

LACK OF INFORMATION AND IRRESPONSIBILITY AS THE CRUCIAL RISK FACTORS OF EARLY SEXUALITY IN THE ADOLESCENT PERIOD

Bozidar Jovanovic

The periods of puberty and adolescence are the complex periods of transition from childhood to maturity during which the young are supposed to understand and control their interest in the opposite sex, gain their independence, get used to the problems that adults have, create their own opinion concerning anything that happens around them and in the world and make their own moral principles.

The aim of this research is to clarify the problems of adolescent sexuality. The study includes 2000 secondary school students from Kragujevac (500 male and 1500 female students).

The study has shown that young people get most information about sex not at school or from their parents but from magazines, mutual communication, and television. The majority of young people do not even think about the possible consequences of sexual intercourse and are quite irresponsible.

They do not take into consideration pregnancy nor any other complications. They have no sufficient knowledge about contraceptive methods and do not apply them.

Some prevention can be applied among the young by help of the family, school, and surrounding. *Acta Medica Medianae 2004; 43 (4): 35–39.*

Key words: *adolescence, risk, sexuality*

Gynecology and Obstetrics Department,
Clinical center „Kragujevac“, Kragujevac

Correspondence to: Bozidar Jovanovic
Gynecology and Obstetrics Department,
Clinical center „Kragujevac“
30 Zmaj Jovina street
34000 Kragujevac, Serbia and Montenegro
Tel.: 034/ 342-038

Adolescents who get married make up 1/3 of all marriages. Female adolescents represent 1/8 of the whole population of Serbia.

Since this period is quite a delicate one, it is of great importance for all fields of medicine which study it thoroughly.

All mistakes done in this period of physical and psychological development may produce some permanent negative effects.

Introduction

Adolescence is the period characterised by the development of the female sex, from puberty up to a complete sexual maturity. Modern medicine treats this period with utmost interest since it plays a very significant role in human reproduction.

The beginning of adolescence is marked by the beginning of puberty, whereas its end coincides with gaining some psychosomatic maturity. Good health of a female adolescent is of crucial importance for the health and future of the whole nation. All diseases and complications in her health, especially reproductive, may cause very grave consequences that cannot be healed.

The adolescent starts his or her sexual life while still psychologically immature, emotionally unstable, socially unfit and not accepted, economically dependent, legally irresponsible, but physically, sexually – possibly mature.

Target of the research

The goal of this study is to examine in details the problems of sexuality of the adolescent period. It was done through the questionnaire with accidentally chosen participants. Our task was to gain some opinion about the basic problems of sexuality of the young and about the sources of their sexual education.

Material and methods

We created a questionnaire for 2000 adolescents, that is, secondary school students in Kragujevac. We interviewed the students of all four grades, while the classes were accidentally chosen together with headmasters.

We considered the sample to be representative since it included the students of all grades from all

secondary schools. The questions were composed in such a way as to enable the participants to give brief and clear answers by either circling one of the given solutions or filling in empty spaces.

The students who took part in this study were informed about the purpose of this examination in advance.

The majority of data were systematically presented in charts, and statistically processed using various tests for proving the significance of differences of certain indexes by classical principles. Some parameters were grafically presented.

We compared our results with the facts given in the books written by Serbian and foreign authors dealing with the same problems in order to confront our and their opinions.

Finally, we drew some conclusions.

Results

The test group consisted of 2000 secondary school students (500 male and 1500 female students) (Table 1, 2).

Table 1. Sample

Age	Number		Total
	Male	Female	
16	99	252	351
17	169	513	682
18	187	515	702
19	45	220	265
Total	500	1500	2000

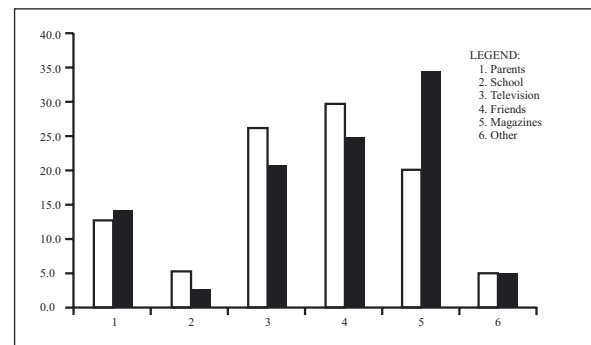
Table 2. Information on male and female intercourse

	Male		Female	
	Number	%	Number	%
From parents	65	13,0	210	14,0*
From school	27	5,4	34	2,3
Television	130	26,0	306	20,4
From school friends	155	31,0	384	25,6
From magazines	105	21,0	510	34,0
Other	18	3,6	56	3,8

*p < 0,001

We tried to determine the sources from which the young get most information about sex. Our results showed that they get most information from magazines (34%), their mutual communication (25%), from

television programmes (20%), whereas they get only little information from school (6%) and their parents (14%). These results are shown on Graph 1.



Graph 1. Sources of information

The greatest interest in the opposite sex appears in the period from 13 up to 15 years of age, in both boys and girls, which is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. The age of initial interest in the opposite sex

Age	Male		Female	
	Number	%	Number	%
10	208	41,7	252	23,5
10–12	131	26,2	373	18,2
13–15	161	32,1	762	50,8*
16–18	/	/	113	7,5
Total	500	100,0	1500	100,0

*p < 0,05

While examining how responsible the young are in their sexual life and its consequences, we came to a conclusion that the majority of young men are ready to reach some kind of compromise with their girlfriends in case of unplanned pregnancy. Yet, we also discovered that most young people do not even think about the consequences of pregnancy (Table 4).

Table 4. How would you react if your girlfriend told you she were pregnant

Answers	Number	%
I would be against abortion, I would marry her	86	19,2
I would talk to her and her parents	167	37,2
I would recomend abortion	63	14,1
This would never happen to me	34	7,7
I do not think about that yet	100	21,8
Total	450	100,0

The majority of young girls (65,9%) do not even think about the reaction of their partners in case of pregnancy (Table 5).

Table 5. How would your boyfriend react if you told him you were pregnant

Answers	Number	%
He would be surprised, but pleased	273	18,2
He would accept it and help me	193	12,9
He would be worried, he would recommend abortion or he together leave me	193	12,9
We would reach the solution together	27	1,8
I would not even tell him	18	1,2
I do not think about that	989	65,9*

*p < 0,01

80,5% of the young people who took part in this study think that both partners are equally responsible for pregnancy (Table 6).

Table 6. Who is responsible in case of pregnancy

	Male		Female	
	Number	%	Number	%
Girl	59	11,9	153	10,2
Boy	36	7,1	80	5,3
Both	405	80,9	1267	84,5*
Total	500	100,0	1500	100,0

*p < 0,005

However, what appears to be quite upsetting are the answers to the question whether a boy or a girl would see the doctor concerning some sexual problems (Table 7).

Table 7. Would you see the doctor on a certain sexual matter

	Male		Female	
	Number	%	Number	%
Yes	225	45,0	1020	68,0*
No	101	20,2	480	32,0
No answer	174	34,8	/	/
Total	500	100,0	1500	100,0

*p < 0,05

More than 1/2 of the young fear venereal diseases, although statistics show that the young do not know enough about them (Table 8).

Table 8. Do you possess enough knowledge about venereal diseases

	Male		Female	
	Number	%	Number	%
Yes	256	51,2	594	39,6
No	244	48,8	906	60,4*
Total	500	100,0	1500	100,0

*p < 0,01

Most young people are aware of the consequences of the abortion (Table 9).

Table 9. Are you aware of the complications of abortion

	Male		Female	
	Number	%	Number	%
Yes	357	41,4*	954	63,6**
No	143	28,6	546	36,4
Total	500	100,0	1500	100,0

*p < 0,05

All adolescents are characterised by the wish to achieve a certain goal, without thinking about the possible consequences. They are ignorant to the fact that they can fulfill their desire without any problems. Namely, most young people lack knowledge about contraceptive methods (Table 10).

Table 10. Knowledge about contraception

	Male		Female	
	Number	%	Number	%
I know nothing	387	77,4	552	
I know one method	11	2,2	168	
I know two methods	/	/	312	
I know three methods	54	10,8	312	
I know four or more	48	9,6	162	
Total	500	100,0	1500	

*p < 0,05

Discussion

Adolescent sexual activities have increased in the whole world, influenced by a number of factors, such as better living conditions, greater possibilities of communication, mass media like television, radio, film.

Thus, this phenomenon represents a very significant study topic, important for experts in all sciences, whose aim is to draw certain conclusions and use the results of the studies in order to help the young in their sexual life.

The questionnaire was made based upon other researchers' experiences in this field.

The test group of 2000 participants is representative since it includes secondary school students in our town.

There were more girls (1500) than boys (500) in our test group. They were chosen by accident, the data were processed by computers applying classical tests for statistical significance examination, and the statistically significant difference between two parameters was estimated at the level of 0,05.

Our key task was to discover the sources of sexual knowledge among the young. The results showed that they get most information from magazines (34%), their mutual communication (25%), television programmes (25%), while they obtain quite little

information from school (6%) and their parents (14%). These are the results that have already been proved in the work of numerous researchers (1,2,3,4).

The greatest interest in the opposite sex appears from 13 up to 15 years of age, for both boys and girls, which was proved in the study (5).

Our research proved that most young men are ready to reach a certain compromise with their partners in case of unplanned pregnancy, but also that the majority of young people do not even think about the consequences of possible pregnancy. Consequently, the number of unplanned pregnancies has risen, most of them leading to abortion (6,7,8,9).

The problem of venereal diseases is of utter importance for adolescents and probably the most relevant one in the field of sexology (10).

The majority of the young know nothing about contraception (11,12).

Conclusion

Sexual intercourses among the adolescents have increased in the world influenced by numerous factors.

The young have poor knowledge about sex, they get very little information about it from their parents and school, which is very negative. They are poorly informed about the physiological characteristics of sexual intercourse.

The young are irresponsible concerning the consequences of sexual intercourse. They do not care about possible pregnancy or any other complications that may arise. They have no sufficient knowledge about contraceptive methods and rarely use them.

What is needed is significantly greater sexual education of female adolescents.

References

1. Mc Knight JT, Nagy S, Nagy MC, Adcock A. Adolescent sexual activity in Alabama. *Fam Pract Res J* 1994; 14(1):59–65.
2. Miladinović P, Miladinović M, Dimić N, Cvetković A, Branković D, Mitić M, i sar. Namerni prekid odmakle trudnoće u adolescentnom dobu. Zbornik radova VIII jugoslovenskog simpozijuma o aktuelnim pitanjima u sterilitetu i fertilitetu; 1980 Oct 15–19; Priština.
3. Rodgers JL, Rowe DC. Social contagion and adolescent sexual behavior: e development EMOSA model. *Psychol Rev* 1993; 100(3):479–510.
4. Stout JW, Kirby D. The effects of sexuality education on adolescent sexual activity. *Pediatr Ann* 1993;22(2):120–6.
5. Pavićević M, Pavićević M. Polni život u adolescentnom dobu. Zbornik radova VIII jugoslovenskog simpozijuma o aktuelnim pitanjima u sterilitetu i fertilitetu; 1980 Oct 15–19; Priština.
6. Binak K, Mekuli S, Sejdulah H, Lulaj S, Belegy F, Kelmendi H. Komplikacije i ishod trudnoće kod adolescentkinja. Zbornik radova VIII jugoslovenskog simpozijuma o aktuelnim pitanjima u sterilitetu i fertilitetu; 1980 Oct 15–19; Priština.
7. Bolenc N, Elko B, Breznik R, Ivanišević T. Prekid trudnoće u maloletnica. Zbornik radova VIII jugoslovenskog simpozijuma o aktuelnim pitanjima u sterilitetu i fertilitetu; 1980 Oct 15–19; Priština.
8. Kundurović M, Đokić S, Šušić D. Abortusi školskih adolescenata. Zbornik radova VIII jugoslovenskog simpozijuma o aktuelnim pitanjima u sterilitetu i fertilitetu; 1980 Oct 15–19; Priština.
9. Obersnel–Kveder D, Andološek–Jeres L. Evaluacija metod prekinitve nosečnosti. Zbornik radova Prekid trudnoće; 1984 Oct 15–19; Zagreb.
10. Jensen LC, De Gaston JF, Weed SE. Societal and parental influence on adolescent sexual behavior. *Psychol Rep* 1994; 75(2): 928–30.
11. Braverman PK, Strasburger VC. Adolescent Sexuality: Part 2. Contraception. *Clin Pediatr Phila* 1993; 32(12):725–34.
12. Creatsas GK. Sexuality: sexual activity and contraception during adolescence. *Curr Opin Obstet Gynecol* 1993;5 (6):774–83.

NEOBAVEŠTENOST I NEODGOVORNOST KAO VODEĆI RIZICI RANE SEKSUALNOSTI U ADOLESCENTNOM PERIODU

Božidar Jovanović

Pubertet i adolescencija su kompleksan prelazni period iz detinjstva u zrelost, gde mladi moraju shvatiti i kontrolisati pojavu interesovanja za suprotni pol, steći samostalnost, privikavati se na probleme odraslih, imati sopstveno mišljenje o dešavanjima oko sebe i u svetu i izgraditi sopstvene moralne principe.

Cilj ovog istraživanja je bio da se stekne uvid u problematiku seksualnosti adolescenata. Istraživanje je sprovedeno na 2000 učenika (500 muških i 1500 ženskih ispitanika) srednjih škola u Kragujevcu.

Došli smo do podataka da u našoj sredini mladi najviše informacija o seksu dobijaju iz časopisa, u međusobnom komuniciranju i sa televizije, a veoma oskudne u školi i porodici.

Veliki broj mladih uopšte i ne razmišlja o posledicama seksualnih odnosa prema kojima se neodgovorno ponašaju.

O trudnoći ne razmišljaju, kao ni o ostalim komplikacijama. Nedovoljno poznaju kontraceptivna sredstva koja skoro i ne koriste.

Preventivno se na komplikacije seksualnosti kod mladih može delovati preko porodice, škole, životne i radne sredine. *Acta Medica Medianae 2004; 43 (4): 35–39.*

Cljučne reči: adolescentni period, rizik, seksualnost