

Adolescent sexual practices and contraceptive usage

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Abstract

Introduction: Adolescence is a critical period of development, as adoption of unhealthy risk behaviours such as unprotected sex, smoking and drug abuse, avoiding contraceptive methods will lead to long standing health and socioeconomic consequences. Therefore information is needed about the sexual practices and contraceptive usage of adolescents and young adults to develop interventions in the community.

This study was undertaken to describe and compare the sexual practices, knowledge and usage of contraceptives by adolescents and young adults in selected urban and rural settings.

Method: This cross sectional descriptive study was conducted among young adults aged less than 21 years at the time of interview in three settings in both rural and urban areas. The study subjects were students from universities, technical colleges and garment factory workers representing both rural and urban areas.

The data was collected using a pretested self administered questionnaire during June 2007 to August 2007. Information collected included marital status, gender and the level of education, first sexual relationship (age, partner, contraception used), current contraceptive practices and knowledge about contraceptive methods. The data was analysed using SPSS 10.1 statistical package. Informed consent was obtained from all participants.

Results : There were a total of 1258 subjects who had returned the completed questionnaires. Out of them there were 290 garment factory employees, 480 technical college students, and 488 university students. The percentage of females was 58.9%. The mean ages of the males and the females of the total population were 20.75(SD 1.13) years and 20.55(SD 1.63) and it was similar in the three settings. The level of education was highest among the undergraduates lowest among garment factory workers.

Out of the population 303 (24.1%) were sexually active. It was significantly higher among males {33.5%0 than females (17.0%). Both among male and females this trend was significantly more common among garment factory workers.

Sexual activity of the unmarried and the premarital sexual practices of married subjects are shown in the table. 6. 17% of females and 33.5% of males were sexually active before marriage. 90% male garment factory workers were sexually active. In contrast the proportion