



HEALTHY LIFESTYLE PRACTICES FOR ADOLESCENTS

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ABSTRACT

Background: Lifestyle is the nature in which a person or group of people live and one's lifestyle can be healthy or unhealthy based on nutrition, physical activity levels, and overall personal behaviours. A positive lifestyle can bring health and happiness, while a negative life-style can lead to illness and depression. A lifestyle has different components which includes: nutrition, physical activity, sleep pattern, healthy habits, hygienic practices, safety and health awareness, and these components contribute to an individual's health. Health requires the promotion of healthy lifestyle. Health risk behaviours such as smoking, alcohol abuse, unhealthy dietary patterns, sedentary habits, and unsafe and aggressive behaviours have been found to have an important influence on morbidity and mortality. Health risk behaviours, which develop over time, can also contribute to an unhealthy lifestyle. Adolescent population and health of adolescents is a very special issue and is focus of attention globally for various reasons. An essential component in the prevention and management of diseases is the adoption of a healthy lifestyle that would include the promotion of non-smoking, eating a healthy balanced diet, and actively engaging in organized physical activities.

KEYWORDS: Lifestyle pattern, Adolescents.

INTRODUCTION

Young people are the valuable human resources in every country. Adolescence is the critical period of growth and development, their personal lifestyle and behavior pattern develop during this period. Eating behavior, physical activity, sedentary behavior, low cardio respiratory fitness are the risk factors for developing chronic diseases which lead to morbidity and mortality among youth and young adults, increases the economic burden to the society and reduced occupational productivity.

According to World Health Organization, health is state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Accordingly, health has three dimensions i. e physical, mental and social which are connected to the concept of wellbeing.

Lifestyle is the way, in which person or group of people live, where they live, what they own and what activities they enjoy. One's lifestyle can be healthy or unhealthy based on their nutrition choices, their physical activity level, habits and overall personal behavior. Lifestyle

includes the following components, like nutrition, sleep, activity, exercise, study habits, recreation, leisure time activity, religious behavior and health risk behavior. Healthy lifestyle habits during adolescents can prevent many of the lifestyle diseases and disabilities in adulthood and later.

Youth population and their health are focus of attention worldwide and matter of concern for various reasons. Indian adolescents are prone for lifestyle diseases due to unhealthy lifestyle practices like poor eating pattern, inadequate physical activity, smoking, alcohol consumption and stress. Enhancing the knowledge about healthy eating behavior, exercise, and healthy habits are also the predisposing factors for adopting a healthy lifestyle practice. Hence parents, teachers and health care professionals should create awareness among adolescents for promoting physical activity and healthy behavior.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON LIFESTYLE PATTERN OF ADOLESCENTS

An exploratory study was conducted to assess the lifestyle of 128 adolescent girls in Dadu Majra colony, Chandigarh. Sample was selected through systematic

sampling technique. The findings of the study showed that majority of the adolescent girls were having sedentary lifestyle. Less number of subjects was engaged in vigorous exercises and most of them were doing indoor activities like household work, sitting in front of television, listening to music for seven hours.

A study on physical activities of adolescents reported that adolescent girls spent most of their time in watching television sewing and chatting and gossiping. Inadequate physical activity among adolescent girls results in increased BMI. In one of the studies in India, results revealed that adolescent girls have higher BMI compared to boys. Many studies found that poor eating habits are another major concern among youth. Adolescents often will have skipping of breakfast and lunch, eating fast food and junk food, less consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables. These lifestyle changes in young adults will negatively modify their eating behavior, frequency and timing of intake.

According to Choudhary SM et al, study result reveals that 296 adolescent girls had anemia which associated with their socio demographic factors. High prevalence of anemia was seen among lower socio economic group and also their parent were not educated much. The youth who are in the age group of 12-18years are the future citizens of our country and healthy country can be built only by healthy citizens. Lifestyle behavior which is learnt during at young age will have strong influence on their health both in present and future. Since adolescents will have various lifestyle choices, there is urgent need to study their life style pattern.

Facts about adolescent health

- a. Obesity has nearly tripled between 1975 and 2016 worldwide
- b. 1 .9 billion adults 18 years and older were overweight and 650 million were obese in 2016
- c. 41 million children under age of five were overweight or obese in 2016
- d. 340 million children and adolescents aged 5-19 were overweight or obese in 2016
- e. Obesity is preventable
- f. Overall, about 13% of the world's adult population (11% of men and 15% of women) was obese in 2016

Factors influencing healthy lifestyle pattern of adolescents

Diet and body mass index: diet and nutrition of the adolescents is one of the important factors that have direct and positive relationship with health. Imbalanced diet and overweight are the common problem seen in urban population. Unhealthy lifestyle can be measured by BMI. Urban lifestyle is influenced by fast foods, junk and processed foods, due which they are high, risk for cardiovascular diseases.

Daily meal frequency- Daily meal eating frequency like breakfast, morning snack, lunch and afternoon snack and

dinner. Five meals a day was considered as the optimal daily meal frequency pattern.

Exercise: Regular exercise along with healthy diet will help in reduce the general health problems and enhances the health of the individual. Some studies reveal that there is direct and positive relationship between lifestyle and health.

Physical activity-Physical activity was expressed as average minutes per day in light, moderate and vigorous physical activity.

Sleep: Another important factor that influences the health is sleeping pattern of the individual. Sleep is integral part of life and sleep disorders due to social, psychological, economical and unhealthy lifestyle has direct influence on mental and physical health.

Sleep quality-Seven components of sleep quality include subjective sleep quality, sleep duration, sleep latency, habitual sleep efficiency, sleep disturbance, use of sleep medication and day time dysfunction.

Substance abuse: Addiction behavior is considered as unhealthy life style. Cardiovascular disorders, asthma, cancer, brain injury are the consequences of various substance abuse. A study conducted in Iran reveals that 43% females and 64% of males experience substance abuse. A longitudinal survey reveals that 30% of people between the age of 18-65 years smoke cigarettes from longer duration.

Medication abuse: Medication abuse is also one of the major forms of unhealthy lifestyle in Iran. Unhealthy behaviors like self-treatment, sharing medication, using medication without prescription, prescribing too many drugs, prescribing large number of each drug, unnecessary drugs, ignoring the harmful effect of drugs etc.

Application of modern technologies: the life man is facilitated by the use and application of technologies. Unpleasant consequences may result from misuse of technology. Use of gadgets and other devices up to midnight may have harmful effect on sleeping pattern and it disturbs the normal sleeping habits. Addiction of mobile phone may result in depressive symptoms.

Recreation: Leisure time activity is one of the major factors of lifestyle. Neglecting the leisure time may lead to negative impact in human beings. Lack of planning and unhealthy leisure time activities may cause serious danger to their health.

Study: Regular study habit is the major part of our lifestyle. Having regular study habits may lead to physical and mental health.

Screen time-Screen time is the number of hours spent on television, videogames, internet and mobile phone.

Healthy lifestyle index-A healthy lifestyle index ranging from 0 to 6 was specifically defined as adolescent optimal weight status, low screen time, good sleep quality, optimal daily, meal frequency, high levels of cardiorespiratory fitness, and high levels of vigorous physical activity.

Factors affecting mental health of adolescents

Good mental health is more than just the absence of mental illness. It can be seen as a state of mental health that allows one to flourish and fully enjoy life. Some of the factors that affect the mental health of youth area as follows.

Self esteem

Self-esteem means positive self-image and sense of self-worth. People with high self-esteem generally have appositve outlook and are satisfied with themselves most of the time.

Feeling loved

Children, who feel loved, trusted and accepted by their parents and others are far more likely to have good self-esteem. They are also more likely to feel comfortable, safe and secure and are better able to communicate and develop relationships with others.

Confidence

Adolescents must be encouraged to discover their own unique qualities and have the confidence to face challenges and take risks. Young people who have confidence in themselves are more likely to have a positive attitude, and to lead happy and productive lives.

Family breakups or loss

Separation or divorce or the loss of a parent or sibling is extremely painful. Finding ways to cope and adjust to the changes wrought by these events is critical for everyone, but particularly for youth. How grief is handled can affect young people negatively for years to come. If children are having difficulty coping, professional help is recommended.

Difficult behavior

When people are unhappy, they either internalize their unhappiness or act out. The latter usually appears as bad or difficult behavior such as using abusive language, being aggressive or violent, damaging property, stealing, lying, refusing to comply with requests or expectations at school or home or displaying other inappropriate actions. If such behavior is serious and persistent, the young person and his or her family might require professional help.

Physical ill health

Diseases, injuries and other physical problems often cause poor mental health and sometimes mental illness.

Some physical causes (such a birth trauma, brain injury or drug abuse) can directly affect brain chemistry and contribute to mental illness. More commonly, poor physical health can affect self-esteem and people ability to meet their goals, which leads to unhappiness or even depression. In such cases, receiving the best possible treatment for both the physical problem and the resulting psychological consequences is key to optimal recovery to good mental health.

Abuse

The mental health of abused children is at great risk. Abused children are more likely to experience mental disorders or mental illness during childhood and into adulthood. Abuse may be physical, sexual, psychological or verbal. It may not always be evident or easily recognized. Regardless of the form it takes, abuse cannot be tolerated. Children need to be protected from abuse and helped to overcome its negative effects.

Lifestyle pattern among adolescents

Lifestyle is the way individuals live and it has direct impact on their health. Lifestyle pattern may be healthy or unhealthy. Health promoting lifestyles is the pattern followed to benefit their health. The six components of health promoting behaviors include health responsibility, physical activity, nutrition, interpersonal relations, and spiritual growth and stress management. Eating pattern and lifestyle pattern usually change during adolescence. Adolescents are liable to environmental influence, peer pressure and consume fast food. Young people will have unhealthy lifestyle behaviors.

Unhealthy habits among adolescents

Some of the unhealthy habits can be commonly seen among the adolescents

1. Procrastination – postponing the activities which is the common habit of youth
2. Laziness –most of the time they deal with doing NOTHING
3. Impatience – most of the adolescents may not have patience and commit blunders in this age.
4. Lack of gratitude- they have the tendency to have complaining nature on others
5. Vulnerable to risk taking behavior- like smoking, drinking and drugs.
6. Addiction to virtual life
7. Disrespect
8. Rebellious nature
9. Attitudes

Ways to lead a healthy lifestyle

There are some simple tips for the adolescents to lead a healthy lifestyle

- Be active on everyday
- Regular physical activity is very important for healthy growth and development and wellbeing of children and youth
- Perform at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day, including vigorous activities

- Perform the activities that strengthen muscles and bones on at least 3 days of the week
- Parents must be role model for the teachers and should have a positive attitude to being active
- Drink enough water as a drink
- Water is the best way to quench the thirst and it does not add sugar like fruit juices, soft drinks and other sweetened drinks
- Reduced fat milk for children is nutritious drink and it provides good source of calcium for children
- Consume whole fruit rather than drinking fruit juices that may contain a lot sugar
- Eat more fruit and vegetables
- Eating fruits and vegetables everyday helps children and youth grow normally, boost their vitality and reduce the risk for many chronic diseases
- Eat two serves of fruit and five serves of vegetables every day
- Have fresh fruit available as a snack

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