

Lesson 2

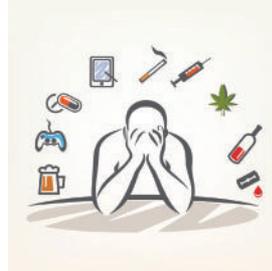
Adolescence and Some (Related) Problems in Bangladesh

A. Warm up activity

- Look at the pictures and discuss the following questions in pairs.



a



b



c



d

source: internet

- What does each of these photographs show?
- What are some typical health problems affecting adolescent boys and girls?
- Who, do you think, are more vulnerable to adolescent health problems—boys or girls? Why?
- Why should all of us say 'No' to habit-forming drugs of every kind?

B. Now read about some typical health problems experienced by adolescent girls and boys in Bangladesh.

- Adolescents constitute a nation's core resource for national renewal and growth. Adolescence is a period in life when transition from childhood to adulthood takes place and behaviours and life styles are shaped. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), adolescence is the period which shapes the future of girls' and boys' lives. There are more than 31 million adolescents in Bangladesh; 13.7 million of them are girls and 14.3 million boys.

ii. The situation of adolescent girls in Bangladesh is characterised by inequality and subordination within the family and society. This inequality leads to widespread practice of child marriage, marginalisation or exclusion from health, education and economic opportunities, and vulnerability to violence and sexual abuse.

iii. In Bangladesh, the legal age of marriage is 18 for girls and 21 for boys. However, 33 percent of adolescent girls are married before the age of 15 and 60 percent become mothers by the age of 19. Research finds that adolescents with higher level of education and from more affluent families tend to marry at a later age. Boys, however, become ready for marriage only after several years of adolescence and young adulthood.

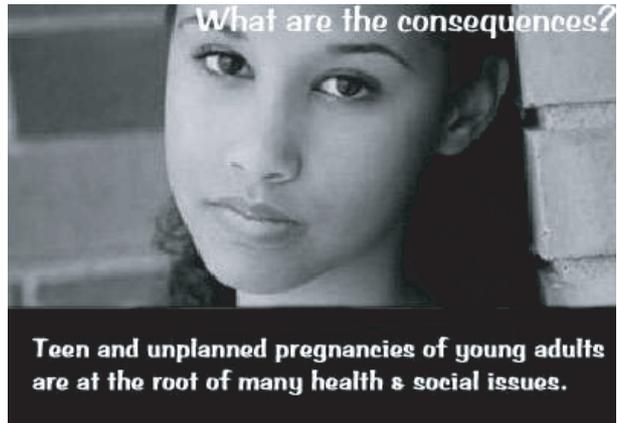


Photo: <http://smarteens.cfsites.org/files/sadgirl2.jpg>

iv. When a girl gets married, she usually drops out of school and begins full-time work in her in-laws' household. In the in-laws' house, she is marginalized. She becomes vulnerable to all forms of abuse, including dowry-related violence. In Bangladesh, it is still common for a bride's family to pay dowry, despite the practice being illegal. Dowry demands can



Source: Internet

also continue after the wedding. For an adolescent bride, even if her in-laws are supportive, there are significant health risks in terms of pregnancy and child birth. The majority of adolescent brides and their families are uninformed or insufficiently informed about reproductive health and contraception. The maternal mortality rate for adolescents is double the national rate.

v. When adolescent girls are pulled out of school, either for marriage or work, they often lose their mobility, their friends and social status. The lack of mobility among adolescent girls also curtails their economic and non-formal educational

opportunities. Moreover, they lack information about health issues. According to a study, only about three in five adolescents have even heard of HIV. It is also reported that more than 50 percent of adolescent girls are undernourished and suffer from anaemia. Adolescent fertility is also high in Bangladesh. The contribution of the adolescent fertility rate to the total fertility rate increased from 20.3% in 1993 to 24.4% in 2007. Moreover, neonatal mortality is another concern for younger mothers.

- vi. While the situation for adolescent boys is somewhat better, many are vulnerable and lack the power to make decisions about their own lives. Many boys who are unable to go to school, or are unemployed, remain unaware of social or health issues. They are at considerable risk of being drawn into criminal activities. They are also more likely to get exposed to drugs and alcohol.



source: The Internet

Sources:

1. Health Profile of Adolescents and Youth in Bangladesh, Government of Bangladesh, 2007, available at: http://ban.searo.who.int/LinkFiles/Publication_Health_Profile_of_Adolescents_and_Youth_in_Bangladesh.pdf.
2. Unite for Children, UNICEF, Adolescent Empowerment Project in Bangladesh, 2009, available at http://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/Adolescent_Empowerment_%28KA%29.pdf

C. Read the following statements and decide if they are true or false. If a statement is false, correct it.

- a. In Bangladesh there are more adolescent boys than adolescent girls.
- b. Many girls in Bangladesh get married before they reach the legal age for marriage.
- c. A bride's family has to pay dowry only before the wedding.
- d. More than half of Bangladeshi adolescent girls cannot meet their dietary needs.
- e. Many adolescent boys in Bangladesh are likely to be involved in various forms of criminal offence.

D. Column A of the following table lists some causes while Column B lists the effects. Match the causes with the effects and join them to make sentences using 'as', 'since' or 'because'.

<i>Column A: Causes</i>	<i>Column B: Effects</i>
<p>i. Some adolescent girls have higher level of education.</p> <p>ii. Boys are usually more concerned about their financial independence.</p> <p>iii. Many girls drop out of school after marriage.</p> <p>iv. Married girls have no status and bargaining power in their in-laws' house.</p> <p>v. Most adolescent brides have no or little knowledge of reproductive health and contraception.</p> <p>vi. Many adolescent boys are unemployed and unaware of many social or health issues.</p>	<p>a. This leads to increased mortality rates among adolescent brides during childbirth.</p> <p>b. They have to work all day long at their in-laws' household.</p> <p>c. They get married several years after adolescence and young adulthood.</p> <p>d. They become victims of domestic violence.</p> <p>e. They have a tendency of getting married at a later age.</p> <p>f. They have the risks of getting involved in criminal activities, including drug abuse.</p>

E. Find the meanings of the words given below and then make sentences with them.

- a.** dowry
- b.** mobility
- c.** contraception
- d.** undernourished
- e.** vulnerable



- F. The text in Activity B has six paragraphs (i-vi). Choose the most suitable headings for the paragraphs from the list of headings below. There are more headings in the box than the paragraphs, so you will not use all of them.**

List of headings

1. Reasons for adolescent fertility
2. Concerted efforts to address adolescents' needs
3. Importance of adolescent population
4. A process of disempowerment of women
5. The curse of early marriage
6. Consequences of taking drugs
7. Unfortunate state of adolescent girls
8. Boys are not free from certain risks
9. Violence within the family

- G. One of your cousins living in a different city is a teen now. Write an email to her/him suggesting what to do during this transitional period of life.**