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Adolescents, experimentation and risky behaviors: Is it a chain of events?

Introduction: Adolescence is a transforming period, when physical, psychological, cognitive and emotional changes happen and autonomy from parental control is demanded. The adolescent faces the task of self-discovery, often resulting in the adoption of sexual exploration and experimentation that may constitute Risky Behaviors (RB). These can translate into health decline, not only during adolescence but also into adulthood.

Objectives: The objectives of the study are to increase awareness for adolescent's susceptibility to RB, discuss strategies to decrease health decline and to capacitate doctors on the management of RB.

Methodology: The methodology includes theoretical introduction to adolescence and its characteristics, brief exposition of global statistics on RB; brainstorm on 4 main types: tobacco smoking, alcohol consumption, drug abuse and risky sexual practices; presentation and discussion of strategies for each topic and take-home messages.

Discussion: Adolescents are prone to experimentation, testing the limits of themselves without much account into consequences. As family doctors, we ought to be capacitated on techniques and strategies to use on consultations with adolescents engaging on RB. Ideally, a multi-disciplinary approach should be used, enrolling parents, teachers and the school community into preventing their perpetuation into adulthood.

Biography

Carla Veiga Rodrigues has completed her Master's in 'Risky behaviors on a student's population from Vila Nova de Gaia' from the Health Sciences School at University of Minho. She is currently a GP resident at UCSP São Neutel, Chaves and is an Emergency Doctor on the Medical Vehicle of INEM (National Institute of Medical Emergency). She takes a special interest in adolescence and sexuality, being a founding member of FIMS (Iberic Federation of Medicine and Sexuality). She also focuses on communication skills and presented a workshop on motivational interviewing in Wonca Europe 2016 and is currently writing a book on the subject.

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