

SEXUALITY AND CONTRACEPTION BETWEEN ADOLESCENTS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
SEXUALIDADE E CONTRACEPÇÃO ENTRE ADOLESCENTES DO ENSINO FUNDAMENTAL
SEXUALIDAD Y CONTRACEPCIÓN ENTRE ADOLESCENTES DE LA ESCUELA PRIMARIA

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Cross-sectional study, with non-probability sampling, including 189 students in 7th and 8th grades of a public school of Uberaba/MG, Brazil, which aims to identify sexual practice patterns and use of contraceptive methods (MAC) in adolescents. There were 52.9% men, with an average age of 14.6±1.3 years old and 50.3% had between 1 and 3 minimum wages. 72% of men and 60.7% of women have already had sexual relations and 89% of them had active sex life. 38.9% use MAC in all relationships, being the most used method the male condom. Friends are the primary source of information and the man is appointed as the responsible for the use of MAC. These results reflect the need of health education activities targeted at adolescents, more inclusive and ludic methodologies, stimulating the critical reflection about vulnerability factors related to this risk sexual behavior they are exposed.

Descriptors: Adolescent; Sexual Behavior; Contraception.

Estudo transversal, com amostragem não probabilística, incluindo 189 alunos de 7^{as} e 8^{as} séries de uma escola pública municipal de Uberaba/MG, que tem como objetivo identificar padrões de prática sexual e de uso de métodos anticoncepcionais (MAC) em adolescentes. A maioria (52,9%) dos jovens eram homens, com idade média de 14,6±1,3 anos e 50,3% tinham renda familiar entre 1 e 3 salários mínimos. 72% dos homens e 60,7% das meninas já tiveram relações sexuais e 89% destes possuíam vida sexual ativa. 38,9% utiliza MAC em todas as relações, sendo o preservativo masculino o mais utilizado. Os amigos são a principal fonte de informações e o homem é apontado como o responsável pela utilização de MAC. Tais resultados refletem a necessidade de ações de educação em saúde direcionada a adolescentes, com metodologias mais inclusivas e lúdicas, estimulando a reflexão crítica acerca de fatores de vulnerabilidade relacionados ao comportamento sexual de risco a que estão submetidos.

Descritores: Adolescente; Comportamento sexual; Anticoncepção.

Estudio transversal, con muestra no probabilística, incluyendo 189 estudiantes en 7^{mo} y 8^{vo} serie de la escuela pública municipal de Uberaba/MG, Brasil, que tiene como objetivo identificar los patrones de la práctica sexual y el uso de métodos anticonceptivos en adolescentes. La mayoría (52,9%) eran hombres, con una edad media de 14,6 ± 1,3 años y 50,3% tenía renda familiar entre 1 y 3 salarios mínimos. 72% de los hombres y 60,7% de las chicas ya habían tenido relaciones sexuales y 89% de ellos tenían vida sexual activa. 38,9% usó MAC en todas las relaciones, y el preservativo masculino fue el más utilizado. Los amigos son la principal fuente de información y el hombre es nombrado como el uso responsable por usar lo MAC. Estos resultados reflejan la necesidad de actividades de educación en Salud, más inclusivos y con metodologías lúdicas dirigidas a adolescentes, estimulando la reflexión crítica sobre factores de vulnerabilidad relacionados a comportamiento sexual de riesgo a que están sometidos.

Descritores: Adolescente; Comportamiento sexual; Contracepcion.

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INTRODUCTION

Adolescence involves a period of deepening biological, psychological, social change, in which the adolescent starts expressing their search for autonomy. Relationships experienced, especially in the school scenario, enclose the need of this individual in dealing with gender identity and their functions, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction¹.

In this regard, it should be considered that the sexual initiation of young people occurs at a younger age, and together with other risk behaviors such as not using condoms, alcohol and drugs affect a context of high vulnerability to adolescent population^{2,3}.

According to the Demographic Census of 2010, adolescents were 17.9% of the Brazilian population, and concentrated in ten years, 26% of hospitalizations related to pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum of the Unified Health System (SUS), with an expense accumulated over R\$ 2 billion⁴. In Uberaba/MG, adolescents were about 16% of the local population, reaching 53% in the Residential Neighborhood in 2000, where 30% of young people in this age group were mothers or were pregnant¹.

Under these perspectives, this research aims to identify patterns of sexual activity and contraceptive use (MAC) in adolescents in the last two years of elementary school in the Residential Neighborhood population in 2000, Uberaba, Minas Gerais.

METHOD

Cross-sectional study with non-probabilistic sample of students from 7th and 8th grades of the School Esther Limório Brigagão in Uberaba/MG, Brazil. Out of 203 students, 189 agreed to participate by returning the consent form signed by their parents, since they were under 18.

Data collection took place between September 2010 and March 2011, using a structured questionnaire prepared by the researchers and preset pilot test in a different school from the one object of research, under the supervision of trained observers.

Descriptive variables were gender, age, school failure and family income. For the

interest issues, there were investigations about: sexual initiation and use of contraceptive methods, source of knowledge about sexuality and attitude of people to unwanted pregnancy. Data were analyzed using absolute and relative frequencies, in addition to associations by Pearson's chi-square test. It was considered the value of $p < 0.05$.

This research was submitted to the Ethics Committee in Research with Human Beings of the Federal University of Triângulo Mineiro and approved by nº1.764 protocol/2011 in agreement with the parameters recommended in Resolution 196/96 of the National Health Council (CNS).

RESULTS

The male population predominated among students of 7th grade (52%), while the proportion of girls was higher in 8th grade (61.3%). The average age of the study population was 14.6 ± 1.3 years old, with most young people reporting the age of 14 (38.6%).

The school failure occurred for 34.4% of adolescents and the average more prevalent family income was 1-3 times the minimum wage. It is noted also the high proportion (about 40% for both genders) of young people living in families with income up to a salary whose value at the time the survey was R\$ 545.00 (Table 1).

Of 189 questionnaires analyzed, 46% of adolescents lived with both parents, 15.3% only with the mother and 14.8% with other family members. All young people had at least one sibling with higher prevalence of two other brothers (52.7%).

Table 1. Adolescents of a public school according to grade, school failure, family income and age. Uberaba/MG,Brazil, 2011.

		Male		Female	
		N	%	N	%
Grade	7 th	52	52,0	34	38,2
	8 th	48	48,0	55	61,3
Failute	Yes	31	31,0	35	39,3
	No	69	69,0	54	60,7
Income (MS)*	Up to 1 MS	40	40,0	33	37,1
	1 to 3 MS	43	43,0	52	58,4
	More than 3 MS	17	17,0	4	4,5
	MS	17	17,0	4	4,5
Age (years old)	13	27	27,0	23	25,8
	14	43	43,0	30	33,7
	15	15	15,0	27	30,3
	16	6	6,0	8	9,1
	17	9	9,0	1	1,1
Total		100	100,0	89	100,0

*MS = Minimum salary.

When asked about the sexual initiation, 72% of boys and 60.7% of girls responded yes. Among the 126 young people who had already had sexual intercourse, 89% were sexually active and 17% of boys and 15.7% of girls said they did not know what family planning meant.

Regarding knowledge and use of contraceptive methods (MAC), 33.3% of adolescents believe that it is not possible to get pregnant at the first intercourse; 40.5% of them reported not using any contraceptive method (Table 2). There was no statistically significant difference between the use of MAC for the genders (p=0.233), and most of the adolescents (77.3%) used the male condom (p<0.001).

In family planning, 17% of boys and 15.7% of girls said they did not know what it was. 43% of men and 55% of women considered a matter of great importance. 38% of boys and 22.5% of girls said they did not care about the issue. There were 18 students who did not answer the question.

Table 2. Adolescents of 7th and 8th grades of a public school according to knowledge and use of contraception. Uberaba 2011.

	Male		Female	
	N	%	N	%
Is it possible to get pregnant in the first sexual intercourse?				
Yes	56	56,0	53	59,6
No	40	40,0	23	25,9
NS/NR	4	4,0	13	14,6
Do you use a contraceptive method?*				
Yes	26	36,1	23	42,6
No	27	37,5	24	44,4
Sometimes	19	26,4	7	13,0
Which method do you use? **				
Condom	45	100,0	13	43,3
Oral contraceptive	0	0,0	9	30,0
Next day pill	0	0,0	6	20,0
Hormonal injection	0	0,0	2	6,7

*Question answered by young people who have practiced sex (N=126) **Answered by young people who reported having used any MAC in the previous question (N=75). NS/NR = Do not know/Did not answer.

Regarding talking to their partners about the use of strategies to prevent pregnancy (among those who were sexually active), 31.9% of boys and 20.4% of girls said they always talk and 65.3% of boys and 55.5% of girls said they only talk sometimes and 2.8% of men and 24.1% of women reported not talk about the subject with their partners (p<0.05).

The Table 3 show the responses of adolescents about their opinion on who would be responsible for using contraception, and what would be their attitude if there were an unexpected pregnancy, revealing distinct patterns between the genders. 40.3% of adolescents believe that the responsibility for the use of condoms lies with the man. Regarding the attitude towards an unwanted pregnancy, 35% of boys would still dating and 25% would indicate abortion to the partner. With regard to girls, most could not say how they would react; 27.8% would take responsibility for themselves, while 18.7% said they would try an abortion.

Table 3. Adolescents of 7th and 8th grade in a public school as the source of information, use of MAC and unwanted pregnancies. Uberaba 2011.

	Male		Female	
	N	%	N	%
What is your main source of information about sexuality?				
Friends	29	29,0	22	24,7
TV/Internet	40	40,0	23	25,8
Parents	8	8,0	15	16,9
Health Professional	8	8,0	18	20,2
NR	15	15,0	11	12,4
Who should use contraception?*				
Men	29	40,3	18	33,3
Women	25	34,7	17	31,5
Both	12	16,7	14	25,9
NS/NR	6	8,3	5	9,3
What would be your attitude if there were an unwanted pregnancy?*				
Assume alone	12	17,0	15	27,8
Assume Couple	25	35,0	4	7,4
Abortion	18	25,0	9	16,7
Adoption	7	10,0	3	5,6
NS/NR	10	10,0	23	42,7

*Question answered by young people who have practiced sex (N=126). NS/NR = Do not know/ Did not answer

DISCUSSION

In this study, it was observed that 38.6% of adolescents lived in families with incomes below the minimum wage, which could mean greater social vulnerability. This fact agrees with a study⁵, where 59% of adolescents belong to the least favored class.

Among the study population, 72% of men and 60.7% of women had already begun their sexual life. The impact of early sexual initiation may be associated with the lack of knowledge about contraception and reproduction^{6,7} often compounded by a lack of reflection and critical awareness towards sex, as evidenced in the increasing incidence of adolescence pregnancy, which has been reported in high prevalence in this stage of life.

About family planning, 55% of boys and 38.2% of girls said they did not know what it is or not consider it a relevant issue; which reinforces the need to create spaces for discussion on the thematic⁷. The Ministry of

Health argues that assistance to family planning for adolescents should include preventive and educational activities, reversible contraceptive methods and techniques available for fertility regulation, preventing, thus unwanted pregnancies and consequently reducing the number of abortions and maternal deaths⁸.

When asked if the very first relationship without condom use, could occur pregnancy, 19.1% of young people answered to not know or that there would be the possibility of getting pregnant. Also, it is worrying the fact that 40.5% of young people do not use any protection, which not only increase the chances of early pregnancy, but also it conditions risk factor for the development of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs).

As factors that hinder the use of contraceptives by adolescents, there are: carelessness with contraception, strong concept of fatherhood in the popular segments and use of coitus interruptus without knowledge of the partner’s menstrual cycle⁹. It is noteworthy that 20% of girls reported using emergency contraception as well as several blank responses, which can mean lack of proper use of the methods.

About who should use contraception, 40.3% of boys and 33.3% of girls think that this is a male responsibility. Other studies report the use of these methods in both as most prevalent¹⁰.

Regarding the attitude of adolescents in case of occurring an unintended pregnancy, prospects who approach other research were identified⁹. It is important to point out the relationship between low education and higher fecundity showing a failure of educational institutions where there should be approach on the subject since the school is the place where young people express their doubts, receive information and stay most of the time¹¹.

In this way, it is necessary to create strategies for updating teachers to promote differently and correctly education. There is also the need for coordination between the health and education sectors to complement each other in pursuit an interdisciplinary able

to meet the challenges of sexual orientation for adolescents^{12,13}.

Some initiatives have focused on these issues when entering health education strategies at schools¹² to train teachers in addressing these issues and to enable adolescents¹³, causing them to become multipliers and independent agents for their sexual and reproductive lives.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study reflect the need for health education strategies directed at adolescents, noting the inclusion of more inclusive, directed and ludic methodologies, encouraging critical reflection of these students about risk situations and vulnerabilities related to their sexual behavior.

To do this, we must prioritize the training of teachers who will be in contact with these students, providing the professional education tools for addressing issues related to sexuality, family planning, among others; supported by team of primary care units to the health of local reference.

Another perspective reflects the need for greater coordination between sectors: Social, Health and Education, to work together in reducing vulnerability risks inherent to the complexity of adolescent topics. In this sense, it is presented the role of the University, which, while working to research, allows knowing the local reality to propose interventional strategies in university extension shapes.

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CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors had equal contributions during research development and elaboration of the article and its different phases.