

Research Paper

Male Adolescents' Health Needs in Iran and the Associated Factors



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ABSTRACT

Background Attention to adolescent health is one of the Millennium Development Goals. Adolescent health planning to achieve an acceptable level of health and prevention of waste of capital should be based on attention to all aspects of health and performing needs assessment.

Objective This study aims to determine the health needs of male adolescents in Iran and the factors associated with their needs.

Materials and Methods This is a cross-sectional study. Participants were boys studying in the first and second year of high school in the fields of mathematics, experimental sciences, humanities, and technical sciences at public, non-profit, and gifted & talented schools in Rasht, Iran. The sampling was done using a multi-stage cluster sampling method. Data were collected by using a demographic form and the Male Adolescent Health Needs-Assessment Scale.

Results The boys' Mean±SD scores of physical, sexual, mental, and social health needs was 49.65±0.15, 11.39±0.12, 89.28±0.29 and 47.3±0.24, respectively. Majority of them obtained excellent scores in physical (76%) and mental health (94%) needs and a good score in social health (81.3%) need, while they earned a moderate score in sexual health need (57.8%). Linear regression analysis results showed that the physical health need of boys had a statistically significant relationship with the type of study school (P= 0.001); their sexual health need with age (P= 0.002), type of study school (P= 0.015), mother's education (P= 0.025), and mother's occupation (P= 0.005); their mental health need with the type of study school (P= 0.009), birth rank (P= 0.048), father's job (P= 0.021), and mother's job (P= 0.022); and their social health need with the type of study school (P= 0.001).

Conclusion Most important health needs of male adolescents in Iran is sexual health need followed by social, physical and mental health needs. The most important factors related to their health needs are type of study school, mother's job and education, birth rank, and father's job. The results of this study can be effective and useful in designing and implementing need-based interventions to promote male adolescents' health.

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

Adolescence is an important period of life; it is the period of transition between childhood and adulthood that begins with puberty. This period is the beginning of physical, psychological and social changes and is the period of preparation for fulfilling great responsibilities such as family, social, cultural, and economic issues in adulthood. Paying attention to the health of adolescents is one of the Millennium Development Goals and one of the missions of the member of the World Health Organization. Evidence shows that 70% of deaths in adulthood are the result of behaviors in adolescence, and preventing the formation of these behaviors requires the design and implementation of goal-based programs. Adolescent health planning to achieve an acceptable level of health and prevention of waste of capital should be based on attention to all aspects of health and needs assessment. Adolescents' needs are different from other age groups due to their personality and physiological changes. It is very important to pay attention to gender differences in the needs assessment of adolescents, since studies have shown that adolescent girls and boys have different health needs that their needs definitely need to be assessed separately. In order to have proper planning in the field of adolescents, it is necessary to have information about their health needs because understanding these needs can reduce health risks and develop health services. This study aims to investigate health needs of adolescent boys in Iran and its related factors.

2. Materials and Methods

In this cross-sectional analytical study, participants were 352 boys studying in the first and second year of high school in the fields of mathematics, experimental sciences, humanities, and technical sciences public, non-profit, and gifted & talented schools in Rasht, Iran. The sampling method was random multi-stage cluster sampling. The data

collection tool in this study was a questionnaire consisting of two parts. The first part surveys demographic information and the second part was the Male Adolescent Health Needs-Assessment Scale developed by Zare et al. It has 49 questions in 4 areas: physical health needs (12 items), mental health needs (20 items), social health needs (13 items) and sexual health needs (4 items) of adolescent boys. The items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 to 5. Data analysis was carried out using descriptive (Mean, standard deviation, median, minimum and maximum) and inferential statistics (regression analysis to determine factors related to boys' health needs) in SPSS v.16 software.

3. Results

The age range of participants was 12-18 years (Mean±SD age = 14.96 ±1.72 years). The majority of participants were studying in public high schools (41.8%) in the field of experimental sciences (25.3%) and were in the first year of high school (50.5%). Their mean scores of health needs in physical, sexual, psychological and social needs are presented in Table 1. Regression analysis results showed that the physical health need of participants had a statistically significant relationship with the type of study school (P = 0.001). Participants in non-profit and gifted & talented schools had greater physical health needs than those in public schools. Sexual health needs had a statistically significant relationship with age (P= 0.002), study in non-profit (P= 0.015) and gifted & talented (P= 0.001) schools, having mothers with high school diploma (P= 0.025) and university degree (P = 0.033) and with mothers being employed (P = 0.005). Participants at younger ages, enrolled in gifted & talented and nonprofit schools, having mothers with high school and university education, and with employed mothers with had higher sexual health needs. Mental health needs had a statistically significant relationship with the variables of study in a non-profit school (P = 0.009), being the third child (P= 0.048), having employed (P= 0.021) and self-employed father (P = 0.032) and having mother being worker (P = 0.022). The boys attending nonprofit schools had lower mental health needs. Third-born boys had better

Table 1. Mean scores of health needs in four areas

Health Needs	Mean	Std. error	95%CI	
Physical	49.6575	0.1574801	49.34791	49.96709
Sexual	11.3925	0.1282077	11.14045	11.64455
Mental	89.28	0.2995259	88.69115	89.86885
Social	47.3	0.2431003	46.82208	47.77792

mental health needs. Those whose fathers were employed or self-employed had more mental health needs. Finally, the social health need of participants had a statistically significant relationship with the type of study school ($P = 0.001$). Participants in non-profit and gifted & talented schools had greater physical health needs than those in public schools.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

Sexual health need of adolescent boys in Iran requires more attention followed by social, physical, and mental health needs. One of the limitations of this study was the inability to consider the health needs of a large number of adolescents due to cultural differences in different parts of Iran. It is necessary to conduct more studies in this field. Other limitation was the sensitive age of adolescents, which made it difficult to gain their trust to answer the questions. The researcher, by introducing himself and saying his working conditions, gained their trust.

Ethical Considerations

Compliance with ethical guidelines

This study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Guilan University of Medical Sciences (Code: IR.GUMS.REC.1398.206). All ethical principles are considered in this article. The participants were informed about the purpose of the research and its implementation stages. They were also assured about the confidentiality of their information and were free to leave the study whenever they wished, and if desired, the research results would be available to them.

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Authors' contributions

Conceptualization, resources, supervision: Amir Mohammad Safardoost, Zahra Bostani Khalesi; Research: Amir Mohammad Safardoost; Original draft-writing, review and editing: Zahra Bostani Khalesi; Methodology, funding acquisition: All authors.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declared no conflict of interest.

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