



# Adolescence

October 2021

# Learning Objectives

**By the end of this lecture you should be able to:**

- ▶ Identify various definitions of adolescence.
- ▶ Define by age the groups of adolescents and young adults and adults.
- ▶ Identify the aspects of stormy phase in adolescents.
- ▶ Identify the characteristics of adolescence.
- ▶ Identify the rationales for increased interests in adolescence period.

# Why is it important to study adolescence?

- ▶ Adolescence is a period of life with specific health and developmental needs and rights.
- ▶ There are three main physical changes that come with adolescence: The growth spurt (an early sign of maturation); Primary sex characteristics (changes in the organs directly related to reproduction); Secondary sex characteristics (bodily signs of sexual maturity that do not directly involve reproductive organs).
- ▶ A growth spurt is a period when a child's height rapidly increases. Growth spurts are most obvious when a child is an infant (in the first year of life) and during the teen years (starting at about age 11 for girls and at about age 13 for boys).
- ▶ It's important to remember that these changes will happen differently for each teen. Some teens may have these signs of maturity sooner or later than others. Each child goes through puberty at their own pace.
- ▶ Adolescence is also a time to develop knowledge and skills, learn to manage emotions and relationships, and acquire attributes and abilities that will be important for enjoying the adolescent years and assuming adult roles.

# ADOLESCENCE DEFINITIONS

- ▶ The term adolescence is derived from the Greek word “adolescere” meaning “to grow” or “to grow to maturity”.
- ▶ It is a period, which fills the gap between childhood and adulthood. Generally, this period is termed as “youth.
- ▶ It is considered as a period of transition from childhood to adulthood.
- ▶ Adolescence is the period between puberty and adulthood.
- ▶ Puberty is the time in which a child's sexual and physical characteristics mature.
- ▶ Adulthood is the period of human development in which full physical growth and maturity have been achieved and certain biological, cognitive, social, and personality.
- ▶ Beginning after adolescence, adulthood is sometimes divided into young adulthood (roughly 20 to 35 years of age); middle adulthood (about 36 to 64 years); and later adulthood (age 65 and beyond)

# Adolescence

- ▶ Maturing involves not only physical but also mental growth.
- ▶ During adolescence, the regions of the brain that control emotions develop and mature. This phase is characterized by seemingly spontaneous outbursts that can be challenging for parents and teachers.
- ▶ A major area of conflict arises from the adolescent's desire for more freedom, which clashes with the parents' strong instincts to protect their children from harm.

# A Stormy phase?

- ▶ G. S. Hall's (1904) view that adolescence is a period of heightened "storm and stress".
- ▶ The author provides a brief history of the storm-and-stress view and examines 3 key aspects of this view: conflict with parents, mood disruptions, and risk behaviour.
- ▶ Hall used this term because he viewed adolescence as a period of inevitable turmoil that takes place during the transition from childhood to adulthood.

**NB: not all adolescents go through stormy phase.**

# A Stormy phase? Three aspects



## 1) Conflict with parents

- Adolescents tend to rebel against authority figures as they seek greater independence and autonomy.
- Hormonal changes related to puberty are thought to lead adolescents to strive for autonomy and individuation from parents.
- biological and cognitive development facilitates reorganization of the parent–adolescent relationship from a vertical relationship, in which parents have more knowledge and social power than their children and are expected to provide security and warmth, toward a more horizontal relationship, characterized by equal, symmetrical interactions

# A Stormy phase?



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## 2) Mood Disruption

Hormonal changes and the psychological stress of adolescence can cause uncontrollable shifts in emotions.



# A Stormy phase?

## 3) Risky behaviour

Adolescent risk behavior is participation in activities that may cause physical or mental harm, such as unintentional injuries and , sexual risk behavior, and tobacco, alcohol use.



# Adolescence

- ▶ They are no longer children yet not adults (Transitional Period).
- ▶ Period of changes: It is characterized by rapid physical growth, significant emotional, psychological changes.

# Adolescence

- ▶ It is not an age, but a stage.
- ▶ The length of time for this period of development varies.
- ▶ Adolescence can start at nine (9) and end at eighteen (18).
- ▶ It can start at fourteen (14) and end at twenty five (25).

- ▶ WHO defines adolescents as individuals between the ages 10-19 years.
- ▶ **Adolescence : 10 – 19 years**
- ▶ **Early Adolescence : 10 – 13 years**
- ▶ **Middle adolescence : 14 – 16 years**
- ▶ **Late adolescence : 17 – 19 years**

# Early Adolescence:

- ▶ Early adolescence is from 10 to 13 years.
- ▶ The rate of growth increases, starting first in the hands and feet and later in the limbs.
- ▶ They start initiating independence from the family, and desire for privacy.
- ▶ There may be a clash between the wish for their autonomy and parental authority.
- ▶ adolescent egocentrism is the feeling of personal uniqueness often experienced in adolescence; that is, the conviction that one is special and is or should be the constant focus of others' attention.

# Middle Adolescence

- ▶ Is from 14 to 16 years.
- ▶ auxiliary hair develop.
- ▶ The timing for this is influenced by genetic factors and nutritional status.
- ▶ Any chronic illness can delay puberty.
- ▶ and is characterized by increased importance on intimate relationships, physical appearance, and trying to achieve independence from parents.

# Late Adolescence

- ▶ Is from 17 to 19 years.
- ▶ The body approximates the young adult and development of secondary sex characteristics is completed.
- ▶ In late Adolescence, career decisions are finally traced.
- ▶ The child gradually returns to the family.

# Characteristics of Adolescence

1. Biological Growth and Development
2. Undefined Status
3. Increased Decision Making
4. Increased Pressure
5. The Search for Self



# Biological Growth and Development

- ▶ Onset of adolescence marked by beginning of puberty.
- ▶ Specific hormones are released.
- ▶ Growth spurts, voice changes, development of sexual characteristics.
- ▶ Complexion (skin) problems

# Undefined status

## ► Unclear social expectations

- Some treated as children, some as adults

# Increased decision making

- ▶ More decisions must be made by oneself.

# Increased pressure

- ▶ Parents, friends, and teachers all pressure adolescents to behave in particular ways.
- ▶ Peer pressure is the strongest.

# Peer pressure

- ▶ Adolescents are particularly susceptible to peer influence for several reasons.
- 1. adolescents look to their peers to understand social norms. They align their behaviour over time with the norms of their group or the group they want to belong to – a process known as **peer socialisation**
- 2. adolescents tend to be hypersensitive to the negative effects of social exclusion. They may conform to a group norm (which sometimes means taking a risk) to avoid this unpleasant social outcome. The desire to avoid the social risk of being left behind might outweigh the potential negative consequences associated with health risk or illegal behaviours

# The Search for Self

- The ability to establish personal norms and priorities is important.
- Preparing for future roles is one aspect of finding oneself.
- **Anticipatory socialization** is learning the rights, obligations, and expectations of a role to prepare for assuming that role in the future.

## Age structure in Jordan (2018)

- ▶ 0-14 years: 34.14%
- ▶ 15-24 years: 19.98%
- ▶ 25-54 years: 37.72%
- ▶ 55-64 years: 4.64%
- ▶ 65 years and over: 3.51%

# Why Adolescence?

- ▶ **They are not only in large numbers but are the citizens and workers of tomorrow.**
- ▶ **A large number of adolescents in the developing world are out of school, malnourished, get married early, working in vulnerable situations.**



# Why adolescence?

- ▶ Demographic rationale
- ▶ Public health rationale
- ▶ Economic rationale
- ▶ Human rights rationale

# Demographic rationale

- ▶ One in five individuals in the world is an adolescent, aged 10-19 years.
- ▶ Most adolescents live in developing countries.
- ▶ In these countries, they represent up to a fourth of the population.

# Public Health Rationale-Mortality

- ▶ Every year about 1.4 million deaths occur in adolescents.
- ▶ Most of these deaths occur in low & middle income countries
- ▶ Death rates rise sharply from early adolescence (10-14) to young adulthood (20-24).
- ▶ Leading causes of death vary by sex and by region.

# Public Health Rationale-Morbidity

Tens of millions of adolescents face health problems

- ▶ In 11 countries (out of 64 with available data), a quarter of the adolescent girls are underweight.
- ▶ In 21 countries (out of 41 countries with available data), a third of adolescent girls are anaemic
- ▶ Globally, about 2.2 million adolescents are living with HIV
- ▶ Between 40-70% ever-married girls aged 15- 19 reported that they experienced emotional, physical or sexual violence by their current or most recent husband or partner.

# Public Health Rationale- Behaviours

- ▶ Hundreds of millions of adolescents adopt unhealthy habits that will lead to disease and death in later life.
- Unprotected sex
- Physical inactivity
- Use of tobacco, alcohol & illicit drugs

- ▶ Physical inactivity (sedentary behavior)
- ▶ Adolescence is a critical period in the human life. It affects people future habits and practice.
- ▶ Benefits of physical activity; Improves blood circulation throughout the body, Keeps weight under control, Improves blood cholesterol levels, Prevents and manages high blood pressure, Prevents bone loss.
- ▶ Poor diet and physical inactivity cause at least 300,000 deaths among U.S. adult each year.

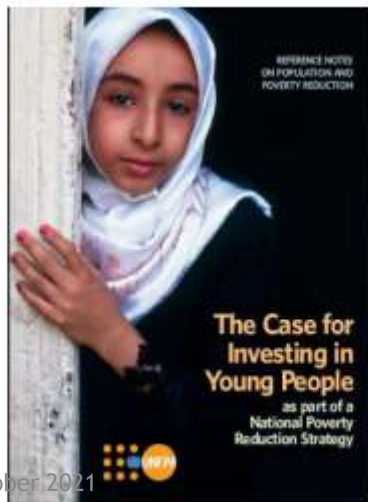
# Economic rationale

- Socio-economic deprivation: a cause & consequence of adolescent pregnancy



*"We young women are not prepared to become mothers. I would like to continue my studies. But since I have had my daughter, my options have changed because I have many more obligations now."*  
Eylin 19, Honduras January 2006.

Source: World Development Report 2006 (World Bank, 2006.)



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# Human rights rationale

- ▶ The right to the highest level of health possible & to access the required health services.
- ▶ Greater access to education and Greater ability to make personal & professional choices.
- ▶ The right to access appropriate information from the media & to be protected from harmful information.
- ▶ The right to seek, receive information and ideas of all kinds



Choices: A guide for young people  
Gill Gordon, 1999.



- ▶ **The following changes are taking place during adolescent period:**
  - a) Biological changes – onset of puberty**
  - b) Cognitive changes – emergence of more advanced cognitive abilities**
  - c) Emotional changes- intimacy, relation with adults and peers' group**
  - d) Social changes – transition into new roles in the society**

# Child abuse and Nurturing Care for Early Childhood Development

[Click on the link to watch the video about child abuse;](#)

► <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6kcKX2In0B0>

# Thank you!

