



FORMATIVE RESEARCH FOR COMMUNICATION STRATEGY - UNDERSTANDING THE PROTECTIVE AND RISK FACTORS FOR LIFESTYLE BEHAVIOURS IN SCHOOL GOING ADOLESCENTS IN HARYANA, INDIA

VRIDDHI: SCALING UP RMNCH+A INTERVENTIONS, SUPPORTED BY USAID



Background

Adolescence is a period of experimentation and risk taking behaviour. Infact lifestyles acquired during adolescence determines risk for multiple lifestyle diseases in later age. Haryana state plans to develop a comprehensive communication strategy for adolescents. Hence a formative study on adolescent behaviours related to lifestyle diseases was planned.



Methods

A cross sectional school based student health survey was done in 6 districts in Haryana, India. The study was conducted from October, 2015 to January, 2016. Gender stratified multistage cluster sampling technique was used. A self-administered questionnaire adapted from WHO Global school student health survey 2013 core questionnaire module was used. A total of 3138 students (1597 boys and 1541 girls) from classes VII to XII in 97 schools were included in the study.



RESULTS

Substance Abuse

	7 th to 9 th	10 th to 12 th	7 th to 9 th	10 th to 12 th
Ever use of alcohol	12.5%	16.1%	9.7%	7.5%
Current use of alcohol (in the past 30 days)	3.6%	6.8%	2.7%	3.1%
Ever use of smoking tobacco	6.9%	12%	4.4%	2%
Current use of smoking tobacco (in the past 30 days)	3.9%	5.9%	2.6%	1%
Current use of non smoking form of tobacco (in the past 30 days)	3%	4%	2.2%	0.5%
Ever use of drugs	4.1%	3%	3.1%	1.5%
Current use of drugs (in the past 30 days)	5.5%	3.6%	4.9%	2.1%
Ever use of intoxicating drugs (injectable, amphetamine)	9.7%	7.7%	16.2%	10%

- ❖ Odds of students using any form of tobacco were statistically significantly higher in students whose parents used any form of tobacco particularly for students of lower grades.
- ❖ One fourth of the adolescent boys and girls reported exposure to second hand smoke in past one week.
- ❖ Nearly one third of the adolescents reported a parent/guardian consuming tobacco products.
- ❖ Over one third of the current user boys and girls bought alcohol themselves.

Mean age at Initiation of Substance Use

7th-9th Class

Alcohol - 12-13 yrs
Smoking - 7 yrs

10th-12th Class

Alcohol - 16-17 yrs
Smoking - 12-13 yrs

Sexual Practices Among Students

Indicators	BOYS 10 th -12 th class	GIRLS 10 th -12 th class
Percentage of students who ever had sexual intercourse	16%	6%
Median age at 1st sexual intercourse for students who ever had sexual intercourse	Age 16-17 Years (Out of 146 boys)	Age 11 Years or less (Out of 54 girls)
Percentage of sexually active students who had used condom for last sexual intercourse	53.8%	4.5%

Dietary Habits and Physical Activity Among Students

Questions	Boys		Girls	
	7 th to 9 th	10 th to 12 th	7 th to 9 th	10 th to 12 th
Percentage of students who went hungry most of the time due to non availability of enough food in their home during the past 30 days	3.9%	2.7%	4.2%	1.9%
Percentage of students who had carbonated soft drinks one or more times per day during the past 30 days	41.6%	34.8%	41.0%	31.3%
Percentage students physically active at least 5 days for at least 60 minutes during the past 7 days	24.4%	38.5%	21.7%	25.2%
Percentage of children who spend more than 7 hours on a usual day sitting and watching television, playing computer games, talking with friends or doing other sitting activities	2.2%	2%	2%	2%

Dietary Habits and Physical Activity Among Students

	Out of every 10 students
Students who usually ate fruits \geq 1 times per day during the past 30 days	8
Students who usually ate vegetables \geq 1 times per day during the past 30 days	8
Students who had eaten from a fast food during the last 7 days	8
Students who walked or rode a bicycle to or from school at least 5 days a week during past 7 days	8
On a typical week students who attended PE Class each week	8
Students who spend more than 3 hours on a usual day sitting	8

Personal Hygiene Practices Among Students

INDICATORS	(7 th -12 th grade)	(7 th -12 th grade)
Students who usually brush at least once a day	87.60%	92.50%
Washing of hands		
• Before eating food	86.10%	89.60%
• After using toilet	91.40%	95.00%
• Used soap and water	76.50%	87.30%

- ❖ One out of 10 boys do not wash hands after using toilet.
- ❖ Nearly one-fourth boys do not use soap and water for washing hands.



Conclusions

- ❖ The rates of cigarette smoking are higher than the estimated values in Global School Health Survey 2007.
- ❖ There are laws prohibiting access to tobacco and liquor for adolescents, however these are easily available for the adolescents.
- ❖ In the background of a culturally conservative society where discussions on reproductive and sexual health is a taboo, the percentage of adolescents experimenting with sex is increasing and age of sexual involvement is decreasing. This exposes our adolescents to risk of unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases.
- ❖ It is important to involve the gatekeepers for adolescents (parents, teachers and local influencers) to address the high risk behaviours including substance abuse and unsafe sex practices.



Recommendations

- ❖ Policies that prohibit the sale of alcohol and tobacco to minors and overall implementation of Cigarette and Other Tobacco Product Act (COPTA) needs to be strengthened.
- ❖ Integration of healthy lifestyle behaviours for adolescents in the curriculum.
- ❖ Curriculum should focus on the short term and long term effects of use of alcohol, tobacco and drug use/abuse these substances in addition to facilities available for addressing dependence.
- ❖ Promote healthy diet and discuss with adolescents about the adverse impact of nutritional transition from traditional food (high in fiber and cereals) to foods high in processed sugars, fat and animal source foods.
- ❖ Encourage students to engage in exercising during leisure time. Importance of regular exercise needs to be inculcated into students using PE Classes, through mass media and curriculum.

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