

## Common Heal Problems of Adolescents in Dehradun

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Health problems of adolescents are very different from those of younger children and older adults. Due to lack of accurate information and proper guidance, adolescents are prone to various general morbidities along with behavioral and reproductive health problems. We need to study the health problems of adolescents because they face significant problems and risk related to their healthy development. The increasing focus on adolescent health will help in the development of preventive, promotive and curative adolescent health programme in the community.

**Objective:** To find out the common health problems of adolescents.

**Methods:** A cross-sectional study was conducted in Doiwala Block, District Dehradun (Uttarakhand). The study group comprised of 840 adolescents, selected by multistage stratified random sampling. Data was collected on a pre-designed and pre-tested questionnaire by interviewing the adolescents and by conducting their thorough examination which was subsequently analyzed by using suitable statistical package.

**Results:** Generalized weakness was found to be maximum among adolescent girls i.e., 29.5 %. Defective vision in adolescent boys and girls was found to be 15.2 % and 16.4 % respectively. Dental caries was found to be maximum in adolescent boys (14.8 %). Adolescent girls had relatively maximum morbidities per morbid case (1.9).

**Conclusions:** A holistic approach to underlying causes of problems of adolescents should be undertaken. There is need of strengthening the existing "package" of services for adolescents in various initiatives and programmes.

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Adolescence is a period of transition between childhood and adulthood. It occupies a crucial and important place in the life of human beings whereby transition is characterized by rapid rate of growth<sup>(1, 2)</sup>.

WHO defines adolescence both in terms of the age (spanning the ages between 10 and 19 years) and in terms of a phase of life marked by special attributes. These attributes include: rapid physical growth and development; physical, social and psychological maturity, but not all at the same time; sexual maturity and the onset of sexual activity; experimentation; development of adult mental process and adult identity; transition from total socio-economic dependence to relative independence<sup>(3)</sup>.

Health problems of adolescents are very different from those of younger children and older adults. Due to lack of accurate information in the absence of proper guidance, adolescents are prone to various behavioral and reproductive health problems<sup>(4)</sup>.

We need to study the health problems of adolescents because they face significant problems and risk related to their healthy development. The increasing focus on

adolescent health and the need for research will help in the development of preventive, promotive and curative adolescent health programme in the community. Adolescents have very special and distinct needs, which can no longer be overlooked. It is also essential to invest in adolescents, as they are the future of the country.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present cross sectional study was conducted in rural areas of Doiwala Block situated within a radius of 20 Km from the Himalayan Institute of Medical Science (H.I.M.S.), Dehradun. This study was approved by the research and ethical committee of the College. The study subjects comprised of adolescent girls and boys (10-19 years) residing in the villages of Doiwala Block. The study was carried out for a period of one year (15<sup>th</sup> June 2006 to 14<sup>th</sup> June 2007). An adequate sample (420 adolescent boys and 420 adolescent girls) was drawn to carry out the present study and Stratified Multistage Random Sampling was used for the selection of villages.

### Key words :

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