

# Behavioral and Emotional Changes among Adolescent Populace

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## Abstract

**Background:** Adolescents are vulnerable population who would experience emotional changes. Lack of proper channeling their emotions would lead to drastic behavioral change. Psychological or emotional changes during puberty manifest in different ways but often through a change in behavior. The confusion and the indecisiveness that your teenager experiences during the transition period also translate into a conflict of interest at times.

**Materials and Methods:** This study was done among the adolescent populace as community-based cross-sectional study among 450 students from private schools and 342 students from government schools who were taken for the study.

**Results:** This study included 792 adolescents' school children from both private and government schools with the mean age of 15.3 years. Majority 420 (53%) of the study population were belonging to 12–15 years, whereas the remaining 372 (47%) were from 16 to 19 years. The study population showed conscious about losing weight (296, 37%), building muscles (366, 46%), spending more time in front of the mirror (320, 40%), and conscious about facial beauty (437, 55%). Feeling of uncertainty was expressed by 375 (47%) of the study population and conflict of thought was seen among 457 (57%) of the study population.

**Conclusion:** Our study has described that the majority of the adolescent populace are undergoing emotional distress which is actually a dangerous sign for the future community, to be initiated as soon as possible for the well-being of the future generation.

**Key words:** Adolescence, Behavioral changes, Emotional changes

## INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines adolescents as those people between 10 and 19 years of age. The great majority of adolescents are, therefore, included in the age-based definition of “child,” adopted by the convention on the rights of the child, as a person under the age of 18 years. Other overlapping terms used in this report are youth (defined by the United Nations as 15–24 years) and young people (10–24 years), a term

used by the WHO and others to combine adolescents and youth. Adolescence is one of the most rapid phases of human development where biological maturity precedes psychosocial maturity. The characteristics of both the individual and the environment influence the changes taking place during adolescence. These changes in adolescence have health consequence not only in adolescence but also over the life course. Adolescent age groups are often thought of as a healthy group. Nevertheless, many adolescents do die prematurely due to accidents, suicide, violence, pregnancy-related complications, and other illnesses that are either preventable or treatable. In addition, many serious diseases in adulthood have their roots in adolescence. For example, tobacco use, sexually transmitted infections including human immunodeficiency virus, poor eating, and exercise habits lead to illness or premature death

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later in life. Our study was planned to assess the social, behavioral, and emotional changes occurring during adolescent period among the school-going population.

### Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of this study were to assess the emotional and behavioral changes during adolescent age group among school-going population.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted from January 2018 to July 2018, as a school-based cross-sectional descriptive study. With a list of all the government and private coeducational schools, four government and three private schools were randomly selected by simple random sampling method. After getting the official permission from school authorities, the study population was approached in the classrooms with the help of concerned class teachers. Informed and written consent was obtained from parents on a printed pro forma distributed a day before filling the questionnaire. On the day of administering the questionnaires, the study participants were addressed by their teachers followed by the research team and were offered to participate or opt out of the study. Some items comprised factual information about family size, type, income, and educational background, and employment, chronic illness in adolescents and addiction in family. Other questions were designed to assess child's self-esteem, satisfaction with his academic performance, parents' satisfaction with child's academic performance, and child's perception of closeness and proximity to one of the parents. There were separate items for assessing child abuse. This questionnaire was also written in both the languages, pretested, and suitably modified before forming a part of the questionnaire set. Approval of the ethical committee of the institute was sought before conducting the study.

### Data Collection

The data were collected by self-administering the questionnaire in the classroom after informing the study participants about the details of the questionnaire. The doubts raised by them were cleared immediately.

### Statistical Analysis

The data were entered in Microsoft Excel sheet and expressed in frequencies and percentages.

## RESULTS

This study included 792 adolescents' school children from both private and government schools with the mean age of

15.3 years. As illustrated in [Table 1] Majority 420 (53%) of the study population were belonging to 12–15 years, whereas the remaining 372 (47%) were from 16 to 19 years. Most of the study participants, 565 (71%), belonged to class I socioeconomic status and 588 (74%) were from nuclear family.

The emotional and behavioral attributes were classified as feeling overly sensitive, looking for identity, feeling uncertain, conflicts in thought, peer pressure, mood swings, and sleep difficulty [Table 2].

### Feeling Overly Sensitive

The study population showed conscious about losing weight (296, 37%), building muscles (366, 46%), spending more time in front of mirror (320, 40%), and conscious about facial beauty (437, 55%).

### Looking for an Identity

Among the study participants, 633 (80%) had shown more thought toward getting more marks than their friends, 565 (71%) had shown interest to join sports, and daydreaming about unrealistic goals 577 (73%) was expressed.

Feeling of uncertainty was expressed by 375 (47%) of the study population, and conflict of thought was seen among 457 (57%) of the study population.

The marks obtained by the friends is being the great peer pressure than dressing up, makeup, and worthwhile things.

**Table 1: Sociodemographic factors**

Variables	Frequency (%)
Age	
12–15	420 (53.1)
16–19	372 (46.9)
Sex	
Male	327 (41.3)
Female	465 (58.7)
Standard	
IX	197 (24.9)
X	201 (25.4)
XI	212 (26.8)
XII	182 (23)
Socioeconomic status	
Class I	565 (71.3)
Class II	166 (21)
Class III	43 (5.4)
Class IV	11 (1.4)
Class V	7 (0.9)
Siblings	
Present	427 (53.9)
Absent	365 (46.1)
Type of family	
Nuclear	588 (74.2)
Joint	204 (25.8)

**Table 2: Emotional And Behavioral Attributes**

Emotional and behavioral attributes	What do you feel?	Yes n (%)	No n (%)
Feeling overly sensitive	Are you conscious about losing your weight ?	296 (37.4 )	496 ( 62.6)
	Have you thought of building your muscles?	366 (46.2)	426 (53.8)
	Will you often spend time in front of mirror?	320 (40.4)	472 (59.6)
Looking for an identity	Are you conscious about pimples and taking care of it?	437 (55.2)	355 (44.8)
	Did you think of getting good marks than your friends?	633 (79.9)	159 (20.1)
	Have you joined in sports to show up your talents?	565 (71.3)	227 (28.7)
	Are you daydreaming about unrealistic goals and wanted to be a supermodel one day?	577 (72.9)	215 (27.1)
Feeling uncertain	I never wanted to do certain things (eg. doctor) Because I thought it doesn't suit with my talent?	375 (47.3)	417 (52.7)
Conflicts in thought	Are you finding difficult to take any decision? Yes or no	457 (57.7)	335 (42.3)
	Are you struggling with your studies and lead to a state of emotional tension yes or no	458 (57.8)	334 (42.2)
Peer pressure	Will you feel depress often		
	When your friends getting good marks, but you Couldn't	461 (58.2)	331 (41.8)
	When your friend dress up nicely, but you couldn't	229 (28.9)	563 (71.1)
Mood swings	When your friend having mobile or worthful things	195 (24.6)	597 (75.4)
	Are you often change your mind from happy to sad or irritable suddenly	492 (62.1)	300 (37.9)
	Will you argue or fight for small things with your friends or parents?	337 (42.6)	455 (57.4)
	Are you feeling isolated	257 (32.4)	535 (67.6)
	Do you have lack of sleep or disturbed sleep	335 (42.3)	457 (57.7)

### Mood Swings

The mood swings expressed were sudden change of happy to sad or irritable mood, argue or fight for small things, and feeling of isolation.

## DISCUSSION

Adolescence is a period of life with specific health and developmental needs and rights.<sup>[1]</sup> It is also a time to develop knowledge and skills, learn to manage emotions and relationships, and acquire attributes and abilities that will be important for enjoying the adolescent years and assuming adult roles.<sup>[2,3]</sup> This study done among school-going adolescent population had explored the various emotional and behavioral attributes such as feeling overly sensitive, looking for an identity, conflicts in thoughts, and mood swings. In all the attributes, the study population showed that around 50% of them was having these social and emotional changes which are an iceberg. Factors like perceiving popularity with peers, body dissatisfaction, focus on sport, involvement in competitive sport, strategies to lose weight, strategies to increase muscle, disordered eating, use of food supplements and steroids, and exercise dependence was demonstrated in a study among 881 adolescent boys and girls by McCabe and Ricciardelli.<sup>[4]</sup> The behavioural and papillary changes for emotional words identification studied among pubertal age group population suggested that the mid-/late pubertal children showed greater peak pupillary reactivity to words presented during the emotional word identification task than pre-/early pubertal children, regardless of word

valence.<sup>[5]</sup> These cognitive and emotional changes were clearly demonstrated by various studies on MRI imaging and frontal lobe functioning during adolescent period.<sup>[6,7]</sup> Adolescents' neurodevelopmental changes and evolving capacities affect how they perceive risk, how they act on communication about risky behaviors, how they think about the present and the future, and what influences their ideas and actions. The changes during puberty affect the incidence and clinical manifestations of a number of diseases. Many of the health-related behaviors that arise during adolescence have implications for both present and future health and development.

## CONCLUSION

Our study had explored the social, behavioral dimensions of the most vulnerable stage of life. So far as the adolescent period is concerned, age is not the whole story, but the physical, neuro-developmental, social, and psychological changes and its implications on health and disease has to be considered for leading normal life.

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