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RISKY SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR

Abstract

Sexuality is a fundamental component of human personality, but adolescent sexuality is often referred to through the prism of risk and promiscuity. Adults rarely accept young people as sexual creatures – their sexuality is often viewed as something that should be controlled and limited. Adolescent sexuality in the Croatian context is marked by the strong traditional and conservative attitudes towards gender and sexuality. Therefore, the fact that topics such as sexual education in schools, prevention of unwanted pregnancies, and lectures on contraceptives are still controversial is not surprising. During the period of adolescence, young people encounter numerous physical and psychosocial changes. These changes directly influence the formation of sexual identity, which is further shaped by the individual and environmental factors. It is well known that young people tend to engage in various risky behaviours because they are curious, like to experiment, believe that nothing bad can happen to them and, first and foremost, want to test their maturity and autonomy. The purpose of this paper is to highlight and define the essential features of risky sexual behaviour in adolescence. Furthermore, the paper emphasizes the impacts on sexual behaviour of young people, such as peer pressure, influences of drugs and alcohol and other individual, proximal and widespread environmental factors. The emphasis is also on the importance of preventing risky sexual behaviour in regard to different sexually transmitted diseases, influences, and the proper contraception usage.

Keywords: *adolescence, sexual identity, prevention, contraception, sex illnesses, unwanted pregnancy*