

# Adolescence



# Learning Objectives

**By the end of this session 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.



# ADOLESCENCE DEFINITIONS

- ▶ The term adolescence is derived from the Greek word “adolescere” meaning “to grow” or “to grow to maturity”.
- ▶ It is considered as a period of transition from childhood to adulthood.
- ▶ Adolescence is generally regarded as the period of life from puberty to maturity.



# Adolescence

- ▶ Maturing involves not only physical but also mental growth.
- ▶ It is a period, which fills the gap between childhood and adulthood. Generally, this period is termed as “youth.





# 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.



# A Stormy phase?



## 2) Mood Disruption

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



# A Stormy phase?

## 3) Risky behaviour

The combination of a neurological need for stimulation and emotional immaturity lead to increased risk taking behaviour during adolescence.





# Adolescence

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



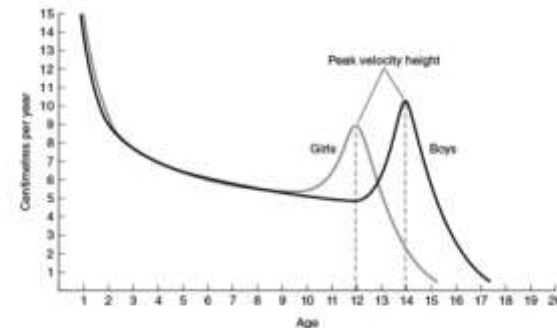
# Early Adolescence:

- ▶ 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.



# Middle Adolescence

- ▶ Is from 14 to 16 years.
- ▶ The peak of the height velocity curve is seen
- ▶ auxiliary hair and sweat glands develop.
- ▶ The timing for this is influenced by genetic factors and nutritional status.
- ▶ Any chronic illness can delay puberty.



**Figure 8.1** Peak velocity height curve for girls and boys showing the increase in stretch stature (height) expressed in units of centimetres per year.

From <http://www.brianmac.co.uk/13ad.htm>



# 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 may find it particularly rewarding to gain social status, a potential outcome of aligning with peers.
  3. 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.



# Why Adolescence?

- ▶ The Jordanian population is young with **52 percent of the population below the age of 20,** and the generation aged 10-19 constitutes around 25 percent of the total population .
- ▶ Still almost half of Jordan's population was below 19 years of age, of which 26.9 per cent were in the age group 0-9, and 24.8 per cent between 10 and 19 years.



## 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.**
- ▶ **The problems of adolescents are multi-dimensional in nature and require holistic approach.**
- ▶ **A large number of adolescents in the developing world are out of school, malnourished, get married early, working in vulnerable situations, and are sexually active.**





# 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 vary by region & sex
- ▶ 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
- ▶ Adolescence is a critical period in the human life. It affects people future habits and practice.
- ▶ Poor diet and physical inactivity cause at least 300,000 deaths among U.S. adult each year.

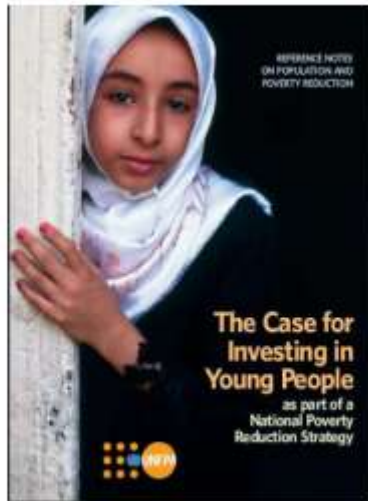


# Economic rationale

- 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.)



# 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 – self image, intimacy, relation with adults and peers' group**
  - d) Social changes – transition into new roles in the society**



# Thank you!

