



REPORT OF NATIONAL RESEARCH AND NEEDS ANALYSIS “SOCIAL EDUCATION TEACHING ON ADOLESCENTS BY SPECIALISTS”

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Introduction

This report provides statistical data concerning teenager pregnancies, age of the first sexual relation, access to information, services supplying information about contraceptive methods such as condoms or pills, but also about next-morning pill.

The report also shows the opinion of Italian society as regards teenagers' sexuality and their needs.

Statistical data clearly show that teenagers have little knowledge on these themes;

As a consequence we are in need of carrying out projects on sexuality and contraception to prevent unwished pregnancies among teenagers and sexually transmitted diseases but also in order to help adolescents to undertake responsible and aware relationships.

1 Statistical data

Start of sexual life

A survey carried out by the **National Observatory on children and adolescents**, taking into account 1400 anonymous young people aged 15 to 25, shows that teenagers whose had their first sexual experience before the age of 14 account for 19%: a percentage that is doubled compared to 2012 when this percentage accounted for 10%

The survey also shows that very few (12%) want to wait for a more mature age.

Unfortunately there is lack of information about risks linked to sex: as a matter of facts 73% of youngsters doesn't know the most frequent sexually transmitted diseases whereas 33% think their incidence is not remarkable.

As regards prevention and contraception the situation is also worrying.

In fact only 35% of the boys and 29% of the girls uses condoms; 88% of youngsters doesn't know where counselling centres are and among them only 56% would go for a visit; however according to statistics, only 23% of girls and 46% of boys underwent a visit before reaching 18 years old.

Lack of information together with inappropriate behaviour involve a significant risk of developing Sexually transmitted diseases (which have already raised since 2008), as well as a risk of unwanted pregnancies.

These data are confirmed by interviewed youngsters. The percentage of those who have already known a viral infection account for 3% among males and almost 5% among females. Complete sexual relation (males 8%; female 5%) before the age of 14 and often with no preventative measure of any kind play an important role as regards infections. As a matter of facts, Among youngsters only 28.3% of girls and 38.8% of males use condoms during a sexual relation.

<http://www.paidoss.it/>

2 Access of information

Both youngsters and adults took information concerning sexuality from their friends and classmates (respectively 78% and 74%)





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Times have changed : our parents used to get information from newspapers and magazines whereas today's youngsters get information from the internet where the first paradox appear: movies and videos let teenagers believe that the use of condoms is not important(in hard movies for example, condoms are never used). And sometimes boys are convinced that condom is to be used 3 days before a girl's period.

Fortunately mothers play a key role: 52% of youngsters gets information from them whereas their parents could not do the same.

However people talk about sex but not about youngster's sexual life and needs.

Within schools , if needed, project to educate on sexuality or affectivity are put into place with the help of gynaecologists, nurses, social workers and psychologists coming from family counselling centres. Those centres are part of the so called ASP and offer a moment to talk about sexuality, contraceptive methods, pregnancy, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, sexual abuses, rights and duties. People from the counselling centre are involved in courses to prevent wrong and dangerous behaviour.

Several counselling centre have open the so called " spazio giovani" , a centre devoted to counselling, visits and psychological support for youngster aged 14 to 20/24.

Youngsters can go with no previous appointment but during the receiving days and without paying (at least until the age of 19).

Privacy is guaranteed . SPAZIO GIOVANI has been created to:

- inform on contraceptive methods , choosing the more suitable to personal needs and with the aim of preventing diseases and early unwanted pregnancies;
- provide specific information on sexually transmitted diseases;
- cope with problems concerning sexuality and affectivity also to provide specific answers;
- give advice to better manage physical and psychological changes during teenager age;
- to face problems concerning relationships with friends , with the partner and parents.

Here below is the website where a list of counselling centres which have opened SPAZIO GIOVANI can be found:

upon request everybody can request information on the following issues:

- Contraception and contraceptive methods
- Responsible procreation
- Sexually transmitted diseases, such as HIV/AIDS and information on HIV test
- Procedures to voluntarily interrupt pregnancy, medical and psycho-social support (also for minors)

Counselling centres also offer the possibility of undergoing some medical examinations :

- Prevention and psicological listening
- Gynecologist visit
- Pap-test and sexology counseling





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You can access counseling centre:

- For free / at no cost
- Without appointment ;
- Without medical request.
- Health ministry offers some information on the below website

Furthermore, the Italian association for demographic education offers a series of information on sexuality and on the several contraceptive methods: remarkable is the section devoted to FAQ

This is a very useful website and provides answers to the most frequent questions concerning risks and consequences and on how to get them.

As regard morning after pill , a doctor prescription is definitely necessary (doctor from the counselling centre or a gynaecologist or in urgent cases a doctor from the first aid service).

3 Social cultural context

Sexual Education in Italy

The term sexual education covers various issues and topics linked to education in particular; it involves the relationship between youngsters and their peers during the development of their sexual life.

Sexual education comes firstly from parents (especially in the case of girls who receive information from their mothers); teachers also play a role in this area (they generally follow the indications and instruction of some organisms such as MIUR, regions and provinces, schools).

Other educators also play a key role (religious educators, scout chiefs, trainers of sport associations, etc.). Last but not the least is the web.

In the last few years a different approach has been embraced in schools.

First of all a specific course is generally scheduled, composed of some lessons on one or more topics, at the end of the secondary school.

Also some primary schools have provided such lessons as well as more detailed approaches in high schools.

As regards sexual education and the so called education to affectivity, generally various teachers deal with it. In particular teachers of literature, religion, science and sport.

During the planning phase of a school this activity can also involve parents; they can be all the students' parents or only those who have been elected as representatives. They can speak during meetings open to the families.

In some Italian regions some professionals from ASL or from the SSN (Italian health service) can intervene especially as regards psychological aspects and some details suitable for the students' age: contraceptive methods, sexually transmitted diseases, personal hygiene, addictions and counselling centres.

Sexual education usually describe the origin and the development of a human being , starting from conception and embryonic and foetal development to arrive at the final delivery of the baby.

The kind of activity that a single class carries out cannot be defined in detail because there are various possibilities





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The use of hormonal contraception in Italy

According to a special European classification concerning hormonal contraception, such as the pill, the vaginal ring and the contraceptive patch, Italy ranks at the bottom of the list.

In fact only 16,2% of Italian women use these forms of contraception.

This is what emerges from the research carried out by the Italian Society of Gynaecology and Obstetrics (SIGO), which has also introduced a new awareness campaign on contraception called "Love it! Conscious sex."

Italy is far away from the EU standard as far as safe sex is concerned.

Protected sex is generally speaking not the rule in Italy: today 6 out of 10 women in their fertile period, aged between 15 and 49, still do not use any form of contraception; 15% have never used a contraceptive of any kind and 44% have given up using one.

As a matter of fact, 1 pregnancy out of 5 is unwanted and 42% of women who became pregnant by mistake were not using any contraceptive.

The situation is not reassuring with regard to the pill. It seems that Italian women have a particularly difficult relationship with the pill.

The alarming data is that 45% of young women aged between 18 and 26 do not use a contraceptive method of any kind.

Teenager Pregnancies

The number of Italian teenagers who become pregnant before reaching the age of 18 is rising. Pregnancies involve mainly girls aged between 14 and 18, even if it is difficult to provide exact data. Teen pregnancy is generally an unwanted experience. Furthermore, teenage fathers-to-be often run from this situation and in most cases the grandparents intervene to help their daughter, although initially with reticence. It is estimated that unwanted pregnancies in Italy account for 76 million, which is to say 1 out of 5. We should reflect on this data, which is alarming if we consider that the age at which girls become pregnant is becoming significantly lower. Unfortunately this is not only the case of girls coming from disadvantaged families but also girls coming from the middle class whose parents usually work all day long. It has also been observed that unwanted pregnancies depend on sexual relation occurred during the Christmas period and during summer holidays.

According to the latest report of the Health Institute, the age of the first sexual experience has dropped. The first sexual relations can occur between 13 year-olds but only 0,3% of girls have proper information on this topic. Because of their young age, boys and girls haven't had the time to get information and reflect on the significance and importance of their first sexual experience. Nowadays the youngest girls may have from 5 to 15 partners per year and use only emergency contraception improperly and only if needed, in other words after a risky sexual experience. When dealing with an unwanted pregnancy, many teenagers choose abortion; statistics show that 4,2% of voluntary interruption of pregnancies were undertaken by young girls under 18 years old. According to ISTAT data, in Italy mothers aged less than 21 account for 2,6%; and in 2013 in the north of Italy, in Lombardia to be more precise, pregnancies among girls aged 15 increased remarkably, by 75% compared to the previous year.

The number of teenage mothers has decreased thanks to the prevention campaign carried out in schools. Teenagers who are pregnant in most cases live in socially and economically disadvantaged





situations. Almost 60% of them risk developing depression.

4 Teens opinion

Italian government does not provide good information to teenagers as regards sexuality and prevention

As a matter of facts, 70% of girls and 58% of guys would like to receive more qualified information at school, at home, within the health system but also through the internet. Most of the interviewed teenagers consider the new communication media as the biggest source of information, such as online forums which enable teenagers to share their opinion and compare their own experiences with other teenagers. Also TV channels devote some programs to youngsters facing real problems related to sexuality, contraception, pregnancies or sexually transmitted diseases.

According to 47% of Italian girls (1 out of 2) , making love is partially a nightmare because of the risk of getting pregnant; so this is their first concern.

Whereas only 11% (1 out of 10) of girls is afraid of catching a disease.

22% of teenagers (1 out of 4) feels at ease talking about contraception ; basically they know 3contracpetive methods and 27% doesn't use any. This percentage is higher (35%) among women.

Youngsters would like to be acknowledged on this issues and have access to programmes involving families, services and institutions.

At school, youngsters ask for an improved debate with their teachers upon this delicate issue and they also would like to meet gynaecologists and psychologists to discuss about the intimate relation with a partner, pregnancy prevention, prevent sexually transmitted diseases, to discredit doubts on the so called petting and coitus interrupts.

Furthermore, it seems that youngsters have difficulties talking about sex within their families, a context where this issue is still a taboo. In most cases, parents are very willing to discuss sexuality with their children but when the moment comes they often feel embarrassed. As a consequence, teenagers are likely to look for information elsewhere.

5 Beneficiaries needs

When talking about motherhood of minors , we deal with a medical problem but also with social, economical, cultural and legal issues.

According to statistics, social and economic factors have a key role. As a matter of facts the more poor and uneducated teenagers are, the highest is the risk of early pregnancies.

Those people who are not educated and are not planning their study project or life project, do not perceive pregnancy as an obstacle. In fact, those who study, generally have their first sexual approach later and are more aware of the risks linked to sexuality.

Moreover, poverty often causes people to abuse alcohol sex and drugs that may also favour sexual promiscuity and precocity. Very often family bond are weak or even inexistent. As a matter of facts, expert say that where there teenagers who have a good communication with their parents, approach sexuality later and rate of early pregnancies among them is reduced.

Women should have a proper information and live a safe and aware sexuality.

Unfortunately sex is a debated and difficult to discuss theme in Italy, especially in southern regions; whereas many people are in real need of talking , being listened and being given answers.

Very often, youngsters would like to ask questions on the issue of sexuality but they do not know who to address. sexual education is compulsory in every European country expect for Italy, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and UK.





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The introduction of Sexual education is being debating for 10 years but no law has been approved so far.

The European parliament has express its opinion on the subject of sexual education, sexual and reproductive health of teenagers through the resolution 2001/2128 which recognises the different need of teenagers compared to adults with respect to sexual and reproductive health; underlines the importance of sexual education programs open to parents and their children; reminds that sexual education should be different according to the target group of beneficiaries (according to their age and gender); invites member state governments to improve access of teenagers to health services.

Number of marriages and Divorces in Italy

In 2014 ISTAT (National Institute for Statistics) published data concerning marriages, divorces and separations occurring in 2012. Below are the main data: According to statistics, the number of marriages in Italy has been decreasing beginning in 1995 until today. In 2012 separations decreased (-0,6) as well as divorces (-4,6%) compared to 2011.

During 2012, 311 separations and 174 divorces were registered for every 1000 marriages. In other words, there were 88.288 separations and 51.319 divorces. So their increases has stopped for now.

After how many years separations and divorces occur

On average separation occurs after 16 years of marriage and divorce after 19 years (times are calculated based on the time of the request). Recent marriages last less and less however. Talking about the so-called “crisis of the 7th year“, in the last few years the number of separations has doubled, from 4,5% in 1985 to 9,3% of 2005. However we should take into account that the above mentioned data are different between civil marriages and religious marriages. It seems that marriages celebrated according to religious ceremony last longer than civil ones. During 2012 the age of people applying for separation was on average 47 for men and 44 for women. On average 21,6% of women were aged 40 to 44 whereas 20,9% of men were aged 45 to 49. As a result we can say the crisis involves people in their 40s.

Educational qualification of Separated or Divorced people

Another important fact is that separations are more frequent among educated people. In 2012, 39% of separated husbands had a secondary school certificate, 41% had a high school certificate, and 13,5% were had university degrees. As far as wives are concerned, 33,9% had a secondary school certificate, 44,3% had a high school certificate and 16% had a university degree.

Separations and divorces in case of couples with children and kind of custody

In 2012, 73,3% of separated couples had children. As regards divorced couples, 66,2% had children. Only 48,7% of separated couples and 33,1% of divorced couples had a child under 18. After the approval of the Law 54/2006 a new trend has been observed as regards child custody. In most cases couples choose the so called shared custody of minors. Thanks to the new law, both parents are guaranteed parental responsibility and are bound to supply maintenance to their children in proportion to their incomes. Until 2005 mothers were generally awarded child custody (in 80,7% of separations and 82,7% of divorces). In 2012, shared custody accounted for 89,9% of the cases whereas maternal custody appointed for 8,8%.





Family violence

Violence against women is a very spread phenomenon in Italy.

6.788.000 women have been victims of violence (sexual or physical) during their life, which is to say 31,5% of women aged 16 to 70 ; 20,2% has been victim of physical violence; 21% sexual abuse, 5,4% more serious sexual violence such as rapes and attempted rape.

The number of women victims of sexual abuse appoints for 652.000, whereas 746.000 women were victims of attempted rapes.

Generally violence comes from partners or ex partners. 62,7% of rapes is perpetrated by a woman's partner or by her ex-partner. Authors of sexual harassments are usually carried out by strangers in most cases (76,8%).

10,6% of women experienced violence before the age of 16.

If we consider that very often women experiencing violence were also mothers, also the percentage of children who were present while their mother was victim of violence is increased (from 60,3% in 2006 until 65,2% in 2014)

Separated or divorced women have experienced physical or sexual violence more than other women (respectively 51,4% and 31,5%).

The situation is also severe in the case of disabled or sick women: 36% of sick women and 36,6% of impaired women were victims of violence . Moreover, the risk of undergoing rapes or attempted rapes is doubled (10% versus 4,7% of women with no problems)

However comforting data are emerging showing a decrease in the number of violent episodes which decreased from 13,3% to 11,3% in the last 5 years compared to the 5 years before 2006. this is probably due to the improved awareness of women and to their ability in preventing and fighting the phenomenon as well as to the disapproval attitude of our society towards violence.

Both physical and sexual violence have decreased. Also psychological violence from the partner is lowered (from 42,3% to 26,4%) .

Women are more aware and thus able to get out of a violent and unhealthy relationships. They now consider violence as a crime (29,6%) and report it to police (reports account for 11,8%)

More and more they talk about experienced violence (75,9% compared to 67,8 of some years ago) and turn to specialized services, anti violence centres, (4,9% compared to 2,4% of the past)-

The same goes for cases of violence committed by strangers.

According to statistics, victims of violence today are more happy with police intervention as regards cases of violence. Their satisfaction is 28,5 compared to 9,9% in 2006.

Nevertheless rapes and attempted rapes accounts for 1,2% for both 2006 and 2014 . violence are more severe then before .violence from the partner causing injuries increased from 26,3% to 40,2% and also the number of women who risked their lives has increased from 18,8% in 2006 to 34,5% in 2014 .

Also violence from strangers are increased.

3.466.000 women (which means 16,1% of women) have been victims of stalkers during their lifetime. Out of them, 1.524.000 experience stalking episodes from the ex-partner, 2.229.000 from strangers.



Number of children accommodated in children care institutes

New ISTAT data show a high number of minors accommodated within reception centres. According to statistics, this number accounted for 22.584 in 2009, whereas they were 16.414 in 2006. The 40% more concerns under- 18 youngsters. This increase is probably due to a wider survey including more institutions and also health and social centres apart from assistance centres.

Number of abortions in Italy

In 2012, ISTAT highlighted 103.191 voluntary interruptions of pregnancies, 6.850 less than in 2011. Italy is one of the European union countries with the lowest number of voluntary abortions. In 2012, the rates accounted for 7,6 abortions every 1000 women aged 15 to 49 (it was 7,8 in 2011) Regional differences exist but they are less and less important : in 2012 the highest number of voluntary abortions was recorded in Liguria (10,2), the lowest in the Independent province of Bolzano (4,3). In 1982 Puglia recorded a rate of 26 and Bolzano 8,7 Abortion rates involve basically people aged 25 to 29 (12,8 every 1000 women). Generally speaking a decrease in abortion rates has been recorded; less among young women though. Incidence of abortions is more spread among unmarried women (8,1 every 1000 women) than among married ones (6,5 every 1000 women) The average age of women who turn to abortion is 31 years old in Italy; whereas for foreigner women it is 29. Among foreigners resident in Italy, abortion rates are higher for Chinese women (30,0 cases for 1.000 women aged 15-49), followed by Romanians, (22,7), Albanian (16,6) and Moroccans (16,2) The percentage of repeated voluntary Interruption of pregnancies accounts for 26,6% of the total number of abortions. The percentage of women at their second abortion accounts for 18,7%, the percentage of women at their third abortion accounts for 5,3%, whereas the percentage of women turning to abortion for more than 3 times accounts for 2,6%. More detailed information can be found on the ISTAT website under the section reproductive health of women

Single mother statistics

According to a survey published by ISTAT and carried out by the statistical focus on life conditions of separated, divorced and married people after divorce, women are more likely to become single parents and often live under bad economic conditions. Data shows that in 2009 people who have experienced a separation (legal separation, de facto separation, divorce) are 3.115.000 (6,1% of the population); generally speaking, separations involve highly educated people, northern Italy people more than southern people and especially people from big cities. After a separation, women are likely to be an only parent (35,8% versus 7,35 of men); whereas men generally live alone (43%) or start a new relationship (32%). Also after 10 years from the separation, mothers tend to stay alone (this is the case for 29,1% of women). However there is an increase in the number of single women (32,25) and women with a new family (26,2%).



CONCLUSIONS

- 1) The above mentioned survey shows a clear and far-ranging lack of information (about sexuality?) among youngsters. As a consequence, improving prevention campaigns is of pivotal importance.
- 2) In schools the situation is the same. There is no real action devoted to educating students and often it is too difficult for parents to care about sexual education; they often feel embarrassed about this issue.
- 3) As a result, an external professional could be entrusted with this task, intervening in schools to educate youngsters about sexuality.
- 4) Information means prevention: boys and girls should never be left on their own during their sexual development process, because this could compromise their actions; they could embrace transgressive behaviour which can often put them at risk.

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