

Quadrant II – Transcript and Related Materials

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Adolescence Health:

Adolescence is a critical juncture in the adoption of behaviors that are relevant to health.

Many of the behaviors that are linked to poor health habits and early death in adults begin during adolescence. Conversely the early formation of healthy behavior patterns such as regular exercise and a preference for foods low in fat and cholesterol not only has immediate health benefit but helps in adulthood to delay or prevent disability and mortality from heart disease, stroke diabetes and cancer.

1. Risk Taking Behavior

One type of health compromising behavior that increases in adolescence is risk taking.

Research indicates that the more resources there are in the community such as youth activities and adults as role models, the less likely adolescents are to engage in risky behavior. A recent study found that a higher level of what was labeled

social capital

- Study
- Number of schools
- Number of churches/temples/synagogues

Was linked with lower levels of adolescent risky behavior.

Health services

Though adolescents suffer from a greater number of acute health conditions than adults, they see private physicians less often than any other age group.

- Among the chief barriers to better health care for adolescents are Cost,
- Poor organization and
- Availability of health services,
- Lack of confidentiality and
- Reluctance on the part of health care providers to communicate with adolescents about sensitive health issues.

Few health care providers receive any special training in working with adolescents.

Leading Causes of Death

Medical improvements have increased the life expectancy of today's adolescents and emerging adults compared with their counterparts in the early twentieth century.

Still life threatening factors do exist in adolescents' and emerging adults' lives.

The three leading causes of death in adolescence are unintentional injuries, homicide and suicide.

More than of all deaths from 15 to 24 years of age are due to unintentional injuries $\frac{3}{4}$ of them involving motor vehicles, risky driving habits such as speeding, tailgating and driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs and lack of experience in driving.

Homicide also is another leading cause of death in adolescence especially among African American males, who are three times more likely to be killed by guns than by natural causes.

Suicide is the third leading cause of death in adolescence.

Nutrition

Nutrition is an important aspect of health compromising and health enhancing behaviors.

The eating habits of many adolescent are health compromising and increasing number of adolescents have an eating disorder.

Concern is often expressed over adolescents' tendency to eat between meals.

However their choice of foods is much more important than the time or place of eating.

Fresh vegetables and fruits as well as whole grain products are needed to complement the foods adolescents commonly choose, which tend to be high in protein and energy value.

Another concern is the amount of fat in our diet.

Many of today's adolescents virtually live on fast-food meals which contributes to the high fat levels in their diet.

Exercise and Sports

Exercise

Researchers have found that individuals become less active as they reach and progress through adolescence.

Also 26% of adolescents had engaged in physical activity that made their heart and breathing rates difficult for at least 60 minutes a day on five or more of the seven days.

10% of the adolescents did not engage in even moderate exercise.

Low levels of exercise by adolescents not only appears in general exercise data but also in participation in physical education (PE) classes.

Some health experts blame television for the poor physical condition of American adolescents.

Some blame the US schools many of which fail to provide physical education class on daily basis.

Sports

Sports play an important role in the lives of many adolescent development.

Many sports activities can improve adolescents' physical health and well being, self confidence, motivation to excel and ability to work with others.

Adolescents who spend considerable amount of time in sports are less likely than others to engage in risk taking behaviors, such as taking drugs.

Positive benefits of organized sports for adolescents

- Adolescents who participated in sports were less likely to engage in such risk taking activities as truancy, cigarette smoking, sexual intercourse and delinquency than non sports participants.
- They were 40% less likely to end up in a negative peer group and 40% less likely to be depressed than their counterparts.
- Were more likely to be successful academically and less likely to take drugs than their counterparts

The downside of extensive participation in sports is

- Pressure by parents to win at all costs.
- Result in competition anxiety and self centeredness
- Their academic skills may suffer.
- Pushing their bodies beyond a particular point may cause injuries.
- Youth coaches create performance oriented motivational climate that is focused on winning, public recognition, performance relative to others.
- Female athlete triad involves a combination of disordered eating (weight loss), amenorrhea (absent or irregular menstrual Cycle and osteoporosis (thinning and weakening of bones).
- Once menstrual periods have become somewhat regular in adolescent girls, not having a menstrual period for more than three or four months can reduce bone strength.

Sleep

Recently there has been a surge of interest in adolescent sleep patterns.

Research indicates that adolescents who got inadequate sleep (8 hours or less) on school nights were more likely to feel more tired or sleepy, more cranky and irritable, fall asleep in school, be in a depressed mood, and drink caffeinated beverages than their counterparts who got optimal sleep.

Many adolescents stay up later at night and sleep longer in the morning than they did when they were children.
