

The Role of Family Physician in Improving Adolescents Lifestyle

Essay

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By

Samar Mahmoud Abbas

M.B.B.Ch

Supervised by

Dr. Mohamed I Sheta

Professor of Internal Medicine
Head of Family Medicine Department
Faculty of Medicine
Cairo University

Dr. Maha M Ghobashi

Professor of Public Health and
Community Medicine
Faculty of Medicine
Cairo University

Dr. Lamiaa A Mohsen

Professor of Pediatric Medicine
Faculty of Medicine
Cairo University

Family Medicine Department
Faculty of Medicine
Cairo University
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List of Abbreviations

- AAS: Anabolic Androgenic Steroids.
- AMA: American Medical Association.
- ATN: Australian Technology Network.
- BMA: British Medical Association.
- DHHS: Department of Health and Human Services.
- GAPS: Guidelines for Adolescent Preventive Services.
- HAS: Health Advisory Service.
- HDL: High Density Lipoprotein.
- MDMA: Methylene Dioxy Meth Amphetamine.
- MOHP: Ministry Of Health and Population.
- NICE: National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence.
- PE: Physical Education.
- SUD: Substances Use Disorders.
- UNFPA: United Nations Fund for Population Activities.
- UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund.
- USDHHS: US Development of Health and Human Services.
- WHO: World Health Organizations.

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- Face 1 of the pyramid. Daily intake.
- Face 2 of the pyramid. Daily activities.
- Face 3 of the pyramid. Food guide pyramid for children and adolescents.
- Face 4 of the pyramid. Hygiene and health.
- Base of the pyramid. Healthy growth.

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Abstract

Adolescence is a critical period for intervention and health promotion. It is the time when adolescents are making life style choices and assuming responsibility for their own health. It is a period of great change and family physicians have the privilege of inspiring adolescent P.T.

Key word;

The Role of family physician in improving-adolescents life style.

Aim of Work

1. Clarify the role of the family physician in providing comprehensive care to adolescents.
2. Be familiar with the guidelines for adolescent healthy lifestyle and methods of its implementation.
3. Presents the guidelines for healthy lifestyle to adolescents in primary health care and family medicine clinic.
4. Highlight the important aspects of healthy lifestyle with its effect on growth and development as regarding:
 - Healthy diet.
 - Physical activity.
 - Avoidance of harmful substances such as anabolic steroids, tobacco, drugs and alcohol.
 - Prevention of injury.

Introduction

Adolescence is transitional period from childhood to adulthood, characterized by significant physiological, psychological and social changes. WHO defines adolescents as those in the age group of 10-19 **(WHO, UNICEF and UNFBA, 1999)**.

According to the Egyptian census, adolescents aged 10-19 compromise 22% of the Egyptian population **(Ibrahim et al, 2000)**.

Our world currently cares for a historic highest number of adolescents; about 1.2 billion adolescents need proper education, health and other life skills to ensure a better future for themselves and their countries **(WHO, UNICEF and UNFBA, 1999)**.

Adolescence is known as a time of physical, emotional and psychosocial changes it is also a time of experimentation and frequently risk taking. Fortunately adolescence is also a time of relatively good health for most. However the choices made during adolescence can affect both the short and long-term health of the individual. Addressing the unique healthcare needs of adolescence can be difficult, as they may be more likely to present to the physicians for acute illness than for health maintenance .For this reason physicians should take the opportunity to consider age-appropriate health maintenance each encounter with an adolescent **(Eugene et al, 2007)**.

The life style and reactions of adolescents vary from those of adults. Any rigid, judgmental position or defensive and stereotypic expectations concerning adolescent behavior must be abolished **(Berhane et al, 2005)**.

Adolescence is a unique period in the life cycle that presents special challenges and opportunities to the individual. During the transition from childhood to adulthood, adolescents experience pivotal biological, cognitive, emotional and social changes. In

addition, they establish patterns of behaviors and make lifestyle choices that affect both their current and future health. By creating safe and nurturing environments for today's youth—environments that focus on young people's assets and minimize chances for engaging in health risk behaviors we can help ensure that tomorrow's adults will be healthy and productive (**National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, 2004**).

However, despite the magnitude of this population segment and the variety of problems facing them today, adolescents receive relatively little attention or public investment (**Ibrahim et al, 2000**).

Investment in the next generation is a matter of encouraging positive healthy lifestyles as well as tackling ill health .Physical activity and healthy diet form part of the foundation for mental and physical well-being (**European Health Report, 2005**).

Although much is known about the health problems of adolescents, little is known about their health. It is far easier to catalog and count specific diseases than to define and measure health. Yet it is the measurement of health that is the appropriate concern of a health services system. With increasing demand in a range of community settings for effective adolescent health promotion interventions. There is a need for a strong evidence base to guide the planning and funding of adolescent health promotion interventions (**British Medical Association, 2003**).

Unlike industrial countries, where large amounts of research have accumulated on the situation and needs of adolescents, Egypt has a dearth of information on this stage of life. Mean while, the international literature provided few useful models for thinking about the realities of Egyptian adolescents. Most of the literature focused on issues of sexual behavior, unwed pregnancy and exposure to sexually transmitted diseases .However ,in addition to being inappropriate to the conservative milieu in Egypt , the

literature also seemed to miss many of the crucial aspects of adolescent life that either in deprivation or enhanced opportunities in the future. To face the major challenges of improving adolescent wellbeing , integrated investments in health, education, and job preparation are needed, an investment in adolescent wellbeing now will confer substantial benefits on Egypt in future decades **(Ibrahim et al., 2000)**.

In fact adolescence is a cross road in life and is the gateway to the promotion of health. Many of the behavioral patterns acquired during adolescence will last a lifetime. They will affect the health and well being of future children. The benefits, which will accrue to every society in meeting the challenge of promoting the health and development of adolescents, far overweight the cost of neglecting their needs **(Mowafy, 2007)**.

Family physicians are in a unique position among medical professionals to provide health care to adolescents. Adolescence is one of the most concentrated periods of developmental changes in a person's life. Behaviors and attitudes developed during this period shape the health of adulthood and thus can have profound long-range implications for individuals and society **(Jeannette et al., 2005)**.

Why adolescents ?

One in every five people in the world is an adolescent, which accounts for 1.2 billion people, and 85% of them live in developing countries **(WHO, 2004)**.

Not like humans some animals must fend for themselves immediately after hatching from an egg or shortly after leaving the womb. Being born prepared for independence has its pluses and minuses. On the plus side, the animal does not require an extended period of nurturing and can immediately go out and find its own food. And can survive without adult help. However, on the negative side, essentially all of the instructions that the animal is going to have to assist in its survival come with it into the world. While it might be able to learn a new trick or two, it will not be able to roll with major changes in the environment. In stark contrast to that scenario, humans are born with an incredible ability to roll with changes in the demands of an environment. While our brains have probably not changed at all in the past thousand years, the repertoire of skills necessary to survive certainly has. Humans take these demands in stride. Unfortunately, this flexibility comes at a great price; we are born incredibly dependent on others. This trade off is clearly more than fair, or we would not have survived as long as we have. Eventually, in order for our species to survive another generation, we need to venture out away from the family, out into the deeper end of the gene pool, and create families of our own. That clearly can not happen overnight. Most of us would not have made it had our parents just dropped us off at a bus stop when we were 10 and said, "Well, it's been great, now it's time for you to do this on your own!" For humans, as for many other mammalian species, there is a transitional stage between childhood and adulthood. That stage is adolescence **(European Health Report, 2005)**.

Reasons for paying attention to adolescents

There are many interrelated reasons why we need to pay attention to the health of adolescents: for this age group, for later life and for the next generation **(WHO, 2002 A)**.

To invest in health today and tomorrow, healthy and unhealthy practices adopted today may last a lifetime. Today's