



## Knowledge, Attitude And Practices Regarding Human Sexuality And Contraception Among Adolescents

<b>Dr. Bhanu R. Desai</b>	Assistant professor of pediatrics, GMERS Medical College Sola
<b>Dr. Rashmi Thanvi</b>	Associate professor of pediatrics, GMERS Medical College Sola
<b>Dr. Krina D. Patel</b>	Junior Resident of pediatrics, GMERS Medical College Sola

**ABSTRACT**

**Objective:** To assess the knowledge, attitude and practice of sexuality and contraception among adolescents, the need of education on human sexuality with all the aspects of prevention and treatment of STDs and AIDS , the need of support by adequate services. **Methods:** Adolescent patients (10 – 17 years) attending OPD at GMERS Medical College Sola, as well as Adolescents aged 10 -19 years accompanying other OPD patients were assessed. **Results:** Majority of the boys (85.2%) and girls (88.5%) had average knowledge on human sexuality. Girls (53.5%) had an average knowledge on contraception whereas majority of the boys (56.6%) had poor knowledge scores Majority (93%) expressed the need for information on sexuality and believed that adolescents face a lot of problems due to lack of information. **Conclusion-** Adolescents prefer medical professionals than teachers for education and counselling on normal body developments and the risk-taking behaviour on sexuality issues Education on human sexuality with all the aspects of prevention and treatment of STDs and AIDS is essential.

**KEYWORDS**

**Introduction**

Adolescent <sup>(1)</sup> age group is defined as 10 -19 years , further subdivided into early adolescent (10-13 years), mid adolescent (13-16 years) and late adolescent (17-19 years). It is a period of dynamic transition, as puberty brings an intensification of interest and anxiety surrounding sexuality. Adolescent sexuality refers to sexual feelings, behavior and development in adolescents. The beginnings of sexual behavior may also lead to sexual and reproductive health problems, sometimes with grave consequences, if they are not well informed about all aspects of sexuality and reproductive health issues. The chances of premarital sexual activities have gone up due to increased opportunities for boys' and girls' interaction. Education on human sexuality with all the aspects of prevention and treatment of STDs and AIDS is very essential and also the support by adequate services is important.

**Objectives**

1. Identify the level of knowledge of adolescents on sexuality and contraception.
2. Determine the attitude of adolescents on sexuality and contraception
3. Determine the sexual and contraception practices of adolescents
4. Find out the relationship between knowledge, attitude and practices of adolescents on sexuality and contraception
5. The need of education on human sexuality with all the aspects of prevention and treatment of STDs and AIDS
6. The need of support by adequate services.

**Method :**

This study was undertaken among adolescent patients (10 – 17 years) attending OPD at GMERS Medical college Sola, as well as Adolescent aged 10 -19 years accompanying other OPD patients. (200 adolescents, 116 boys and 84 girls).

Descriptive survey approach was adopted for the study. The data was collected by using self-administered knowledge questionnaires, attitude scales and practice questionnaires on human sexuality and contraception. It contained the questions, by which their knowledge could be assessed about various aspects of human sexuality including human reproductive system, STDs, HIV/AIDS and methods of contraception. At-

tempt was done to find out the sexual activity among the subjects. Date entry and analysis was done using SPSS-16.

**Result**

Majority of subjects belonged to the age group of 16-17 years. Majority (75%) of them reported surfing internet as their hobbies. Majority of them resided in the urban areas of Ahmedabad(70%).

Knowledge on human sexuality- Majority of the boys (85.2%) and girls (88.5%) had average knowledge on sexuality. In the aspect of psychological change score was highest(54%)(Table-1)

Knowledge on Contraception - Majority of the girls (53.5%) had an average knowledge on contraception whereas majority of the boys (56.6%) had poor knowledge scores. Area wise distribution of knowledge scores on contraception showed that majority of subjects had highest mean percentage (55.75%) in the area of types of contraceptives.

**Table - 1 Knowledge Scores on various aspects of sexuality n=100**

Aspects of sexuality	Max Score	Mean	Mean %
Pubertal Changes	12	4.12	34.33
Psychological Change	2	1.08	54
Menstruation	10	1.78	44.5
Reproduction	10	2.68	26.8
STDs	10	3.59	35.9

**Opinion regarding need for sex education -**

Majority of the subjects (65%) reported to have surfed internet to seek information on sexuality and contraception and a very few (3%) sought advice from professionals. Majority of the subjects (93%) expressed the need for information on sexuality and believed that adolescents faced a lot of problems due to lack of information. 71% of the respondents were of the opinion that professionals (Doctors and Nurses) were competent to teach sex education in schools and colleges. The majority of the subjects (64%) expressed the need for establishment of a counseling cell in their institutions.

**Attitude towards premarital sex and contraception -**

Majority of the boys (49.14%) and girls (38.10%) had a highly liberal attitude towards premarital sex (Table-2). Majority of the boys (85.7%) and girls (79.2%) had a positive attitude towards contraception use.

**Table-2 Frequency and Percentage Distribution of adolescents based on their attitude towards premarital sex n=200**

Attitude on Premarital Sex	Boys Frequency (%)	Girls Frequency (%)	Total Frequency
Highly Conservative	20 (17.24%)	22 (26.19%)	42
Conservative	9 (7.76%)	7 (8.33%)	16
Liberal	30 (25.86%)	23 (27.38%)	53
Highly Liberal	57 (49.14%)	32 (38.10%)	89

**Practices of premarital sex and contraception -**

A total of 44 adolescents reported to have had premarital sex. 31.03% of boys and 9.52% of girls expressed to have premarital sex. For boys highest frequency for age at first intercourse was 16 years(27.78%) and for girls highest frequency for age at first intercourse was 13 years (37.5%). The sexual partners were their lovers in the majority of boys (38.89%) and girls (62.5%) [Table-3]. 13.89% of boys reported pregnancy in their partners; 25% of girls reported pregnancy. None of the girls reported STD, whereas 2 boys reported STD.

**Table-3 Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Practices of Sexually Experienced Adolescents**

Sl No.	Premarital Sex Practice	Boys (n1=36) frequency (%)	Girls (n2=8) frequency (%)	Total (n=44) frequency (%)
1	Age at first intercourse (in years)	12	0 (0%)	2(4.54%)
		13	3 (8.33%)	3(37.5%)
		14	9 (25%)	1(12.5%)
		15	7(19.44%)	1(12.5%)
		16	10(27.78%)	1(12.5%)
		17	7(19.44%)	0(0%)
2	Frequency of Coitus	Very often	9(25%)	1(12.5%)
		Sometimes	15(41.67%)	2(25%)
		Rarely	10(27.78%)	5(62.5%)
		Once	2(5.55%)	0(0%)
3	Sexual Partners	Relatives	7(19.44%)	3(37.5%)
		Peers (lovers)	14(38.89%)	5(62.5%)
		Sex Workers	13(36.11%)	0(0%)
		Servant	2(5.55%)	0(0%)
4	Outcomes of Premarital Sex Resulted in Pregnancy	Reported	5(13.89%)	2(25%)
		Reported STD	2(5.55%)	0(0%)
5	Contraceptive Use	Never	4(11.11%)	4(50%)
		Sometimes	14(38.89%)	2(25%)
		Usually	12(33.33%)	2(25%)
		Always	6(16.67%)	0(0%)

Percentage distribution regarding contraceptive practices shows that half (50%) of the girls did not use a contraceptive, whereas 49.9% of boys usually used a contraceptive.

**Relationship between knowledge, attitude and practices of adolescents on sexuality and contraception -**

There was a significant relationship between knowledge on sexuality and knowledge on contraceptives. No significant relationship was found between knowledge on contraception and attitude on premarital sex. No significant relationship was found between attitude on premarital sex and attitude on

contraception.

**Association of knowledge and attitude of adolescents on sexuality and contraception with selected demographic variables -**

There was no significant association of knowledge on sexuality with selected demographic variables. There was a significant association of knowledge on contraception with selected demographic variables such as age, stream of study and father's occupation. There was no significant association of attitude on sexuality with selected demographic variables. There was a significant association of attitude on contraception with selected demographic variables such as age and stream of study.

**Discussion**

The knowledge about human sexuality was only average, which is not sufficient to prevent untoward consequences like pregnancy and STDs. Knowledge about psychological changes (53%) was better than the knowledge about reproduction (25.2%). The knowledge about HIV/AIDS and other STDs was poor (35.9%). The knowledge about contraceptives was also poor (51%). Only 31% of adolescents were aware of one or the other method of contraception. It is a common observation, that AIDS is the most heard STD among teenagers. Ganguly<sup>2</sup>, Mukharjee and Geeta in their study found that 58.2% school going teenagers were aware of AIDS, but only 38.8% were aware of other STDs. Gupta<sup>3</sup> in their study reported that only 39.5% adolescents were aware of AIDS and 18% were aware of other STDs.

Though the knowledge on sexuality was only average their attitude was liberal ie; there was no inhibition in indulging in pre-marital sex. The positive attitude of adolescents towards contraceptive use is a good sign, however they lack adequate knowledge. The reported percentage of pre-marital sexual practices is low, especially in girls, probably because of the taboo associated with sex in India society. This underreporting is evident from the statistics of prevalence of unwanted pregnancies, abortions and STDs among adolescents in India. Adolescent period is a period associated with perils of sexuality. They need authentic information and education on all aspects of sexuality and reproduction. Sexual health education, guidance on emerging sexual urges and early access to adolescent friendly hospital services will play an important role to guide adolescents and improve their sexual and reproductive health.

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