Prevalence and determinants of depression among orphans and vulnerable children living in child care homes in Nepal

Bhatt Kumari Bandana [1,2], Bhatt Navin [3]

1 School of Health Science, Mae Fah Luang University, Chiang Rai, Thailand

2 Epidemiology and Disease Control Division, DoHS, MoHP, Nepal

3 Bayalpata Hospital (Nyaya Health Nepal/Possible), Achham, Nepal

Background: Orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) are high risk of physical, mental, sexual and emotional abuse and face social stigma and discrimination which significantly increase the risk of mental and behavioral disorders such as anxiety, depression or emotional problems even they stay in well run child care homes. The objective of this study was to estimate the prevalence of depression and determine the determinants among OVC in child care homes in Nepal.

Methods: An institutional-based analytical cross-sectional study was conducted in twenty orphanages of five districts of Nepal. Six hundred two children were recruited into the study. After the informed consent form obtaining, the guardian and assent was interviewed by a semi-structured questionnaire and Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II). Logistic regression was used for detecting the association between variables at the significant level of α=0.05.

Results: The study revealed that 33.20% of OVC had depression. Among them 66.80% of children experienced minimal depression, 17.40% had mild depression, 11.30% had moderate depression 4.50% had severe depression. Sex, alcohol drinking, congenital problem, social support and bully were the main variables associated with depression among OVC of the child care homes in Nepal.

Conclusion: Prevalence of depression was high among the orphans and vulnerable children living in child care homes especially among the female children in Nepal. Therefore, early identification and instituting of preventive measures of depression are essential to reduce this problem in this special group of children living in the child care homes.

Keywords: Orphans and vulnerable children, depression, child care homes, mental health