

A B S T R A C T

Behaviour Disorders Among A Sample Of Jamaican Adolescents

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Most maladjusted children's behaviour is different in quantity rather than quality from the behaviour of other children. The prevalence of behaviour disorders among a sample of 13 and 14 year old Jamaican High School and All Age School adolescents was examined. The identification of aetiological factors involved in behaviour disorders was also attempted.

Teachers can improve their assessment of maladjustment in children through observations of children's behaviour. The Revised Behaviour Problem Checklist R.B.P.C. was found to be a useful measure of common behaviour disorders and showed that Jamaican adolescents had a higher prevalence of behaviour disorders than their North American counterparts. An instrument assessing the adolescent's psychological adjustment - the Personality Screening Inventory P.S.I. was also found to be an indicator of behaviour disorders, and it seems that the R.B.P.C. used in conjunction with the P.S.I. would provide a more complete picture of the adolescent's problems. Males scored higher on most subscales of the R.B.P.C. Maladjusted behaviour was also seen to be affected by long periods of separation from parents

especially if the child was quite young. Adolescents from the lower social class groups were significantly higher on behaviour disorders than the middle social class groups. However, this finding may also have been a function of low intellectual level. These results suggest that identification of behaviour disordered children in Jamaica is imperative, so that literacy can be improved and more importantly the normal personality, behavioural and emotional development of tomorrow's adults can be assured.