Introduction: Mental disorders in children are quite common, occurring in about one-quarter of this age group in any given year. Mental illness are blamed for 10% of kids’ hospitalizations. Mental health professionals consider the need for psychological help necessary and useful not only when diagnosis is established or a co-morbidity is present, but in every phase of a diagnostic process in pediatric population at risk. Relatively little is known about children who present to emergency departments to stabilize acute emergencies related to behavioral disorders. In chronically ill children who are hospitalized for instance with cancer or renal or cardiac failure prolonged hospitalization and chemotherapy can lead to many mood changes and they result at higher risk for mood disorders in comparison with the ones of acute disorders.

Objectives: The aim of the study is to evaluate the effectiveness of mental health screening to identify psychiatric co morbidities in different units of general pediatric hospital (population at risk).

Methods: Analyzing data of 416 inpatient general pediatric hospital where SDQ, a brief screening questionnaire that investigates the presence of emotional and behavioral problems in children and adolescents, has been completed over a three years period, referred and hospitalized for neurological, endocrinological or gastroenterological diagnoses.

Results: High level of psychopathology in the entire study population, indicating high needs for therapeutic intervention. The more frequent psychiatric diagnoses result: ADHD 2.9%, Anxiety Disorders 13.2%, Somatisation Disorder 12%, Obsessive-compulsive disorder 5.7% and Conduct Disorder 2.9%.

Conclusions: The SDQ could be used by clinicians in a pediatric general hospital to detect psychopathology. These findings draw attention to the important role of screening for mental health problems in emergency situations especially in front of self-harm, depression and violent behaviors.

Supplementary material: Complete presentation available at http://ijcnmh.arc-publishing.org

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