

ADOLESCENT HEALTH

Adolescence is defined as the period between 10-19 years of age.

HEALTH PROBLEMS OF ADOLESCENTS

Anaemia in Adolescence

- An adolescent who is anaemic, will tend to be anaemic during pregnancy giving birth to a low birth-weight baby.

Teenage pregnancy and complications

- High mortality and morbidity associated with pregnancy and child birth during adolescence period.
- Unintended pregnancy: There is an increase in number of teenage pregnancies, due to lack of knowledge, inadequate contraception or forced rape.
- Abortion related complications: Unsafe, unhygienic abortion practices lead to increased mortality.
- Sexual violence: rape, harassment etc.

Reproductive Tract/Sexually transmitted Infections

- Adolescent may engage in risky sexual behaviour, increasing the risk of STIs including AIDS.

Problems related to menstruation

- Dysmenorrhoea, Menorrhagia

Mental health problems

- Substance abuse: Experimentation with tobacco, alcohol etc. can lead to addiction and related health problems
- Anxiety and depression: due to academic pressure, social relationships etc.

Others

- Injuries and accidents: may engage in risk taking behaviour.

- Sleep disorders: irregular sleep patterns, insomnia, can affect physical and mental health
- Obesity and overweight: Due to unhealthy eating habits and sedentary life style.

Major approaches to reduce problems

- Informing, educating, and sensitizing key group in society to individual health and social development needs
- Advocating appropriate policy, Legislation and programmes for promoting adolescent reproductive health
- Using appropriate, innovative research to improve knowledge of, and disseminate information about, the factors that influence and determine young people's sexual, contraceptive, and reproductive decisions and behaviour
- Modifying, extending and evaluating services specially designed to meet young people's needs
- Mobilizing the energy, creativity and idealism of young people in promoting health and developing appropriate activities in their communities
- Facilitating action to extend education opportunities for girls

ADOLESCENT HEALTH PROGRAM under RMNCH+A

Priority interventions are:

- Adolescent nutrition; Roll out National iron plus initiative including weekly iron and folic acid supplementation.
- Strengthen Facility-based adolescent reproductive and sexual health services (ARSH clinics)
- Information and counselling on adolescent sexual reproductive health and other health issues i.e. address teenage pregnancy and increase contraceptive prevalence in adolescents.
- Promote menstrual hygiene.
- Preventive health check-ups.

Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health Programme (ARSH) ***[UQ]***

Focus on reorganising the existing public health system in order to meet service needs of adolescents.

Programmatic approaches

- Facility based health services- Adolescent friendly health clinic
- Counselling services-Dedicated ARSH and ICTC Counselling
- Community based Intervention-outreach activities.
- Capacity building for service providers

i)Adolescent friendly health clinic

- Routine check-ups at primary, Secondary and Tertiary levels of care, provided on fixed day clinics.
- Provide information, services and commodities on contraceptives, management of menstrual problem, RTI/STI management, Antenatal care and anaemia.

ii)Facility based Counselling services

- Nutrition, puberty
- RTI/STI prevention and contraception
- Delaying marriage and child bearing, premarital concerns.
- Substance misuse, Sexual abuse, mental health problems

iii)Outreach activities

- Conducted in Schools, colleges, teen clubs and Vocational training centres
- Conducted during village health nutrition day, health melas

Weekly iron and folic acid supplementation (WIFS)

- Administration of supervised weekly iron-folic acid supplements of 100 mg elemental iron and 500 µg folic acid.
- Screening of target groups for moderate/severe anaemia and referring these cases to health facility.

- Biannual de-worming (Albendazole 400 mg), six months apart, for control of helminths infestation.

Menstrual Hygiene Scheme

- Community based health education and outreach in the target population to promote menstrual health
- Ensuring regular availability, sourcing and procurement of sanitary napkins.
- Storage, distribution and safe disposal of sanitary napkins
- Training of ASHA and nodal teachers in menstrual health