

**Social phobia among secondary school students
: A comparative study between Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates**

Azab, Hemaïd M. Musstafa, Usama A. El-Khouli, Magdi A.

The Egyptian Journal of Psychiatry (Print)

2007 v26 n1

The objective of this study was to assess the prevalence and risk factors of social phobia (SP) among Arab secondary school students in Egypt, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). This study was conducted in three cities belonging to three Arab countries, viz, Sohag (Egypt), Abha (KSA) and Abu Dhabi (UAE). In Sohag, adolescents were enrolled from schools of EIDaawa Al-Islamia Secondary Schools. On the other hand, those in Abha (KSA) and Abu Dhabi (UAE) were enrolled through the primary care service of the school health programs in both areas. The study sample from each city comprised 400 adolescents (200 boys and 200 girls). Study tools included The Social Phobia Inventory and the Social Phobia Risk Factors Questionnaire. Prevalence of SP is highest in Sohag (13%), followed by that in Abha (9.8%) and least in Abu Dhabi (7.8%). Differences were statistically significant ($p=0.044$). In Sohag only, risk factors for SP included being a female ($p=0.038$), or being a first born child ($p=0.036$). Moreover, in all study settings, other risk factors included punishment by parents or teachers, either physically by battering, or psychologically by humiliation, having a positive family history of mental disorder or, frequent marital conflict among parents.