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A Comparative Study on Levels of Hopelessness among Children of Alcoholics and Non-Alcoholics in Bangalore

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Abstract: ***The purpose of the present study is to assess the difference between levels of hopelessness among children of alcoholics and non-alcoholics. A sample of 96 young adults aged between 18-25 years participated in the study. Children of Alcoholics Screening Test (CAST-6) a screening test developed to identify children with parents having alcohol problems and Beck Hopelessness Scale (BHS) developed to measures the extent of the respondent's negative attitudes, or pessimism, about the future were used to measure the variables in the study. Pearson's correlation coefficient and Linear Regression Analysis were used for statistical analysis of data. The results indicate that the two- tailed Mann-Whitney U test was significant as U= 717, z = -2.40, p < 0.05. The findings indicated that there is a significant difference between levels of hopelessness among children of alcoholics and non-alcoholics and that children of alcoholics experience higher levels of hopelessness compared to non-alcoholics.***

Keywords: Children of alcoholics, Children of non-alcoholics, Feelings of hopelessness, Parental drinking problem, CAST-6

I. INTRODUCTION

World Health Organization estimates that alcohol usage contributes to roughly 3 million deaths worldwide each year, and hazardous alcohol consumption accounts for 5.1% of the world's burden of illness and responsible for 10% of all fatalities among 15–49-year-old individuals. Global Alcohol Information System on Health data showed that individual aged 15 and over consumed an average of 6.2 liters of ethanol in 2018. A study titled "Magnitude of Substance Use in India, 2019" stated that there are significant differences between states in the volume and frequency of drug use. Alcohol usage is 4.6% common, with a male to female ratio of 17:1, and 19% of alcohol users use it in a dependent manner.

Alcohol has a terrible effect on the alcoholic as well as the family, causing great emotional agony and suffering. Consequences of alcoholism may be the harm it has on children who have alcoholic parents, among the many other enormous expenses it imposes on the family. Children of alcoholics (COA's) are children who were raised in a family environment where alcoholism or other family dysfunctions were present. The one's suffering the most are the children who are made to remain and develop in a dysfunctional household. They are impacted by their parent's drinking issue and by other aspects of the dysfunctional family (Solis et al.,2012). Hopelessness is a feeling that one will not experience positive emotions or an improvement in one's condition. Hopelessness influences on one's perception of oneself, other and the environment. It is a characteristic of both anxiety and depression and is often implicated in suicides and attempted suicides. Children with more negative childhood experiences are more likely to suffer despair as adults (Hopeful Minds. 2022). Studies have shown a link between parents' problem drinking and unfavorable outcomes for their children. They are the victims of a dysfunctional, deviant, and inadequate parental role and parent-child interaction that is typical of an alcoholic household. These factors have an impact on a child's natural growth, emotional control, and expressiveness (Jose et al.,2020). COA's frequently suffer from verbal, physical, emotional, and sexual abuse as well as neglect in the contexts of child assistance, safety, health, and material well-being, which can result in behavioral and mental health issues later on (Aisoorya TS et al.,2018). According to the findings, there is a higher likelihood of reporting physical abuse, psychological injury, and neglect of children due to alcohol in rural areas, a minimum of one alcohol-related injury to children was reported by 43.2% of the fathers, 15.7% of them said that adult drinking has resulted in physical abuse of a kid (Esser, M. B et al.,2016). Although a sizable portion of children also exhibit resilience as a result of other protective factors (Wlodarczyk O et al.,2017).

The development of mental problems, early usage of drugs and dependency, high-risk sexual behavior, and suicide have all been linked to these COA, according to studies. COA's are at a higher risk of developing feelings of shame, guilt, withdrawing from society, anxiousness, and subpar academic performance (Manton E, et al 2014).

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According to a study, COAs' families had worse economic standing, greater unemployment rates, worse academic performance, more time spent sitting down and less time engaged in physical activity, worse eating habits and greater mental health issues were all reported by COAs. Girls reported higher emotional and physical complaints than boys among COAs (SEREC, M., et al., 2012). In terms of behavioral issues, girls are more likely to experience internalizing issues, boys are more likely to experience externalizing issues, particularly conduct issues, COAs have a greater prevalence of behavioral issues than non-COAs (Raj H, et al.,2012). Executive function issues, which are at risk in COA, are closely linked to emotional and behavioral issues. These issues are linked to the length of fathers' alcohol dependency. It has significant implications for specialized family and adolescent interventions (Nattala, P., et al.,2022). Negative feelings and affective states that these children frequently exhibit include difficulty managing stressful situations, sadness, anxiety, an inclination to place blame, poor self-esteem, intense guilt, and sensitive to criticism. Compared to non-COAs, COA's exhibit greater levels of negative emotionality (Ravaja N, et al.,2001). According to research, COAs with alcoholic parents who also suffer from comorbid depression or anxiety are more likely to exhibit neuroticism. The relationship between mother and paternal alcoholism and temperament and character qualities in children and adolescents showed that COA mothers have lesser self-direction as a personality dimension, those of dependent fathers are more inclined to exhibit novelty desiring as a temperamental feature. According to research, four main personality features are highly predictive of drug use in alcoholics' offspring. Impulsivity, sensationalism, susceptibility to anxiety, and hopelessness. (Mansharamani, H., et al., 2022).

II. METHOD

A. *Research Questions*

1) To study the difference between levels of hopelessness among children of alcoholics and children of non-alcoholics.

B. *Objectives*

1) To understand the difference in levels of hopelessness among children of alcoholics and non-alcoholics.

C. *Hypothesis*

H_0: There is no significant difference between levels of hopelessness among children of alcoholics and non-alcoholics.

D. *Sample*

The study was conducted through the descriptive survey method of research on a sample of young adults selected from Bangalore, Karnataka between the age group of 18 and 25. The convenience sampling method was used to select 96 participants for the study.

E. *Measures*

1) Children of Alcoholics Screening Test (CAST-6); Screening tool developed by Jones and Pilat used to screen for COAs. Answers with three or more "yeses" signify COAs. CAST-6 has an internal consistency of 0.86.

2) Beck Hopelessness Scale (BHS) developed by Beck is a 20 item self-reported questionnaire to measure the negative attitudes regarding one's future, loss of motivation, and future expectations. The total score ranged from 0 to 20; high scores denoting higher levels of hopelessness. BHS has Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.82 to 0.93

F. *Statistical Analysis*

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the findings. The data was analyzed using IBM SPSS-2.0. Mean and standard deviation were employed in descriptive statistics and Mann-Whitney U test, a nonparametric statistical test used to compare the samples.

III. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Table 1:

Two- Tailed Mann Whitney for Hopelessness in Children of Alcoholics and Non- Alcoholics

	Mean Rank				
Variable	Children of Alcoholics	Children of Non-Alcoholics	*U*	*z*	*p*
Hopelessness	57.27	43.06	717	-2.40	.016*

*p < 0.05

The results from Table 1 indicate that the two- tailed Mann-Whitney *U* test was significant as *U*= 717, *z* = -8.45, *p* < 0.05. The mean rank for Children of Alcoholics is 57.27 and the mean rank for Children of Non-Alcoholics is 43.06. This suggests that the levels of Hopelessness for Children of Alcoholics is significantly higher than the levels of hopelessness for Children of Non-Alcoholics (*U*= 717, *z* = -2.40).

This study aims to compare the feelings of hopelessness among COAs and non-alcoholics, the findings suggest that growing up in a household with an alcoholic parent is significantly associated with higher levels of hopelessness. COAs are a vulnerable population that has been shown to experience a higher level of feelings of hopelessness in comparison to children of non-alcoholics.

The one factor that consistently predicts suicide is hopelessness. According to the Biden-Harris Administration, 44.2% of Americans experienced hopelessness, 19.9% of individuals who experience despair thought about suicide, and 9.9% made an attempt (Hopeful Minds,2022). This is in line with research from Sweden (Landberg J et al.,2018) that looked at males serving in military with parental alcoholism had a greater risk of alcohol-related mortality, suicide, and violent death. This study provides evidence that parental alcoholism raises the risk of offspring mortality from preventable causes such as drug use, suicide, accident and assault. A Danish register research that reported higher mortality among 15 to 27-year-old COAs discovered higher rates of violence-related hospitalization and suicide attempts. Major Depressive Disorder's primary symptom is hopelessness, behavioral and mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, eating disorders, posttraumatic stress disorder, drug abuse, and suicide thoughts, are classified as having hopelessness as a symptom. The above results are consistent with the literature suggesting that COAs have a higher risk of developing feelings of shame, guilt, withdrawing from society, anxiousness, and subpar academic performance (Manton E, et al 2014). Though thoughts of hopelessness may not necessarily be related to a specific ailment, they can nevertheless be extremely damaging. The emotion not only jeopardizes one's sense of security and well-being, but it may also deprive one of the drives needed to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the current study's findings demonstrated a link between children of alcoholics and feelings of hopelessness. There appears to be a significant difference in levels of hopelessness among COAs compared to non-alcoholics, indicates that COAs experience higher levels of feelings of hopelessness compared to non-alcoholics. One possible explanation for this difference is the impact of living in an environment where alcoholism is present. COAs often experience a range of negative emotions, may feel a sense of abandonment or neglect due to their parent's addiction, which can further exacerbate feelings of hopelessness. However, it is important to note that not all COAs experience hopelessness, and not all children of non-alcoholics are immune to it. Other factors, such as socioeconomic status, family stress, and access to mental health resources, can also play a role in the development of hopelessness. While the exact reasons for this disparity are complex, it is clear that alcoholism can have a lasting impact on the mental health and well-being of children

V. IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study will have important implications for the development of interventions and support services for COAs who may be experiencing feelings of hopelessness. By identifying factors that may contribute to these feelings, we can work to develop targeted interventions that help to mitigate the negative effects of growing up in a household with an alcoholic parent. Ultimately, this study has the potential to promote greater awareness and understanding of the challenges faced by COAs and to improve the quality of life for these vulnerable children.

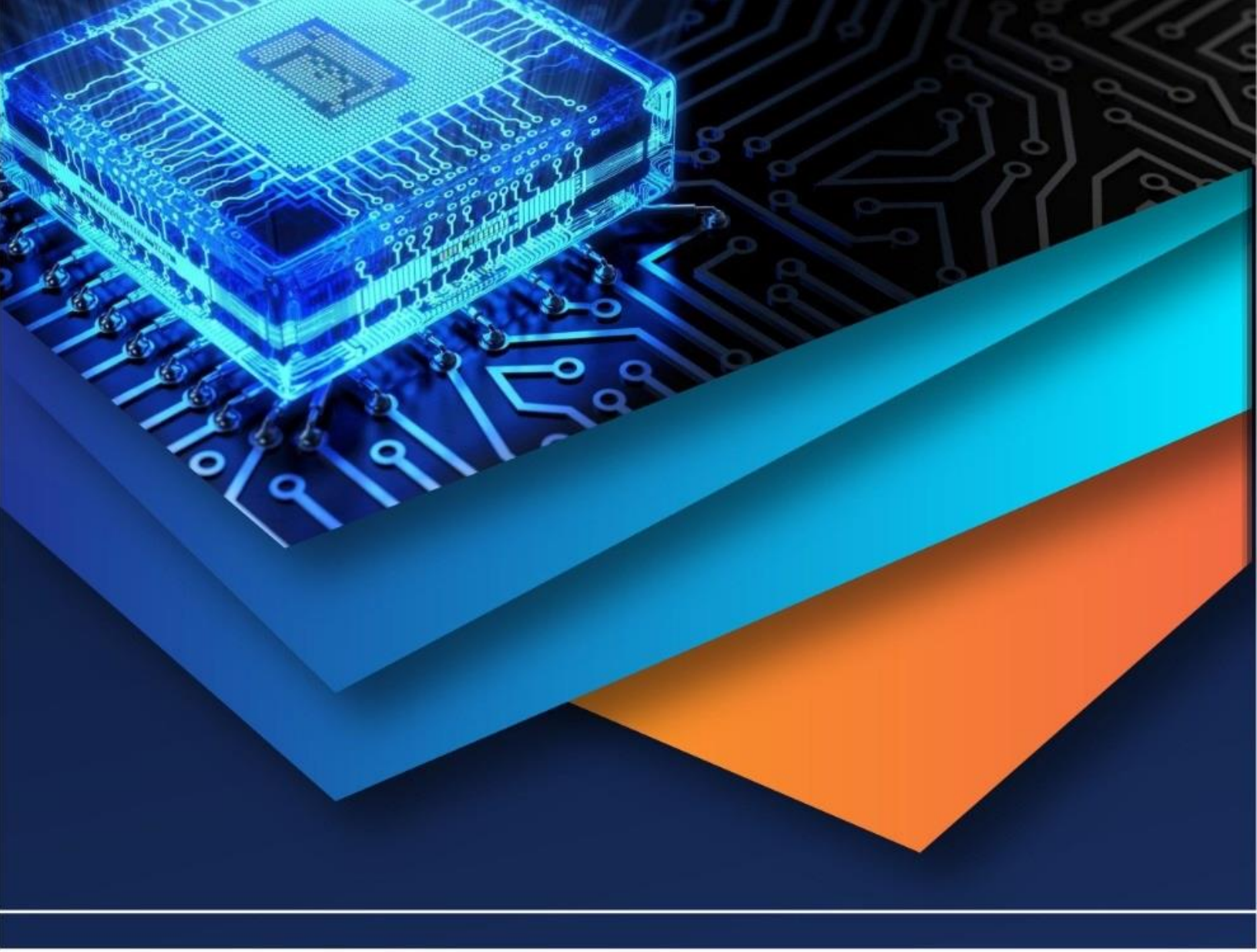
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