

ADOLESCENT HEALTH ISSUES

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Acquire accurate information about the health needs of adolescents
- Build the life skills needed to avoid risk-taking behavior
- Obtain counseling, especially during crisis situations
- Have access to health services
- Live in a safe and supportive environment

TEACHING STRATEGIES:

- Use lectures and informal presentation in describing adolescents characteristics and diagnostic techniques of their health problems
- Small groups discussions for history taking, counseling parental education
- Review techniques necessary to develop skills in evaluation and management of adolescents health problems

MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT NEEDED:

- Computer for Power Point presentation
- Audiovisual aids
- Health education pamphlets
- White board or flip chart and markers

REFERENCES:

- Improving Adolescent Health and Development. WHO 1998.
- Progress in Child and Adolescent Health and Development. WHO 1999.
- Recommended Core Educational Guidelines for Family Practice Residents. American Academy of Family Physicians 1997, aafp/adol2.htm
- Immunization of Adolescents. American Academy of Family Physicians Reference Manual 1997, aafp/adolvax.htm

LEARNING POINTS:

- Information related to adolescents
 - Age group
 - Number
- Characteristics of adolescents
 - Rapid growth
 - Development
 - Sexual maturation
 - Independence
 - Increased exposure, smoking, alcohol, drugs
 - Diversity
- Factors influencing adolescents
 - Personality

Family
Society
Mass media and entertainment industry
Community institution
Religious bodies
Political and legal institutions

Death, disability and ill health
Tobacco use
Sexual and reproductive behavior
Road traffic accidents
Suicides

- Most adult's diseases start in adolescents
Ischemic heart disease

PREVENTION ISSUES AND HEALTH EDUCATION MESSAGES

- Comprehensive information about sexual and reproductive health
- Self-esteem, sense of responsibility and social confidence

Patient or Family Counseling

Inform adolescents of institutions, organizations, civil society and government responsible for actions needed to ensure good adolescent health and development.

The home
Schools
Health centers
The workplace
The street
Community organizations

CRITICAL ELEMENTS FOR REFERRAL

- Serious health problem or accident

Table 1. Specific measures to prevent death, disability and ill health in adolescents

Tobacco use

- Create a safe and supportive environment through:
 - Decreasing availability
 - Increasing prices
 - Advertising, limit sponsorship of sports, music and fashion events
 - Promoting no-smoking areas, schools, hospitals, buses., offices...
 - Information and skills, harmful effect, passive smoking, mass media..

Sexual and reproductive health

- Create a safe and supportive environment through:
 - Promoting delayed marriage and childbearing
 - Expanding access to education and training
 - Providing income-earning opportunities
 - Provide information and skills
 - Expand access to health services (youth friendly)

Death on the road

- Create a safe driving environment:
 - Vehicle design and Road maintenance
 - Individual protection, seat belts, helmets
 - Alcohol drinking
 - Guiding parents, night-time curfews

Suicides

- Addressing risk factors
 - Skills building to manage emotions, solve problems and negotiate conflicts
 - Supporting parents
 - Counseling
 - Mass media by under reporting to avoid “copycat” effect
 - Sensitization (religious and youth organizations)
 - Limiting access to means of suicide
- Identifying and assisting suicidal youth
 - Screening and early detection, teachers, GPs,
 - Crisis centers for confidential counseling on a 24-hour basis

Table 2. Recommendations for the immunization of adolescents (10-19 years)

Vaccine	Comments	Indications
BCG	Revaccination not recommended	First dose if no neonatal program
Diphtheria	As Td	Td in outbreaks
Hepatitis A	2 doses	Travel to endemic areas
Hepatitis B	3 doses	High-risk lifestyle
Influenza		Seasonal: high risk individuals
Measles	Part of MMR	Elimination campaign
Meningococcal		During outbreaks, Travel, military recruits
Mumps	Part of MMR	
Pertussis	Acellular vaccine	
Pneumococcal		Immuno-deficient patients
Polio		Travel to endemic areas
Rubella	Part of MMR	Outbreak prevention
Tetanus	No previous vaccine	Neonatal elimination programs
Typhoid		Optional in endemic areas, Travel to endemic areas
Varicella		Immuno-deficient patients