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Research Paper...

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH: AWARENESS

AND PRACTICES OF ADOLESCENT

GIRLS

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Abstract

Reproductive health is a crucial part of general health and a central feature of human development. Therefore, a descriptive study design was adopted to assess awareness and practices of adolescent girls regarding reproductive health. The population comprised of adolescent girls between the age of 15-19 years studying in standard 10th-12th in government schools of Jaipur, Rajasthan. 100 adolescent girls were selected using purposive sampling. The investigator used a structured questionnaire with two major parts, the first part designed to assess the awareness and the second part to assess the practice about reproductive health. Results showed that major source of information on reproductive health was mass media and only few of them were informed by health personnel. The findings revealed that majority of adolescent girls 45% had average awareness regarding reproductive health; only 16% of adolescent girls had good awareness. 47% of adolescent girls had good practices, 40% had average and 13% had poor practice regarding reproductive health. The highest mean percentage score [62.20] was in the area of HIV/AIDS/STDs and lowest mean percentage of score [43.56] was in the area of contraception. There was a need to educate adolescent girls about these serious issues because their present health status and awareness will affect their future.

Key words: Awareness, Practices, Reproductive Health, Late Adolescent Girls.

Background

The developmental efforts over the years since India's political emancipation in 1947 had witnessed a fundamental shift in perspective from economic growth to social justice. This shift in emphasis had brought forth developmental policies to ensure a qualitative change in the life of the poor and disadvantaged groups, especially women, by providing access to education, health care, nutrition, a share in economic growth, and participation in the decision-making process. (K. Jyothi Kamalam et.al. 2005)¹

Reproductive health is a reflection of health during childhood, and crucial during adolescence and adulthood. It sets the stage for health beyond the reproductive years for women, and affects the health of next generation. The

health of the new born is largely a reflection of the mother's health and nutritional status and of her access to health care.

Adolescence is a period of dynamic transition in which many interrelated changes of body, mind and social relationship take place. During this period the body develops in size, strength, stamina and reproductive capacity and becomes more sexually defined. (Varid Mala et.al., 2002)² In India, adolescents account for a little more than one-fifth of the population (census 2001). Out of an estimated 200 million adolescents, girls account for slightly less than 100 million due to disproportionate sex ratio. Though adolescent girls constitute an important segment of society, until 1994 International conference on Population Development, their special needs have not been addressed seriously.