

WCPCG-2010

The effect of group training for mothers on the attitudes of pre-adolescent daughters towards bio-psycho-social changes

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Received January 5, 2010; revised February 9, 2010; accepted March 28, 2010

Abstract

As adolescent girls experience numerous changes, positive mother-daughter communication and adequate mothers' information may be helpful for girls. In order to investigate the effect of group training program for mothers on the attitudes of Bio-Psycho-Social changes in pre-adolescent daughters, 60 mothers participated in 6- 2 hours sessions in their daughter's school. Training included information about various changes in adolescent girls and some communicational skills. One year follow up showed higher scores in mothers' information and relational skills and also more positive attitude in adolescents in experimental group in compared to control group according to questionnaire.

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Keywords: Group training, mothers, attitude, pre-adolescent girl, bio-psycho-social changes.

1. Introduction

Adolescence which is a transitional stage of development has been defined as a period of Storm and Stress (Hall), Genital phase (Freud), Identity crisis (Erikson), Formal Operational stage (Piaget) and etc. Psychological, Psycho-Sexual, and Social changes and levels of emotional distress are considerable in adolescents (Gelder et al., 2005). Risk taking behaviours which can lead to substance abuse, car accidents, unsafe sex, and youth crime (Lightfoot, 1997), peer pressure (Berndt, 1979) and mood disorders are considered according to these changes. Responses to stress mediated the association between social stress and symptoms of psychopathology including internalizing distress and aggression in young adolescent girls (Sontag et al., 2008). In comparison with a century ago, puberty is occurring earlier and a disjunction between adolescents' psychosocial maturity and their physical appearance makes some challenges for families and societies (Peterson, 2004). Kazin et al. (2008) showed the effect of socio-biological factors on the formation of adaptive responses in school students during puberty. Social support, typological features, and autonomic regulation are important factors to form the levels of completeness of adaptation in these adolescents. The meaning of various physical changes and different pubertal events may play role in the self definitions of preadolescent girls (Brooks-Gunn & Warren, 1988). Menstruation is an important part in the puberty of girls. In order to explore the social and health impact of girls' experience of menstruation and schooling in

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Tanzania, some data were collected. Transition through puberty without adequate guidance on puberty and menses management makes numerous challenges for adolescent girls. Paying attention to their pragmatic and realistic recommendations would be important for the healthy transition to womanhood (Sommer, 2010). Negative body image and body dissatisfaction are also important topics for adolescent girls (Koff & Rierdan, 1993; Paxton et al., 2005) especially for pre-adolescents (Petersen, 1979).

The relationship between adolescent and parent is considerable to confront Bio-Psycho-Social changes. Ackard et al. (2006) investigated parent-child connectedness and behavioural and emotional health among 4746 adolescent students. They found that adolescents who perceived very little or no mother caring, reported high prevalence rates of unhealthy weight control behaviours (63.49% girls, 25.45% boys); suicide attempts (33.51% girls, 21.28% boys); low self-esteem (47.15% girls, 24.56% boys); and depression (63.52% girls, 33.35% boys). Compromised behavioural and emotional health of teens significantly associated with their perception of low parental caring, difficulty talking to parents about problems, and valuing friends' opinions for serious decisions. McGee et al. (2005) paid attention to the perceptions of the parent-adolescent relationship in a longitudinal investigation between age 11 and age 14 by a report measure of conflict and aspects of warmth in the parent-child relationship. Increase in conflict and decrease in all aspects of warmth were greater for girls than boys. As puberty makes changes in mother-daughter relationship control (O'Sullivan et al. 2000), some programs focused on the relationship between mothers and their adolescent girls. Romo et al. (2004) examined Mexican-American adolescents' responsiveness to their mothers' questions about dating and sexuality. As girls are more argumentative they were more active than boys in responding to questions about their personal experiences. Mothers mostly use closed-ended formats, requesting yes-no or other short answers maybe because they think that their adolescents are more comfortable in this ways. For preventing substance use among adolescent girls, a mother-daughter program showed improvements according to the goal and also improvements in communication with daughters and monitoring of daughters' discretionary time (Schinke et al. 2009). The central role that mothers and fathers play in shaping the quality of the romantic relationships that late adolescent girls form was discussed by Scharf & Maysless (2008). They also reported that delays in the entrance into sexual romantic relationships in adolescent girls were associated with better quality of relationship with mother.

As attitudes develop on the ABC model (affect, behaviour, and cognition) and most attitudes are the result of direct experience or observational learning (wikipedia, 2010), attitudes towards pubertal changes in pre-adolescent girls are related to environmental information. Whisnant & Zegans (1975) investigated attitudes towards menarche in white middle class American adolescent girls and they suggested that "menarche is an emotional event related to the adolescent girl's emerging identity as an adult woman, her newly acquired ability to reproduce, and her changing relationship with her mother".

2. Method

To study the effect of group training program for mothers on the attitudes towards Bio-Psycho-Social changes in Iranian pre-adolescent daughters, 60 mothers participated in 6 sessions in their daughter's school. each session lasted two hours. Matched control group had no program. Mean age of daughters was 12.3 and they were studying at a middle school in Tehran at the time of program. Training was including information about biological, psychological and social changes in adolescent girls and some communicational skills to be discussed by mothers and their daughters about these topics. Answering to the questions and receiving informative leaflet were the last part of each session. Program was designed and performed by four experts in psychology, counseling, gynecology and nutrition. Program and questions were in Farsi.

Semi structured interview with mothers was conducted before the program and one year later. This interview which was done by school counselor included demographic information and it had some questions about the quality of mother-daughter relationship. The post interview which was done one year after program was also contained of informative questions to assess mothers' knowledge about Bio-Psycho-Social changes in adolescent girls. 20 informative questions was designed and modified by executive team. Each item had three scores (0= wrong answer, 1= correct but incomplete answer, 2= correct and complete answer). To investigate the inter rater reliability, answers were rated by two psychologists. Three questions were omitted after statistical analysis. Therefore, total score ranges from 0 to 34 for 17 questions. Mother-daughter communicational quality was considered during the interview and interviewer rated (from 0 to 10) this quality according to a guideline.

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