Adolescence

PSY 355
Dr. Schuetze

What is Adolescence?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hallmarks of the teen years, ages 13-19:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Growth spurt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rising hormonal levels (estrogen, progesterone, testosterone, androgen)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Menstruation and ejaculation begin</td>
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<td>Girls develop breasts; boys develop hair on face, chest, voice deepens.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pubic hair appears</td>
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<td>Reproduction becomes possible</td>
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<td>Interest in dating and sex increase</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abstract and scientific thinking appear</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teens question “Who am I?” “What will I do with my life?”</td>
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<td>Initiation rites include confirmation, bar mitzvah, and graduation.</td>
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Growth

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

- **Prepubescent Stage**: no longer a child but not yet an adolescent. Secondary sex characteristics begin to appear, but the reproductive organs are not yet fully developed.
- **Pubescent Stage**: dividing line between childhood and adolescence. Signs of sexual maturity appear - the menstrual cycle in girls and the first nocturnal emissions in boys. Secondary sex characteristics continue to develop. Gametes are produced (not in the quantity/regularity of Fully mature sex organs).
- **Postpubescent Stage**: Secondary sex characteristics become well developed and sex organs begin to function in a mature manner.

Male Secondary Sex Characteristics

- **Pubic hair**: appears about one year after the testes and the penis have started to increase in size
- **Facial/body hair** appear when the pubic hair has almost completed its growth.
- **Muscles**: increase markedly in size and strength.
- **Voice**: changes begin after some pubic hair has appeared. Voice breaks are common when maturing is rapid.
- **Heightened Emotions**: Moodiness, sulkiness, temper outbursts, anxiety and irritability. Testosterone can also trigger a marked increase in aggressive behavior.
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. Auxillary 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.

![Graph showing age vs. height increase for females and boys](chart.png)
Adolescents’ Reactions to the Onset of Puberty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time of Onset</th>
<th>Reaction</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early</td>
<td>Initial</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Later</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Mixed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 rewards)
  - 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

Longitudinal Development of Moral Reasoning

- Moral reasoning percentage
- Age (in Years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>70</td>
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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 inevitably 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 a increased risk of becoming teen mothers than girls in other groups.
  – Aggressive girls were also found to be more likely 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