mind while suffering from depression. The use of suicidal prevention hotlines and/or depression hotlines will provide users with information in regards to depression. It will provide emotional support from who fully understands and is educated in regards to depression. The suicidal prevention hotlines and/or depression hotlines will recommend the appropriate mental health treatment resource, counselor, or therapist for the patient’s needs. The hotline service will also teach the caller how these depressive disorders are cured. In addition to this, suicidal prevention hotlines and/or depression hotlines can also help people who are concerned for someone’s mental health, and what they can do to help.

Background Information

A common misconception is that depression is merely a feeling of sadness, anxiety, or anger. However, in reality, depression is a medical disorder that influences how the brain determines one’s feelings. Depression acts as such a destructive way that the emotions that come alongside having a depression disorder influences one’s life on a social, personal, and academic level. As depression influences the way how someone act, feel, and think, it impacts one’s perspective and experiences in their lives. Sometimes a single event that negatively influenced the mind of an individual causing them to feel emotions of sadness or hostility, it could cause an episode of depression. However, most episodes of depression arise at a very impulsive state.

Depression is the result of a malfunction in the circuits of the brain that regulates one’s emotions. Researchers have revealed that depression has no relationship with one’s relationship status, level and/or quality of education, how much money one makes, or his and/or her ethnic background. There are three types of depression. The first one being Major Depressive Disorder (MDD), which allows an MDD patient to experience numerous episodes of brutal depression. Episodes of depression in an MDD is distributed in between stages of emotional stability. The second disorder being the Persistent Depressive Disorder (Dysthymia), is a depressive disorder that are much less intense than a MDD, however lasts for a much longer period of time. Persistent Depressive Disorder lasts for approximately a year for adolescents. Lastly, the third depressive disorder is the Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder. Adolescents who experience Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder would experience steady hostility and occurrences of physical and verbal aggression towards themselves or others. Adolescents dealing with depression are much more prone to suicidal thoughts and attempts than any other. However, suicidal thoughts, attempts, and actual occurrences will occur more frequently at a faster pace if depression is left untreated. In 2014, approximately 2.8 million adolescents were found to have at least one episode of depression in the past year which makes up 11.4% of all adolescents in the United States of America. According to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, around 20% of adolescents...
contemplate the decision of committing suicide at a serious manner each year. They have also revealed that one out of twelve adolescents attempt suicide annually. In addition to this, alongside depressive disorders, many other mental disorders occur such as: Anxiety disorders, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Substance Use Disorder (USD), Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and etc. These mental disorders that often occur at the price of depression highly influences the younger generation’s social, personal, and academic life, plaguing their emotional and mental health to a further degree. Adolescent and teenage suicide attempts and occurrences are increasing at much faster paces each year. Researchers have revealed that every 100 minutes a teenager will commit suicide due to their depressive disorder dictating their actions. The World Health Organization (WHO) has revealed that 300 million people goes through depressive disorders globally. As previously mentioned before in this report, adolescents that are unable to handle their brutal depressive thoughts and emotions, heavily rely on alcohol or drugs that could anesthetize themselves from feeling destructive feelings. This unhealthy reliance towards alcohol and/or drugs leads to addiction disorders that simply leads to more severe situations and consequences.

It is absolutely paramount that in societies where culture of competition, academic excellence, or setting high bars for individuals is the case, the risk and consequences of depression is fully understood. The leading reason for adolescents to suffer from depression is due to the fact that they are constantly faced with pressure and expectations from societies. In order to avoid long-term and permanent consequences amongst the younger generation, solutions must be created and implemented. It is in the interests of the lives of the younger generation that delegates of the General Assembly 6th Committee must come up with effective and productive solutions that could eventually address the issue of depression amongst adolescents. Merely because of the fact that as time passes societies become more competitive and pressurized, should not result into increased depression rates amongst the younger generation, leading to increased deaths due to suicide. In order for this to be alleviated and addressed, increased supply of counseling, whether that be through hotlines or in reality, must be enacted.

Day after day, our societies become more and more advanced. Through the constant development that the world opts for, adolescents, who themselves did not develop fully, must adapt to this constant change. As time passes, our societies become smarter than the past, giving adolescents an immense amount of expectations, standards, pressure, and competition. In order for one to survive in this myriad of competition, adolescents face substantial amount of pressure and distress along the way. Thus, in a world where competition and expectations are inevitable, solutions that could alleviate and cure depression amongst the younger generation is absolutely imperative for the interests of saving the lives of millennials.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

The United States of America

The United States of America has recently been experiencing a high rise in numbers of adolescents experiencing depression. Although the country itself is experiencing great increase of
depression numbers in all age groups above the age of 12, the most significant increase is of the younger demographic of the found statistics. According to the Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health alongside the help of CUNY Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy, they have public revealed that from years 2005 to 2015, American adolescents from age 12 onwards have shown significant boom. In past years, the United States have made great efforts in establishing national depression and suicidal prevention hotlines in order to provide their people with free confidential counseling. Although over the years, United States have made efforts in order to achieve decrease in numbers of depression amongst adolescents as well as suicidal rates from the younger generation, as time passes, it became inevitable for the United States that its societies became more competitive and pressurized. It is found that there has been a 33% increase of people who suffers from depression throughout the years of 2013 to 2016, meaning 9 million people of the United States suffer from depression. Researchers have revealed that adolescents, the younger generation of the United States is experiencing an even more significant rise, showing 53% increase in teenagers and 47% increase in millennials.

**Timeline of Events**

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**Relevant UN Treaties and Events**

- The 66th World Health Assembly has opted World Health Organization’s mental health action plan for the years 2013-2020


**Previous Attempts to solve the Issue**

In the past, countries such as the United States of America has established a national depression hotline as well as many other sources of suicidal prevention hotlines that increased public access and free counseling through a phone call. Depression hotlines have been implemented in certain countries and has seen improvements through numbers, however, most countries do not. Thus, although certain countries has seen improvements by implementing such method of counseling, the world statistics of depression amongst the younger generation as well as suicide rates amongst adolescents has not seen significant changes. In addition to this, methods such as raising public awareness has also been implemented in certain countries. However, raising public awareness through commercials and
advertisements were only temporary and were never aired continuously. Not implementing this awareness method in a long-term, adequate manner is what has affected this solution to fail in the past.

**Possible Solutions**

In order to address the issue of increasing numbers of adolescents suffering from depression, both long-term and immediate solutions must be created. Solutions should include ways in which could immediately provide counseling and assistance towards adolescents who are suffering depression. However, in order to prevent further increase in numbers of adolescents suffering in depression as well as preventing as much suicidal rates. The first solution that could be proposed in order to address the question of depression amongst the younger generation would be the provision of adequate counseling in schools. With the high pressure and expectations that the younger generation receives on a daily basis regarding their academic life, it is imperative that the provision of counseling systems/programs for vulnerable students at the school available for them. With free access to the counseling program would allow students to destress.

Another potential solution that could possibly reduce suicidal rates and numbers of depression patients would be to raise awareness of symptoms and signs that others could determine who is going through depression. Raising public awareness of these symptoms would not only raise awareness for the individual itself, looking out for themselves, but this could also mean that individuals could look out for one another. Through publicly aired advertisements or commercials, awareness of symptoms could easily be delivered to the public, making them more and more aware and educated in regards to what makes who depressed. One of the biggest issues of depression is that the general public is quite oblivious and unaware of this disorder. In order for adolescents to seek help from others, they must be aware of what they are suffering from. In addition, adolescents who at the same time are going through immense amount of pressure and competition around them, it is quite unusual that they would pay much attention towards their own mental/emotional health. Thus, with risen public awareness of the symptoms, signs, and severity of the issue, support and the look out for one another could be achieved. Through this, the number of adolescents suffering from depression could decrease along with the number of suicidal rates.

In addition, another possible solution that could address this issue is through more provision of education. The creation of convention centers and seminars in order for both adolescents and parents to attend could create and immense impact. Convention centers and seminars that educated the people in regards to the lethal consequences of depression, this could effectively help adolescents recover from their depression, as well as prevent future depression possibilities. If these seminars could educate in regards to the symptoms of depression in order for parents to provide the support for their children in an adequate and educational manner. Education is a key factor in regards to this issue as the more educated the people are with this mental disorder, the better they can cure and prevent it for the future.

**Bibliography**


