

RESÚMEN

La depresión es una condición clínica que sufren durante toda su vida en torno al 16,2% de la población mundial, siendo la principal causa de discapacidad y, en los casos más agudos, pudiendo desembocar en suicidio. Este problema psicológico tiene especial impacto en la adolescencia, periodo de vulnerabilidad donde muchas enfermedades mentales tienen su inicio. Así pues, es importante conocer los factores de riesgo involucrados en el desarrollo de la depresión en esta etapa.

La personalidad y los sucesos vitales estresantes (SVE) son dos de los factores más estudiados a este respecto. Por tanto, el propósito principal de este estudio es examinar el papel que juegan los SVE y la personalidad en la sintomatología depresiva en adolescentes.

En una muestra de 624 alumnos de secundaria (311 mujeres), se evaluaron los SVE mediante el cuestionario LEIA, los síntomas depresivos con el SENA y las cinco dimensiones de personalidad utilizando el JS NEO-A50. El análisis de los datos reveló que el neuroticismo (N) era el rasgo de personalidad más determinante en el desarrollo de depresión. Tanto el neuroticismo como el número de SVE correlacionaron de manera lineal y positiva con las probabilidades manifestar sintomatología depresiva, aunque la influencia de los SVE era menor. Además, encontramos un efecto de interacción entre el N y los SVE: cuando altas puntuaciones en neuroticismo y en SVE coinciden en un mismo sujeto se produce un efecto sinérgico que aumenta notablemente los síntomas depresivos.

En definitiva, conocer qué factores son los más relevantes en el desarrollo de la depresión en adolescentes y cómo interactúan entre sí puede ser útil tanto para prevenir como para tratar esta condición clínica, mejorando la calidad de vida de las personas que la padecen.

ABSTRACT

Depression is a clinical condition that affects approximately 16.2% of the world population at some point of their lives, being the main cause of disability and in some cases, it may lead to suicide. This psychological problem have a greater impact on adolescence, period of vulnerability where many mental diseases begin. Hence, is important to know which factors are involucrated into development of depression at this stage of life.

Personality and Stressful Life Events (SLE) are two of the most investigated factors about this topic. Thus, the aim of this study is to examine the role of SLE and personality into depressive symptomatology on teenagers.

These variables were measured in a sample of 624 high school students (311 of them women) using the LEIA to quantify the SLE, the SENA for depression symptoms and JS NEO-A50 to measure personality traits. The data analysis revealed that neuroticism (N) was the most relevant personality trait in the development of depression. Both neuroticism and the number of SLE showed a positive and linear correlation with the probabilities of manifesting depressive symptomatology, although the influence of SLE was lower. In addition, we found an interplay effect between N and SLE: when both high scores of neuroticism and SLE are experienced by the same subject, a synergic effect takes place and significantly increases the depressive symptoms.

In conclusion, investigating the factors of adolescent depression and understanding how it works could be useful in the prevention and treatment of this clinical condition, improving the life quality of the youngsters who suffer it.

The role of stressful life events and personality on depression among adolescents

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INTRODUCTION

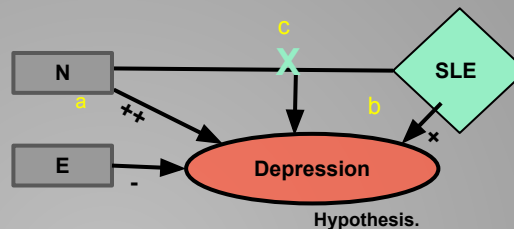
Depression is a mental problem that affects more than 300 million people around the world. It is the main cause of disability worldwide according to the WHO (2018), often involving comorbidity with other disorders. In addition, adolescence is a critical period of vulnerability, in which negative experiences may have a greater psychological impact (Spear, 2009). Consequently, it is important to know those factors involved in the development of depression. Two of the most studied factors are Personality and Stressful Life Events (SLE).

The *Big Five* personality traits (Goldberg, 1993) is the most accepted model nowadays. It establishes five higher-order traits that define personality: Extraversion (E), Neuroticism (N), Openness (O), Agreeableness (A) and Conscientiousness (C). There is evidence that high N scores and, in a lesser extent, low E increases the risk of suffering depression (Kotov et al., 2010).

Another important risk factor for depression is SLE (Hammen, 2005; March-Llanes, 2017; Moya-Higueras, 2018), specially, interpersonal and dependent SLE, such as experiences of personal loss and interpersonal conflicts (Hammen, 2005; Kendler et al. 1999).

Importantly, personality and SLE seems to have a synergistic effects: high N subjects tend to be more sensitive to the depressogenic effects of SLE, in line with the *diathesis-stress model* (Kendler et al., 2004).

Hence, the primary aim of this study is to test the additive effects of high neuroticism levels and SLE into depressive symptomatology (hypothesis a & b), and to test the interaction effects between them (hypothesis c).

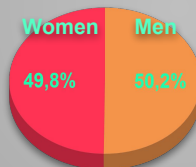


Sample:

The sample was composed by 624 adolescents from IES Bovalar and Caminàs, based in Castellón. Their average age was 15.02 years (Dt = 1.17), with ages from 13 through 18.

Instruments:

After gathering their consent, the instruments were administered in two sessions. First, sociodemographic data was retrieved from the subjects and the Children and Adolescents Assessment System (SENA; Sánchez-sánchez et al., 2016) was used to assess depression symptoms in a 4 point Likert scale. In the second session, the Life Events Inventory for Adolescents (LEIA; Moya-Higueras et al., 2018) was administered. This was a test of 83 items that assesses how likely subjects were to experiment different SLEs by themselves or in their closest environments within the last 12 months, including its objective and subjective impact. Finally, JS NEO-S (Ortet et al., 2012) was applied. This is a Spanish version of the NEO-PI-R adapted to adolescents which assesses the 5 personality traits. The data obtained was analyzed on the version 22 of SPSS Statistics.

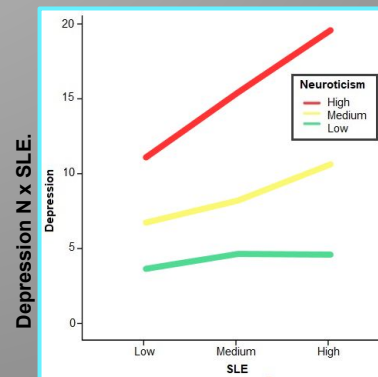


RESULTS

Correlation Table.

	N	A	E	C	O	SLE
Depression	,65***	-,18***	-,19***	-,19***	,15**	,36***

*p<,05 **p<,01 ***p<,001



DISCUSSION

This study has found that personality and SLE are important risk factors for depression among adolescents. Specifically, high neuroticism and, in a lesser degree, low extraversion presented a strong effect in the vulnerability of adolescents to suffer depression. In addition, SLE also showed a relevant influence. Importantly, high neuroticism levels and high SLE exhibited synergistic effects, which increases the probability to experience depressive symptomatology: SLE had much more detrimental effects on adolescents with high N scores than with low N.

The results of this study are in line with previous investigations on the topic. Nevertheless, there are some limitations. Researches report about the heritability of dependent SLE, which suggests a bidirectional interplay between neuroticism and SLE (Kendler et al., 2007). In addition, depression may lead personality changes and increase the probability of experiencing SLE (Hammen, 2005). Future studies should consider that.

Investigating the factors of adolescent depression and understanding how it works could be useful in the prevention and treatment of this clinical condition, improving the life quality of the youngsters who suffer it.

		Depression symptoms		
		ΔR2	β	t
1	Gender	,135		2,951**
	Age	,2		4,372***
		,060***		
2	N° SLE	,338		7,837***
			,113***	
3	N	,551		13,72***
	A	,038		,989
	E	-,091		-2,511*
	C	-,079		-2,103*
	O	,039		1,068
		,300***		
4	N x SLE	,114		2,892**
	A x SLE	,055		1,485
	E x SLE	,059		1,664
	C x SLE	-,032		-,829
	O x SLE	,071		1,871
		,021*		

*p<,05 **p<,01 ***p<,001

Linear Regression Analysis.

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