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Premature sexual initiation - a problem or an everyday occurrence for today's adolescents

Przedwczesna inicjacja seksualna – problem czy codzienność współczesnej młodzieży

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Abstract:

Human sexuality is a component of a holistic being, a biopsychosocial state, defined by the World Health Organization as health. It is manifested in aspects of relationship, desire, sexual behavior, orientation, among others. Every year, more and more reports say that the age of sexual initiation is shifting towards younger years. It is worth noting that, according to analyses, the sexuality of the young does not differ from that of the 20th century. In boys, the motivation to engage in sexual activity is usually lust, in girls it is love and emotion. This condition is influenced by many factors: biological, genetic, environmental, family, as well as psychological factors like personality and temperament. The health care system should promote appropriate sexual behavior, along with sex education and awareness of the consequences of risky behavior, including those related to venereal aspects.

Key words: sexual initiation, adolescents, sex education

Streszczenie:

Seksualność człowieka jest komponentem całościowego bytu, stanu biopsychospołecznego, definiowanego przez Światową Organizację Zdrowia jako zdrowie. Jest ona przejawiana między innymi w aspektach związku, pożądania, zachowaniach seksualnych, orientacji. Z roku na rok coraz więcej doniesień mówi o przesunięciu się wieku inicjacji seksualnej na w stronę lat młodszych. Warto podkreślić, iż według analiz seksualność młodych nie odbiega tej z wieku XX. U chłopców motywacją do podjęcia aktywności seksualnej jest zazwyczaj pożądanie, u dziewcząt miłość i emocje. Na ten stan ma wpływ wiele czynników: biologicznych, genetycznych, środowiskowych, rodzinnych, a także psychicznych jak osobowość i temperament. System opieki zdrowotnej powinien promować właściwe zachowania seksualne, wraz z edukacją seksualną oraz uświadamianiem konsekwencji zachowań ryzykownych, w tym tych związanych z aspektami wenerologicznymi.

Słowa kluczowe: inicjacja seksualna, młodzież, edukacja seksualna

Introduction

Human beings are sexual beings from the moment they come into the world. Sexuality is the area where human relationships are formed, new life is given, and love is made [1]. The World Health Organization, in its published Declaration of Sexual Rights in 2002, describes sexuality as an inseparable part of an individual's personality [2].

Sexuality is described as one of the main components of human existence. It forms a multidimensional sphere of everyone's life [3]. It involves sex, sexual identification, desire, sexual orientation, and reproduction. It is experienced and manifested not only in relationships and roles, but also in values, fantasies, behaviors, beliefs [4]. It develops on five main levels, which include sociology, psychology, physiology, anatomy, and human relations [3]. The simultaneous development of each of the above areas is a major challenge during the adolescent stage [5].

According to the 2015 HBSC survey, sexual initiation at age 15 was initiated by 17.4% of respondents, with girls minimally more likely than boys. The percentage compared to the 2010 survey increased by 1.7% [6].

Young people are forced to grapple with life in today's complex world. Money and success come first. The pursuit of possessions causes the family to be relegated to the background. Parents do not devote enough time to their children. This often results in adolescents at puberty not being prepared to adequately relate to the new awakening energy. Discovering one's own sexual awareness becomes a very difficult process [7]. The emergence of sexual desire during this period is combined with adolescents engaging in various forms of sexual activity. Early sexual initiation poses a greater risk of sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancy. The primary cause of the above risks is unprotected sexual intercourse by adolescents or the use of contraceptives, which are ineffective in this group [6].

Aim of the study

The purpose of this study is to analyze the sexual initiation period of today's youth in terms of various variables and influencing factors.

Material and methods

Data on the methods and research metrics used are provided in Figure 1.

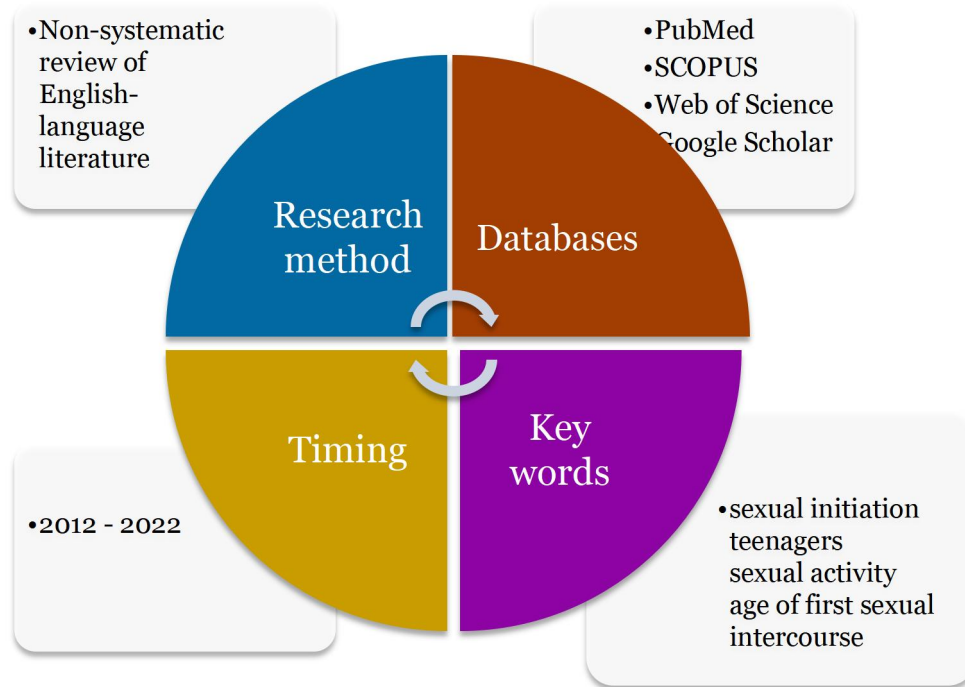


Figure 1. Description of methods and material (source: own elaboration using Word SmartArt software).

Results

Adolescent sexuality and motives for engaging in sexual activity in this group. The process of shaping adolescents' sexuality is largely related to susceptibility to influence. It is also characterized by a high degree of flexibility. In this regard, it is important that adolescents exhibit appropriate normative patterns of development in each of the zones of biopsychosocial life [8,9].

The period of biological maturation in the process of sexuality today is much faster than in the past. Among the factors leading to acceleration, the most cited are the influence of climate, conditions and lifestyle, and genetic factors [10]. A considerable number of studies also indicate a correlation that girls raised in adequate social conditions and a good social and livelihood situation have a faster onset of first menstruation and menopause compared to their female counterparts from non-poor families [11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18].

With the increase in the speed of sexual biological development, mental maturation is delayed. The process of forming responsibility for one's actions only takes a while. Added to

this are difficulties in achieving social and economic maturity, which is reached by the young nowadays by far the latest, compared to the years of the last century [8,19].

The diametrical and significant difference at this stage of sexuality development is due to the difference in emotional and drive. An important issue in discussing the early onset of sexual initiation by young people is to discuss their motivations. Boys want to discharge their desire without much emotional involvement, and often act under the influence of peers to satisfy their own curiosity. Girls, on the other hand, focus on emotionality, showing love, only in the further plan on the discharge of tension, which is felt in them much less than in boys [8,19]. Studies conducted by Z. Lew - Starovich showed that the main motives for the initiation of intercourse by young people were primarily affection, curiosity, and the need to experience adulthood [20]. On the other hand, Z. Izdebski in his study proved that the main motive for initiating intercourse in girls was love, and in boys it was sexual excitement and pleasure [21].

The adolescent sexuality observed today in no way deviates from developmental norms. The disturbing behavior is due to knowledge deficiencies because of lack of or insufficient sex education. Adolescents do not have adequate role models in this area. In search of information and authority, they turn to the media and the Internet, which build a false image of human sexuality. This results in an increase in dangerous and irresponsible behavior on sexual grounds. Therefore, it is the duty of teachers, educators, parents, but also medical personnel to inform adolescents about the dangers of unwise sexual behavior [8,19]. Figure 2 shows the age of legal permission for sexual initiation in the European countries concerned [22].

Age of consent for sexual activity with an adult

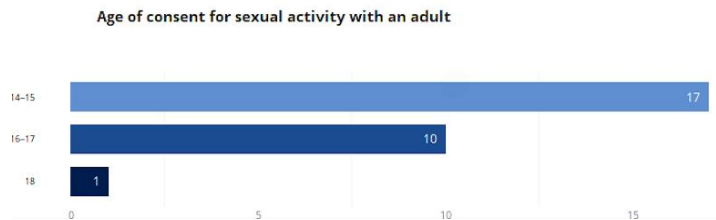
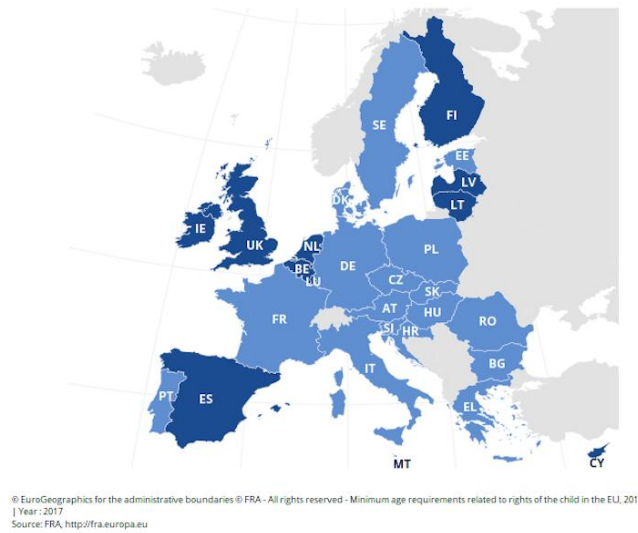


Figure 2. Age of consent for sexual activity with adult (*source: <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2017/mapping-minimum-age-requirements/consent-sexual-activity-adult>*).

Determinants of early sexual initiation

The key to the prevention of early sexual behavior in adolescents is to know the inclinations regarding this topic and the factors causing the problem [23].

Among Polish studies, we can find information by M. Lukaszek relating to early sexual initiation. In his research analysis, he concluded that the age of initiation of intercourse among adolescents is constantly decreasing, although to a decreasing degree. The difference in the average moment of initiation between the sexes is narrowing, presumably due to changes in gender role norms. Compared to the 1990s, the percentage of adolescents initiating sexual intercourse before the age of 15, that is, while still under the legal protection of minors, has risen significantly [24]. The average age of sexual initiation is shown in Figure 3 [25].

Average Age at first sex by Country

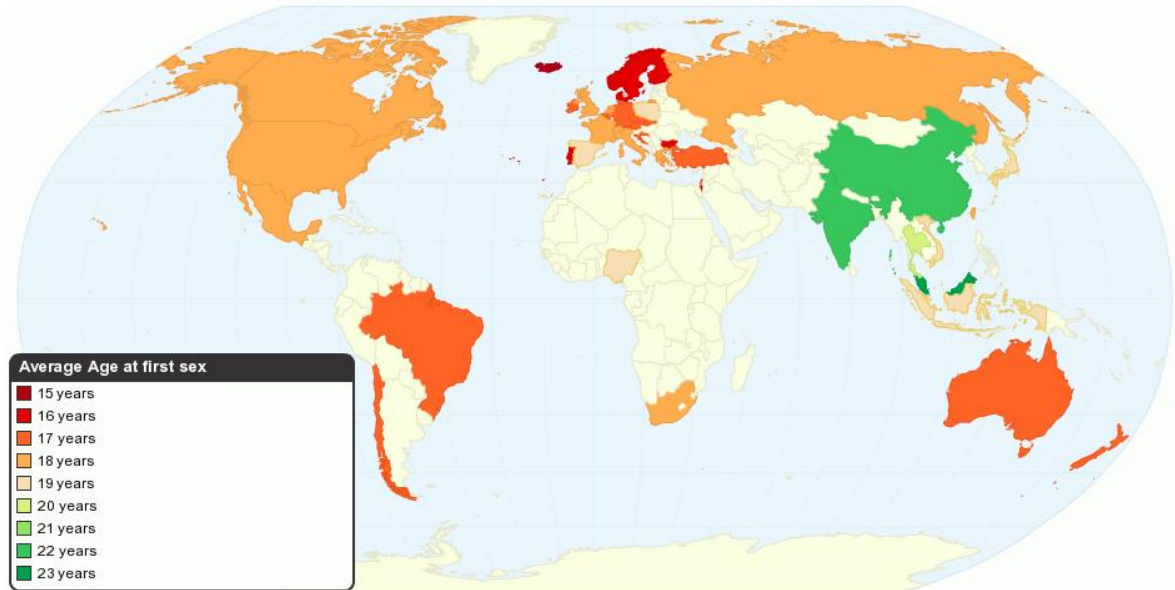


Figure 3. Average Age of first sex by Country (source: <http://chartsbin.com/view/xxj>).

Among the factors that significantly affect the age of having the first sexual intercourse, Z. Lew – Starowicz mentions [26,27]:

- gender - boys begin intercourse earlier than girls,
- family sphere - premature sexual initiation is often strongly related to parental divorce, incomplete family, pathology in the family, raising a child in an overly liberal or strict style, having many siblings or insufficient sexual education of children by parents,
- biological stimuli - high hormone levels at a young age accelerate the moment of first sexual intercourse,
- environmental factors - difficulties at school, patterns of sexuality of peers, lack of ambition and future in the educational field also have an impact on premature sexual initiation,
- personality background - addictions, an understated self-image, lack of self-esteem, being easily influenced by the environment and adolescent behavioral disorders are singled out as factors affecting the early age of sexual initiation.

Based on the research of L. Kay and A. Pawelski, J. Szymanska lists family determinants of hasty sexual behavior of adolescents, such as lack of father's presence, divorce of parents, remarriage of parents, incomplete family, instability of relations with the father as head of the house, overly strict and on the other hand compliant attitudes of parents,

large siblings, deficit of sex education in the family, or parents' approval of their children's early sexual initiations [28].

It is worth noting that it does not happen that only one of the above-mentioned determinants determines the premature initiation of sexual intercourse among adolescents. Most often, this decision is influenced on a multifactorial level [29]. The Figure 4. shows the correlation of motivation to engage in first sexual intercourse with age [30].

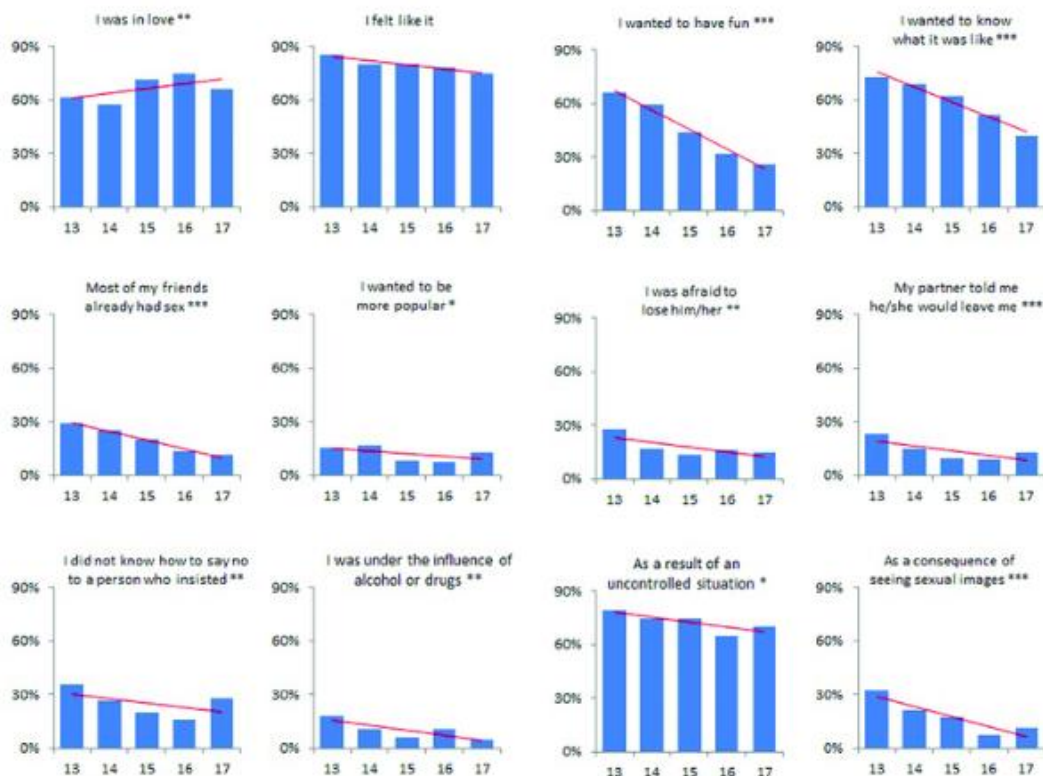


Figure 4. Correlation of motivation to engage in first sexual intercourse with age (*source: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Reasons-for-first-sex-by-age-of-sexual-initiation-P-value-for-linear-trend-p_fig2_318725779*).

Conclusions

1. The sexuality of adolescents observed today in no way deviates from developmental norms.
2. Adolescents do not have appropriate patterns of sexual behavior, and there is a lack of sexual education, this affects the earlier period of initiation of sexual life.

3. Among the determinants of early sexual initiation are variables such as age, gender, personality and temperament, environmental factors and family situation.
4. The task of professional representatives of the health care system is to educate young people about the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and the dangers of risky sexual behavior.

Supplementary Materials

Figure 1.: Description of methods and material. Source: own elaboration using Word SmartArt software

Figure 2.: Age of consent for sexual activity with adult. Source: <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2017/mapping-minimum-age-requirements/consent-sexual-activity-adult>

Figure 3.: Average Age of first sex by Country. Source: <http://chartsbin.com/view/xxj>

Figure 4.: Correlation of motivation to engage in first sexual intercourse with age. Source: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Reasons-for-first-sex-by-age-of-sexual-initiation-P-value-for-linear-trend-p_fig2_318725779

Author's contribution

Conceptualization: PP, KN and KS; methodology: PP; check: KS and AK,; formal analysis: AK; investigation: KN; resources: KN, PP, and KS; data curation: KS; writing - rough preparation: PP, KN and KS; writing - review and editing: PP and AK; visualization: PP; supervision: AK.

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Concurring does not require because of the study methodology used

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