

Effectivity of Awareness Programme Regarding Pubertal Changes among Adolescent Boys in Selected Urban and Rural Schools

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Abstract

Because of the physical changes at the time of puberty, children in the age group of 10 to 19 show more interest to know about sex and sexuality. With the thinking of what father and brother will think of me if I ask doubts about the changes, they bury their doubts inside themselves. They do not get correct answer about the changes in the anatomy and sexuality. In such situations, they talk with other children in the same age group who are also facing the same situation. When they are unable to collect more knowledge, they become learner to know about the opposite sex. Most of them do experiments and land up with worsened situation. They can take care of themselves in a healthy and adaptive way if we provide correct and enough knowledge about the changes that happens in their body at different ages and sexuality. If we hesitate to provide correct and must knowledge to the children, they will be in a confused state and is ashamed of not having proper knowledge about their own body. So the condition can be more vulnerable.

Because of the lack of correct knowledge about puberty, the adolescent boys may feel more anxiety, more tension, sometimes fear, nervousness, becomes restlessness and extremely stressed. The lack of correct knowledge can lead to a situation that they won't be able to manage the situation. In that case, they try drugs, drinks and smoking. Ultimately this will leads to bullying, lying, drunk driving, rebellious behavior, body issues and mental health issues. Other than these, they may feel physical symptoms like nausea, vomiting, headache, stomach ache etc. They also have the right to enjoy their life in a healthy manner.

Keywords: *Puberty, Sexuality, Experiments, Nervousness, Stressed, Nausea, Vomiting, Headache and Stomach ache.*

Introduction

The term adolescence comes from the Latin Word "*Adolescere*" meaning to grow to maturity. "Adolescence" is the age between 10 and 19 years. Between the age of 10 and 19, the boys have many aspects to follow. On an average, girls attain puberty at the age of 10 and boys by 12. Adolescents contribute one fifth of the world's population. In India, out of 100, adolescents contribute 23%, that means around 230 million children are in the age group of 10 to 19 years.¹

The meaning of adolescent is 'to become apparent or prominent' or 'achieve identity.' Adolescence is defined as a phase of life characterized by rapid physical growth

and development, physical, social and psychological changes and maturity, sexual maturity, experimentation, development of adult mental processes and a move from the earlier childhood socio-economic dependence towards relative independence. In other words we can say it is a transformation from child life to adult life where the child lives in a family and the adult lives in the society. They have their own and different needs that cannot be avoided by the parents. The changes or development that takes place in the adolescents are not same for all or the sequence may be different. Most probably, the physical maturity can be achieved earlier than psychological or social maturity.²

In India, for the private schools, it is not compulsory to include sexuality education in the curriculum. Even nobody knows how many private schools are following a comprehensive syllabus. It is compulsory for the private schools that are following Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) syllabus to add a portion of sex education in their syllabus but they are very few in number. Many of the private and public schools that are affiliated to State boards of secondary education have not included a single portion of the sexuality education in their curriculum.³

In the year 2011, there was a Census. According to that adolescents contribute one fifth of the population of the State. In Maharashtra itself, adolescents contribute 19 percent of the total population.⁴

Population Council in India says that India has 315 million children in the age group of 10-24 and they represent 30% of the country's population. These people are much healthier, most of them lives in urban area and well educated than the previous generation. At the same time, we cannot turn the face from the fact that they are at risk for not having much knowledge regarding sex and sexuality. As a result, they do not have many choices for their sexual and reproductive health. The attitudes and expectations of the current younger generation changes day by day. There was a poll conducted by India Today magazine which shows that one among the four women living in big cities of India between the age group of 18 and 30 had indulged in sex before marriage. In the year 2006-2007, a youth survey was conducted by International Institute of Population Sciences (IIPS) and Population Council in Maharashtra. The samples were unmarried men and women who were in the age group of 15-24 years and married women and men in the age group of 15-29 years. They found that most of the women in both groups do not have any knowledge regarding sexuality. There also 18% of men and 3% of women have had indulged in sex before marriage. Compared to women, men have more access to information, but it was not the right source. The true fact is, in this era also, women do not feel free to talk about the sexuality. The results also shown the fact that 33% of unmarried women were aware of the fact that they could get pregnant from their first sexual encounter as compared to 46% of men.⁵

Today's young generation are at high risk to conditions that affect their health because of their personal choices, the way in which the environment influence and changes in the lifestyle including diseases.

The other conditions include disorders from substance use, injuries results from road traffic accidents, attempted and successful suicides, infections that are transmitted sexually, teenage pregnancies and unplanned pregnancies, homelessness, violence and several others.⁶

Even though we live in a fast forwarding and fast growing country, today also there are restrictions or hesitations for the elders in our society to have a casual or free discussion of the reproductive health issues with teenagers or even with their own sons.⁷

Elders in the society believe that if they talk about sexuality with adolescents, they may get into sexual crimes. Because of this kind of thinking of the elders, teenagers or adolescents get very little or no knowledge about the sexuality either from their parents or from the school.⁸

As a result of the hesitation of the parents to discuss the sexual health and sexuality and lack of incorporation of topics related to sexual health, adolescents never get any help from their parents as well as the education system in this regard. The most interesting thing is, many of the health centers are also of no use for this matter.⁹

When adolescents do not get enough knowledge from their parents, school and health centers, with no choice left, they turn towards their friends, local books and media. We can say that not only in India, almost in all countries, this is the situation and the teenagers or adolescents pass through this crucial phase of their life without the help from where they are supposed to. So, they are at high risk of getting road traffic injuries, sexually transmitted infections and if the situation is not handled properly at time, this can lead to much bigger health problem for them in their later life.¹⁰

There are certain changes in the body of an adolescent or teenage boy which are unexpected and upsetting experience for many. One of the most suitable examples for this is ejaculation. It is believed to be the most upsetting experience for an adolescent who do not have much knowledge regarding the changes that happens at the time of puberty or adolescent period. Shipman conducted a research study on psychodynamics of sex education. It is revealed that only 15% of the samples had some knowledge about ejaculation and understood the concept of ejaculation prior to its occurrence. Thus, lack of preparation can lead to negative experiences in their life and sometimes it can be fatal also.¹¹

Sometimes the information passed to the adolescents or the information they got from the other sources may not be adequate or accurate with their own experiences and that will affect their emotional balance.¹² It is just as such factors influence adolescent girls' perceptions of the menarcheal experience.¹³ Most of the time; adolescents hesitate to ask questions or doubts regarding their reproductive or sexual health problems to elders keeping in mind that what elders will think of them. Ultimately, this leads to self treatment of their problems or approach persons who are not legally permitted to practice medicine.¹⁴

Adolescents discover themselves when their intellect growth transfers from concrete form to abstract thinking. They try to define what they are and their relationship with the world. At that time, they ask themselves these four questions:

- **Who am I?** (Related to their sexuality and social roles)
- **Am I normal?** (Do I fit in with a certain crowd?)
- **Am I competent?** (Am I good at something that is valued by peers and parents?)
- **Am I lovable and loving?** (Can someone besides Mom and Dad love me?)

At many times parents and relatives of the adolescents work together. They should understand that the answers of these questions are very important to them. Also they have to give them a chance to explore them and to find themselves the answers of this questions.¹⁵

A research study was conducted at Nand Nagari, Delhi. The setting of the study was slums and the samples were adolescent boys and girls. The findings of the study show that the adolescents were totally unaware about sexuality or sexuality related matters. Half of the study populations knew the fact that secondary sexual characters for boys are growing of moustache and beard. Only 16.8 per cent of the samples were aware of ejaculation at night and 12.9 per cent were aware of pubic hair. The study also included the knowledge about the changes that happens in the body during puberty. Girls had more knowledge regarding the pubertal changes than the boys. Only 58 per cent of adolescents knew the fact that moustache and beard are the signal that indicates the initiation of puberty. There are 12 per cent of adolescents who knew that ejaculation at night and genital growth are also a part of pubertal changes. The

remaining 88 per cent were not even aware that these changes had already happened in their body. There were adolescents who don't even know what pubic hair is. All these indicates that there is a need of mass education about the puberty and the changes that happens in the body at the time of puberty for the adolescents especially for boys.¹⁶

Awareness regarding puberty changes in secondary school children was the name of the cross sectional study which was conducted at Bagalkot, Karnataka. There were three objectives; to evaluate the awareness regarding puberty changes in both boys and girls, to find out the necessity of the subject of sex education in the curriculum and the final one was to find out the source of information of the respondents. The students from 8th, 9th and 10th standards were selected for the study. There were a total of 502 students selected for the study. Out of that, 394 (78.49%) were boys and 108 (21.51%) were girls. Regarding secondary sex characters, 19.80% of the boys and 9.25% of the girls had correct knowledge. When 55.56% of the girls discussed sex matters with their parents but instead of discussing sex matters with parents, 45.18% of boys discussed it with their friends. 41.23% of the students were in favor of including sex education from higher secondary school. Regarding the source of information, 51.52% of the boys received it through television, whereas 40.74% of girls got the information through television.¹⁷

A study was conducted at Glasgow area to assess the changes in body composition in adolescent boys. A total of 47 healthy students were selected and the body composition was studied at 10 and 13 years. 22 of the students had reached a total puberty rating (TPR) greater than 4 and the remaining students were below 4 when it was checked at the age of 13. It is also observed that between the age 10 and 13, there is very fast and dynamic changes in the body composition happens.¹⁸

Conclusion

The important life event that happens in the adolescent period is the changes that happen in the body at the time of puberty. That includes physical, emotional and psychological changes. These changes are very important for their future development. Educating about the growth and development in the body is very important for the adolescents that will help to reduce the tension and anxiety at certain times of development if they do not possess adequate knowledge regarding these

changes. Also it will enable them to take right decision about the sexuality for the current situation and even for their future life.

But unfortunately, neither the parents nor the education system in India doesn't take any interest or initiative for educating the adolescents. As a result, they seek the answer for their own and some get more or less correct answer and most are in middle. So unable to get cope up with the situation, they approach measures like drinking, smoking and drugs. Adolescents need guidance to channel the drive toward risk-taking behavior into less dangerous and more constructive pursuits. So there is a need to educate the adolescents about the normal physiological changes occurring during the adolescence phase in order to help them to cope up with the various changes occurring and help to identify themselves as an individual.

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