

The Prevention of Depressive Symptoms in Rural School Children: A Randomized Controlled Trial

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A controlled trial was conducted to evaluate a prevention program aimed at reducing depressive and anxious symptoms in rural school children. Seventh-grade children with elevated depression were selected. Nine primary schools ($n=90$) were randomly assigned to receive the program, and 9 control schools ($n= 99$) received their usual health education classes. Children completed questionnaires on depression, anxiety, explanatory style, and social skills. Parents completed the Child Behavior Checklist (T. M. Achenbach, 1991). No intervention effects were found for depression. Intervention group children reported less anxiety than the control group after the program and at 6-month follow-up and more optimistic explanations at post intervention. Intervention group parents reported fewer child internalizing and externalizing symptoms at post intervention only.