

Adolescence

PSY 355
Dr. Schuetze

What is Adolescence?

Hallmarks of the teen years, ages 13-19:

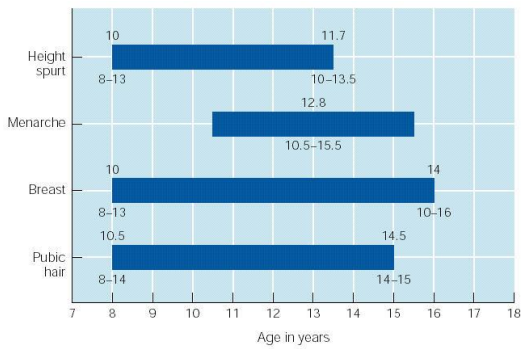
- Growth spurt
- Rising hormonal levels (estrogen, progesterone, testosterone, androgen)
- Menstruation and ejaculation begin
- Girls develop breasts; boys develop hair on face, chest, voice deepens.
- Pubic hair appears
- Reproduction becomes possible
- Interest in dating and sex increase
- Abstract and scientific thinking appear
- Teens question "Who am I?" "What will I do with my life?"
- Initiation rites include confirmation, bar mitzvah, and graduation.

Growth

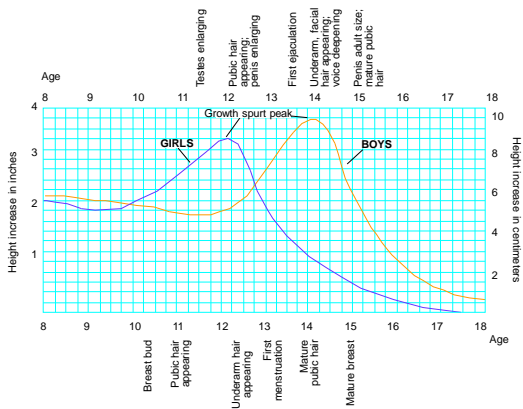
- Adolescence
 - Puberty growth spurt - age 9 for girls, 11 for boys
 - Sexual maturation

Female Secondary Sex Characteristics

- **Hips:** become wider and rounder due to enlargement of the pelvic bone and development of subcutaneous fat.
- **Breasts:** shortly after the hips start to enlarge, the breasts begin to develop.
- **Hair:** pubic hair appears. Axillary hair usually begins to appear after the first menstrual cycle.
- **Voice:** becomes fuller and more melodious.
- **Heightened Emotions:** Moodiness, sulkiness, temper outbursts and a tendency to cry at the slightest provocation. These moods are especially common during the premenstrual and early menstrual periods.



(a) Females



Adolescents' Reactions to the Onset of Puberty

Time of Onset	Reaction	Male	Female
Early	Initial	Positive	Negative
	Later	Mixed	Positive
Late	Initial	Negative	Positive
	Later	Positive	Mixed

Early Versus Late Maturing

- Boys – early
 - Satisfied with bodies
 - Active in HS activities
 - Conventional, responsible
- Boys – late
 - Flexible, adaptive
 - Tolerate ambiguity & stress
- Girls – early
 - Initially embarrassed
 - Seek older friends
 - Date older boys
 - See themselves as more mature
 - Vulnerable to depression
- Girls – late
 - Seen as more popular

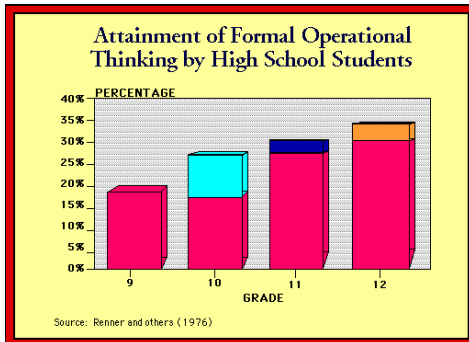
Summary of Adolescent Physical Development

- Growth spurt proceeds in distal-to-proximal direction
- Hormones increase and puberty occurs
- Girls mature earlier, on average, than boys
- High risk for injury and death

Formal Operational Thought

- Piaget's 4th Stage
- Ages 12 and on
- Hypothetical-deductive thinking
- Scientific Reasoning
- Abstract Thinking

- Not all reach formal operational stage



David Elkind

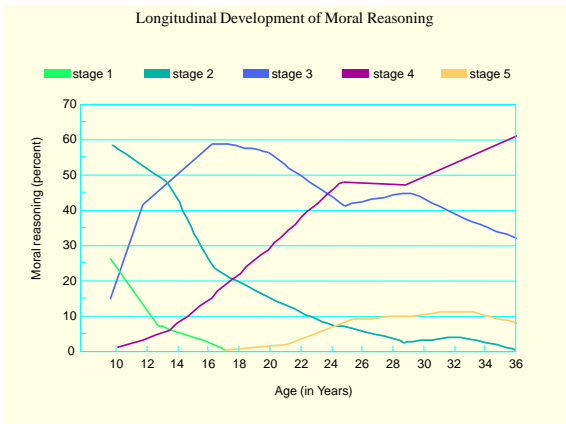
- Implications for both cognition and socio/emotional development in adolescents.
- *Hurried Child Syndrome*

Adolescent Egocentrism

- Imaginary Audience
 - Everybody is watching me
 - Fails to differentiate thoughts from others
 - Self-conscious
 - Constant wish for privacy
- Personal Fable
 - It will never happen to me
 - Over-differentiates thoughts from those of others
 - Special/unique

KOHLBERG'S STAGES OF MORAL JUDGMENT

- PRECONVENTIONAL LEVEL (*emphasis on avoiding punishments and getting awards*)
 - Stage 1: Heteronomous morality; ethics of punishment and obedience
 - Stage 2: Instrumental purpose; ethics of market exchange
- CONVENTIONAL LEVEL (*emphasis on social rules*)
 - Stage 3: Interpersonal conformity; ethics of peer opinion
 - Stage 4: Social system orientation: conformity to social system; ethics of law and order
- POSTCONVENTIONAL LEVEL (*emphasis on moral principles*)
 - Stage 5: Social contract orientation; ethics of social contract and individual rights
 - Stage 6: Ethics of self-chosen universal principles



ADOLESCENCE AND SEXUALITY

Important Notes About Sexuality and Expression

- 80% of adolescents have had intercourse by age 19.
- 80% of males living in the inner-city and in low SES communities report having had intercourse by age 14.
- Adolescent females report being in love as the main motivation for sexual behavior.
- Youth engaging in intercourse before age 16 tend to demonstrate risky behavior including poor use of contraceptives, excessive drinking, drug use, delinquency, and school-related problems.
- Risk factors for problems related to sexual activity include SEC, parenting strategies, modeling sexual behavior, pregnancy by siblings.

IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT TEENAGE PREGNANCY

- 30,000 pregnancies occur annually in the us among girls under the age of 15.
- 1 out of 12 unmarried female American teenagers become pregnant each year; about half of them will carry the pregnancy to term.
- Half of all first pregnancies occur within the first 6 months of becoming sexually active.
- 6 out of 10 teenage females who have a child before age 17 will be pregnant again before age 19.
- America's teenage birth rate is the highest in the Western hemisphere; it is double the rate of Sweden, and is an astonishing 17 times higher than Japan.
- 4 out of 10 girls now 14 years old will get pregnant in their teens.

IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT TEENAGE PREGNANCY

- Adolescent pregnancy and unwed mothers continue to be a serious problem in the US even though the rate is lower than it was in the 1940's.
- Adolescent pregnancy rate is 4 times the rate of Western European countries; even though it has declined by 22%.
- Teen pregnancy currently costs the US more than \$7 billion per year.
- About half of all teenage mothers and 75% of unmarried teenage moms receive welfare within five years of giving birth of their first child.
- 45% of 1st born children and 33% of all children in the US have mothers who are unmarried, teenagers, or mothers without a high school degree.
- The number of girls who become pregnant between the ages of 15 and 19 years will increase by 2.2 million between 1995 and 2010.

IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT SEXUALITY AND EXPRESSION

- Over 900,000 adolescents become pregnant annually.
- About 33% of females aged 15 to 17 do not understand the human fertility cycle.
- 12% of students believe the birth control pill protects against AIDS.
- About 25% adolescents believe looking at a person can enable to identify whether or not someone has AIDS.

Risk Factors For Childbirth Before Age 17

- Health risks of pregnant teens/Infants with LBW.
- Mothers dropping out of school/ Only 50% of mothers complete school by age 26.
- Children with more behavior difficulties/ Children with neurological problems.
- Children with lower intelligence scores.
- Children with more illnesses.
- Mothers and infants living in poverty.
- Only 25% of adolescent fathers remain involved.

Adolescents and STDs

- 25% of sexually active adolescents contract an STD every year. Most common STDs are as follows:
 - **Gonorrhea.** Bacterium; thrives in moist membranes; treated successfully with antibiotics.
 - **Syphilis.** Bacterium; prefers warm, moist areas; attacks CNS; treated with antibiotics.
 - **Chlamydia.** Bacterium; infects genitals; highly infectious; 25% if females become infertile.
 - **Genital Herpes.** Virus; many strains; recurring blisters and sores.
 - **AIDS.** Virus; destroys the immune system; death results from common illnesses.

Peers

- Peers—Children or adolescents who are about the same age or maturity level.
- Benefits:
 - Source of social support
 - Serve as a source of comparison
 - Source of experimentation and feedback

Statistics about Peers

- According to some studies, children interact with their peers 10% of the day around the age of 2 years.
 - 20% of the day around the age of 4 years.
 - 40% of the day between ages 7 to 11 years.
 - In a typical weekend, adolescents spend twice as much time with peers than their parents. Generally, peers engage in:
 - Team Sports/Play
 - Going Places
 - Socializing
 - Play with same-sex friends until 10-11 years
 - By 13-14 years, establish best friends on basis of shared values & intimacy
 - Popularity among peers influences friendships

Are Peers Necessary for Development?

- Positive peer interactions have been found to reduce psychosocial outcomes (depression, self-esteem, stress) and behavioral outcomes (delinquency, alcohol, academic performance/school dropouts).
- Peer support/influence is also linked to adolescent's ability to cope with stressful life events.
- According to J. Piaget and Harry Sullivan, the learning experience from peers are essential towards forming perspectives on:
 - Right and wrong
 - Healthy and long-term intimate relationships.

- **Peer conformity.** This occurs when individuals adopt the attitudes or behaviors of others because of real or imagined pressure from them.
- Teens form all sorts of cliques in the name of social conformity. Gangs, Columbine incident.
 - These cliques are often expressed through dress affiliation, music, and language.
- Teens often engage in many negative behaviors to fit in peer groups.
 - This inevitable put them in conflict with parents and society.
- Teens are struggling for independence from their parents while at the same time still being partially dependent on them.
 - This makes them vulnerable to peer influence. They are still dependent upon others for feedback and emotional support.

Adolescents do not always do what their peers want them to do

- **Non-conformity.** This occurs when individuals know what people around them expect but do not use those expectations to guide their behavior.
- **Anti-conformity.** This occurs when individuals react counter to a group's expectations and deliberately move away from the actions or beliefs the group advocates.

PEER STATUS

- **Popular Children.** Children who are frequently nominated as a best friend and are rarely disliked by their peers. Characteristics:
 - Good communication skills with peers
 - Show enthusiasm and concern for others
 - Self-confident
 - Draw other people to them
- In many cases, adolescents who are very attractive and/or very intelligent tend to be popular. Also, adolescents from middle class families tend to be more popular
- **Neglected Children.** Children who are infrequently nominated as a best friend but are not disliked by their peers.
 - Professionals have noted that the best way to help them develop is to teach them how to be noticed by their peers.

Peer Status

- **Rejected Children.** Children who are infrequently nominated as a best friend and are actively disliked by their peers.
 - Rejected children tend to have more serious problems later in life; more often than neglected (school dropout, delinquency, aggression).
 - 10 to 20% of these adolescents tend to be shy and withdrawn.
 - Professionals have noted that the best way to help these children is to develop their listening skills and sensitivity to what others are saying about them.
- **Controversial Children.** Children who are frequently nominated both as a best friend and as being disliked.
 - Girls in this group were found to have an increased risk of becoming teen mothers than girls in other groups.
 - Aggressive girls were also found to be more likely to be teen mothers than non aggressive girls.

Conflicts with Parents

- Distancing Hypothesis – Steinberg
- Mothers have more conflicts than fathers
- Most conflicts about daily responsibilities at home, not basic values
- Most families learn to avoid conflicts with basic agreements and separate activities
- Authoritative parents have fewest conflicts
