

Abstract

The present study was conducted to assess the prevalence and associations of mental health problems (MHPs) among adolescent schoolchildren in Sri Lanka 8 months after the tsunami disaster. A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out in the Galle Municipality area, Sri Lanka. The study instrument consisted of a self-administered questionnaire and the validated Sinhalese version of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire. The prevalence of MHPs in the study population was 32.2% (confidence interval [CI] = 28.44% to 35.96%). Direct experience of the tidal wave (odds ratio [OR] = 2.93, $P = .013$), perception of being affected by tsunami (OR = 1.79, $P = .0014$), and impact of rumors (OR = 1.85, $P < .001$) were significantly associated with MHPs. Not having a close friend (OR = 1.79, $P = .04$), being criticized by teachers (OR = 1.66, $P = .008$), and adolescents being not satisfied with their academic achievements (OR = 2.42, $P = .02$) were also significantly associated with MHPs. Even 8 months after the tsunami, MHPs among adolescent schoolchildren in the affected areas are still very high.