The use of student self-reporting vs. teacher identification of depression in school-age children

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Depression is one of this nation’s silent evils, affecting 18 million Americans. Researchers are aware that depression exists in school-age children, but very little research has been done with children in the school environment; no large-scale screenings have been conducted in schools to be used as an early warning device to identify depressed students. In two studies where teachers are used to determine which of their students are depressed (Eijkman, 1995 & Augur, 2004), teachers shared a meaningful agreement with the children’s self-reporting.

### Findings

#### Student Self-Reports vs. Teacher Reports as a Predictor of Depression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article #</th>
<th>Abbreviated Title</th>
<th>Research/Hypothesis Tested</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
<th>Variable of Interest</th>
<th>Statistics Used</th>
<th>Sample Sizes/Controls Used</th>
<th>Meaningful Statistics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Accuracy/Teacher Reports...</td>
<td>Can Teachers predict depression as well as student self-reports?</td>
<td>Not a good predictor</td>
<td>Correlation of success</td>
<td>N=74.24; SD=11.50</td>
<td>N=62; N=62</td>
<td>22.22 Chi-square</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Early Warning...</td>
<td>Can Teachers predict depression as well as student self-reports?</td>
<td>Teachers not good predictor</td>
<td>Correlation of success</td>
<td>N=85.61; SD=15.16</td>
<td>N=121</td>
<td>19 Chi-square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>MetaSynthesis</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Qualitative/Self-report</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>N=107</td>
<td></td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Placebo-Controlled</td>
<td>Effectiveness of school-based program</td>
<td>Experimental Double-Binded</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>SD=14; P. APR, CI 95%</td>
<td>N=302</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Predictors of Efficiency</td>
<td>MetaAnalysis of qualitative program</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Mean Effect Size</td>
<td>N=512</td>
<td></td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Teacher Ratings...</td>
<td>Can Teachers predict depression as well as student self-reports?</td>
<td>Reasonable predictor</td>
<td>Correlation of success</td>
<td>N=74.40; SD=38.85</td>
<td>N=83</td>
<td>52 Chi-square</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### References

- Failure-Safe N values were calculated: for students, 35.57 for a critical r of .05; for teachers, 13.95 for a critical r value of .05. Chi-Squares were somewhat large: 26.37275 (2 DFs) for student self-reporting and 15.0873 (2 DFs) for teacher reports. There was a factor of heterogeneity in the analysis.

### Methods

#### Inclusion Criteria:
- Articles published in 1995 or later
- Elementary and Middle School-aged children
- Different geographical locations and remedies
- Any gender or ethnicity but not a factor here

**Exclusion Criteria:**
- Studies without statistical analysis
- Studies published in foreign languages
- Studies published as abstracts only
- Studies which did not have a self-reporting component as a part of their methodology.

#### Search Process

**Sources:** PubMed, WebMD, OVID, Medicine, Google, published systematic reviews and meta-analyses.

**Search terms:** depression, school-aged children, self-reporting of depression, teacher reporting of depression; depression inventories

**Data collection:** screening using student self-report and teacher evaluations; reporting instruments varied by study; appropriate ethical procedures were followed.

**Statistical tests included:** weighted and unweighted Z-values, significance, and corresponding effect size (to adjust for varying sample sizes). See Results for Failure-Safe N values. Tests of homogeneity were also utilized to assess whether or not the sample populations and results were consistent. See Results for Chi-square values.