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Social Science & Medicine

Volume 46, Issue 10, 20 March 1998, Pages 1275-1290

Adolescent sexual and reproductive behavior: a review of the evidence from India

Shireen J. Jejeebhoy

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[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-9536\(97\)10056-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-9536(97)10056-9)

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Abstract

Despite the fact that adolescents represent almost one quarter of the Indian population, their reproductive health needs are poorly understood and ill served. This paper documents the existing research on sexual and reproductive health, explores the knowledge and attitudes among this population in India, and highlights limitations of methodologies currently employed in research on adolescent reproductive health in India. One serious limitation is the lack of attention in almost every dimension of their reproductive health, including sexuality, reproductive morbidity, abortion-seeking and reproductive choice. What is needed is more behavioral research that explores the levels, patterns, and sociocultural factors underlying adolescents' reproductive health; assesses adolescent reproductive health needs and ways in which health and information services can be structured to respond to these needs in light of the social, cultural and economic constraints that adolescents face; and explores appropriate methodological alternatives,

recognizing the need for community-based research, as well as the difficulties of conducting such research under the sociocultural constraints prevailing in India. At the same time, this review argues for far more attention within programs to address adolescent reproductive health service and information needs.



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Keywords

adolescent sexual and reproductive behavior; attitudes; decision making

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