
Students' Corner

Letter to the Editor

Adolescent life style and behaviour: a health domain yet to be explored

Madam, today the world is home to the largest generation of 10-19 year olds in history; they number over one billion and are increasing. The demands on young people are new and unprecedented; their parents could not have predicted many of the pressures they face. How we help adolescents meet these demands and equip them with the kind of education, skills, and outlook they will need in a changing environment, will depend on how well we understand their world.

The CDC uses the terms "adolescents and young adults" for those aged 10 to 24, inclusive. The population ages 15-24 in Pakistan was estimated to be approximately

27 million in 2000, and it is expected to continue to increase, reaching 44.6 million in 2020. This age group accounts for almost one quarter of the population in Pakistan and will reach a peak in the year 2035.¹

Adolescents are a unique population with specific health concerns and needs. Overload of stress from physical, emotional, social and sexual change in adolescents overloads them with stress which can result in anxiety, withdrawal, aggression, poor coping skills and actual physical illness.

Various patterns of health problems exist amongst the adolescent group and these trends differ between and

within countries. A study showed that a significant number of respondents (58.9%) are getting less than eight hours of sleep daily, which is a cause for concern and further enquiry.² A significant association was found between chronic poor sleep, emotional factors, such as worries, anxiety and depression and poor sleep hygiene.³ Moreover, extensive television viewing during adolescence may contribute to the development of sleep problems by early adulthood.⁴ Youth risk behaviour surveillance carried out in the US in 2007 also mentions television watching as a 'priority health risk behaviour.'⁵

WHO's report states that at least 20% of young people will experience some form of mental illness - such as depression, mood disturbances, substance abuse, suicidal behaviours or eating disorders.⁵ Promoting mental health, and responding to problems if they arise, requires a range of adolescent-friendly health care and counselling services in developing countries like Pakistan.

Basic data on education, employment, and reproductive health among adolescents shows that they are

not receiving the adequate schooling and capability building to equip them for the future. Studies need to be conducted in Pakistan to highlight various areas of concern with respect to adolescent lifestyle.

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Errata

In the Original Article titled "**Father's support and literacy — factors associated with child mortality in Gambat, Sindh-Pakistan**", the affiliation of the fourth author should be read as such:

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