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## POSTER

### PSYCHOSOCIAL PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY CONFLICT-AFFECTED ADOLESCENTS OF SELECTED DISTRICTS OF NEPAL

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**Background:** Over 16,000 people died in Nepal's 10 years of armed conflict that impacted deeply on children exposed directly or indirectly to war consequences. The psychosocial support program is implemented in 2021 by CMC-Nepal in 13 different municipalities of Kavre (3), Bardiya(4) and Karnali province (6).

**Methods:** We produced 366 conflict-affected families from a list of 13 municipalities of Kavre, Bardiya and 3 districts of Karnali province. Among them, 108 adolescents (12-17 years) attended psychosocial counseling services developed by the municipality with the technical support of CMC-Nepal. Psychological distress is assessed using Hopkins Symptom Checklist (HSCL)-10 following a cross-sectional study design. The responses are summarized across all items and the mean score is used as a measure of psychological distress. We followed Haavet et al suggested cut-off point (1.6).

**Results:** HSCL-10 provided prevalence and anxiety problems at 25% and depression at 22%. A higher prevalence of anxiety was observed in girls (15%) than boys (10%) while depression is observed slightly higher in boys (12%) than girls (10%). Psychological distress in adolescents is higher when experiencing the loss of one or both parents because of the conflict. Sleep difficulty, self-blaming and hopelessness feeling experienced higher by girls while boys experienced feelings of worthlessness and hopelessness about the future. Adolescents in the Bardiya district experienced a higher level of psychological distress.

**Conclusions:** Adolescents of conflict-affected parents showed a higher level of psychological distress even many years later of the conflict which indicates the need for proper mental health support. Further research is needed on a bigger sample.

