



VET specialists competencies development in the field of positive parenting teaching (POSITIVE)
Project ref. No. : 2015-1-LT01-KA202-013480

Report of National Research about Positive Parenting Teaching and Necessity of Sexual Education in Turkey

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Introduction

This report provides information about the statistical data related to the pregnancies of teenagers, adolescents' fertility rate, starting age of sexuality, marriage, divorce, violence in family, child care institutions, about accessing to information related to the sexuality subjects, and products like contraceptives, condoms and morning after pill, about the thoughts of Turkish society related to the sexuality of teenagers, about the thoughts and needs of teenagers and about the specialists' needs.

1. Statistical Data

1.1 Pregnancies of Teenagers

According to TurkStat Birth Statistics made between 2008-2014, Adolescent fertility rate is shown in the table below. But all of these rates are not early unplanned pregnancy. Some of them are planned pregnancy, some of them are married. So in Turkey we don't have a reliable data about early unplanned motherhood of teens.

| Adolescent fertility rate, 2008-2014 | | | | | | | (‰) |
|--------------------------------------|-------|---------------|----|----|----|----|-----|
| | | Age of mother | | | | | |
| Year | Total | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | |
| 2008 | 40 | 6 | 16 | 35 | 59 | 82 | |
| 2009 ^(r) | 37 | 5 | 15 | 33 | 54 | 78 | |
| 2010 ^(r) | 33 | 4 | 13 | 31 | 51 | 70 | |
| 2011 ^(r) | 31 | 3 | 11 | 28 | 48 | 68 | |
| 2012 ^(r) | 30 | 3 | 10 | 26 | 46 | 67 | |
| 2013 ^(r) | 28 | 2 | 9 | 24 | 43 | 64 | |
| 2014 | 27 | 2 | 7 | 22 | 41 | 63 | |

(r) Birth data were revised with updated administrative records.

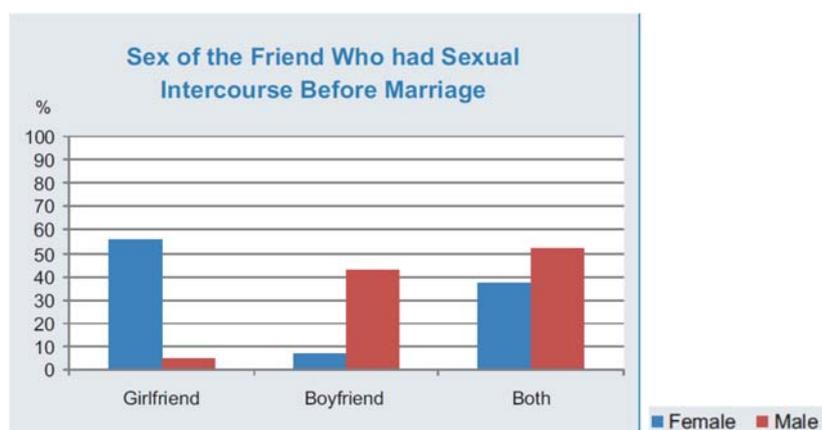


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The age of unplanned pregnancy is getting upper and upper according to this table. In 2014, 2% births gave mothers at the age of 15, 7% mothers at the age of 16, 22% mothers at the age of 17, 41% mothers at the age of 18 and 63% mothers at the age of 19.

1.2 Start of sexual life

42,8 percent of the youth reported to have a friend who had sexual intercourse before getting married; this proportion is 34,5 percent among females, while it is 51,1 percent among males. The median ideal age at first sexual intercourse for men is “20” for female respondents, “18” for male respondents, and “19” for all youth. The median ideal age at first sexual intercourse for women is “20” for female respondents, “19” for male respondents, and “20” for all youth.



83,9 percent of the youth don't approve of women's having sex before marriage, whereas 56,8 percent don't approve of men's having sex before marriage. 12,0 percent of the female respondents approve of young women's having sex before marriage while this proportion is 15,2 percent among males. However, proportion of approving the statement that men "should not have sex before marriage" is 31,4 percent among females while it is 48,7 percent among males.





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1.3. Marriage

Marriage is a very common concept in Turkey. Although the marriage number decreases, the first marriage age is getting upper year by year and this is a satisfactory development for all. Now it seems as 23.2 (average of age)

| Amount of Marriage in Turkey | | |
|------------------------------|-------------|----------|
| Years | Age (16-19) | All Ages |
| 2012 | 129.130 | 603.751 |
| 2013 | 123.120 | 600.138 |
| 2014 | 116.275 | 599.704 |

1.4. Divorce

While the number of marriage is decreasing, the number of divorce is increasing in Turkey and this very annoying situation. In order to prevent this situation, Family and Community Service Directorates in all cities gives services such as Family and Divorce Process Consultancy, Distant Training of Family, Family Consultancy Programme, etc..

| Amount of Divorce in Turkey | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|----------|
| Years | Age (16-19) | All Ages |
| 2012 | 2.431 | 123.325 |
| 2013 | 2.560 | 125.305 |
| 2014 | 2.374 | 130.913 |

1.5. Violence in Family

Numerous legal reforms have been made and circulars have been issued in recent years in order to fight against domestic violence against women in Turkey. Turkey is the first country to ratify in 2011 the Council of Europe Convention on Prevention of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and Fighting against these. The National Action Plan (covering 2008 – 2012) for Fighting against Domestic Violence against Women was prepared by the General Directorate on the Status of Women, staff working in public institutions were trained about these issues and various activities were carried out in order to raise awareness in the society (short films for TV, posters etc.). However, despite the work done so far, the increase in the number of women murdered and the data with respect to violence against women reveal that the expected results have not been achieved. There is



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need for studies to identify for what reason the legislative reforms made and the projects carried out have not yielded the expected outcomes, what the deficiencies, problematic areas, obstacles and points of resistance are.

| Percentage of women who experienced physical or sexual violence from their intimate partners | | | |
|--|-------|-----------|------------------------------|
| | Age | Life Time | Number Of ever Married Women |
| Age Groups | 15-24 | 35.3 | 1.194 |
| | 25-34 | 39.2 | 3.652 |
| | 35-44 | 42.0 | 3.009 |
| | 45-59 | 47.9 | 2.943 |
| Turkey | 15-59 | 41.9 | 10.798 |

| Percentage of women who experienced physical or sexual violence from non-partners | | | | |
|---|-------|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| | Age | Serval Abuse | Physical Violence | Number Of Women |
| Age Groups | 15-24 | 5.5 | 21.8 | 3.490 |
| | 25-34 | 3.4 | 16.6 | 3.493 |
| | 35-44 | 2.3 | 16.2 | 2.797 |
| | 45-59 | 1.5 | 16.3 | 3.015 |
| Turkey | 15-59 | 3.3 | 17.8 | 12.795 |

1.6. Child Care Institutions

According to the statistical data of December 2015, there are 1233 institutions that give service about child care. The other data and number of children related to child care institutions are below.

| 2015 | Number Of Children |
|---|--------------------|
| Children in the Child Care Institutions | 12.667 |
| Children who are given support without being put under protection | 71.845 |
| Children who are adopted | 14.515 |
| Children who are given service at the foster parents | 4.615 |



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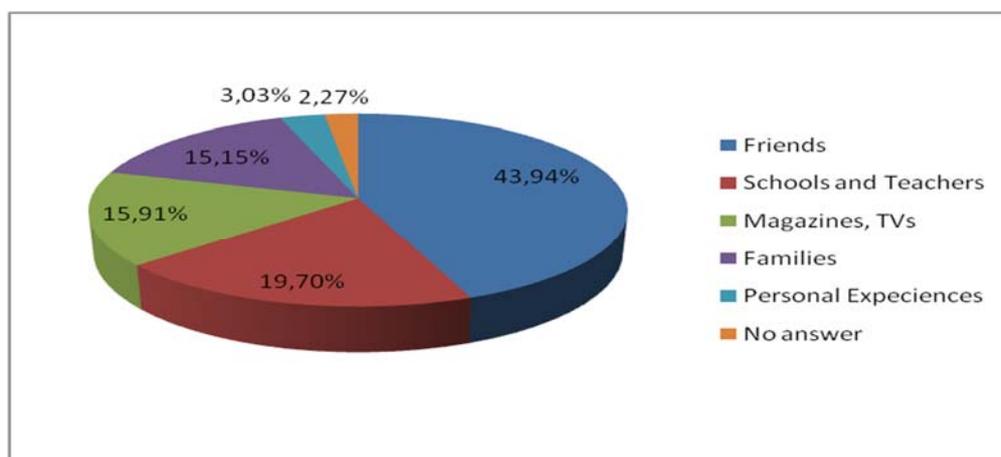
1.7.About Abortions

According to the recently researches in Turkey, %10 of the gestations ends in abortion. As private doctors are mostly preferred for abortions, we can not reach the clear results about the numbers.

Abortion is legal but due to traditions and religion it seems the same as murder. Under 18 years old there must be a permission from court and permission of parents but it is very shameful thing that lots of families try to keep this situation as a secret, so they try to find unofficial solutions. Sometimes pregnant girls are sent to a far place or family migrates to another place.

2.Access to Information

The fact is that Turkish education system doesn't give sexual education at schools. Only some of foundation schools get sexual education for the teenagers. We approach the issue in two terms. One of them is getting first information about sexuality. So unfortunately 43,94% of the teenagers get first information about sexuality from their friends, 19,70% of them from their schools and their teachers, 15,91% of them from magazines, tvs, newspapers and 15,15% of them from their families, 3,03% of them from their personal experiences and 2,27% of the teenagers rejected giving answer.



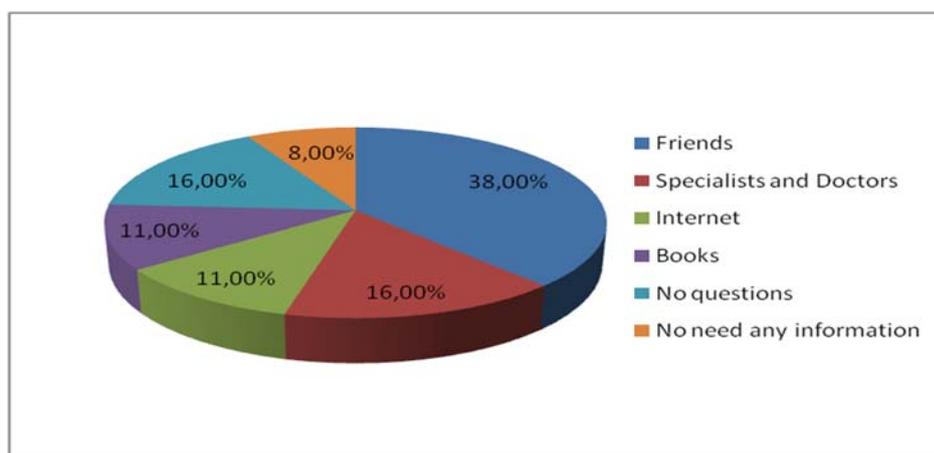
The other one is getting information if needed. Specialists and doctors take place on the top as the safest information resource and as the most frequently consulted when the need arises. But the teenagers don't prefer consulting specialist and doctors. Friends comes first for taking information. 38% of the teenagers consult their friends, 16% of them consult specialist and doctors, 11% of them get information from internet, 11% of them get information from books, 16% of them ask nobody and 8% of them don't need any information.



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More than two thirds of Turkish people believes the necessity of sexual education at schools. The rate of believing the necessity of sexual education increases when the age gets younger and the education level gets upper.

2.1 Access to the contraceptives, condoms and morning after pill

The products like contraceptives, condoms and morning after pill are sold in pharmacies. The teenagers can pay and buy them. In big cities this is not a problem but in small towns buying this kind of products is difficult because of the social norms. Also the pharmacists can not sell these products to the teenagers. It is up to them.

About abortion, Turkish people are generally hard. Because according to our religious beliefs, abortion is a kind of murder if it is not a necessity in terms of health. According to the laws, the permission of two sides is needed for the married couples but for the single mothers under eighteen the decision of the judge is needed for the abortion with the permission of the parents. Also the government asks adolescents to apply to the state hospitals for this kind of events as they want to keep under control. Nevertheless there are a lots of adolescents who decide to have an abortion at unlicensed health centers and people without permission since they want to keep as a secret.

At the first glance, early pregnancies, unwanted pregnancies, miscarriages, early motherhood, and the youth who are forced to have sex and to marry come into prominence when we examine the relationship between sexual behaviours and risks. One of the most effective means of managing these risks is to introduce the required knowledge and skills to youth promptly for rendering them proficient in terms of coping with these problems. The most EFFECTIVE, INEXPENSIVE, and ACCESSIBLE means of this is the FORMAL EDUCATION.



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3.Social Cultural Context

According to traditions and Turkish family structure, sexuality of unmarried people is even a tabu today in Turkey. Turkish society behaves very conservative especially about sexuality of girls but this have becomes more tolerant for the boys.

Sexuality of young men seems normal but sexuality of young women seems as a very big and shameful sin that family need to “clean”. In east parts and rural areas, families personally gives punishments to their girls which goes even death despite laws. In west parts and big cities dosage of violenceless gets less but is far away from normal.

Unfortunately we don't have sexual education at schools, therefore friends and media are the most referenced information sources. This has own problems like lack of information about protection (from pregnancy and disease) and conscience.

The information which provided from media (internet or soft porn magazines) is not healthy because these sources care money more than conscience.

Protective instruments can be reached from markets (like condoms) and from pharmacies (like pills) freely but usually families do not know this situation. Because parents commands their children that sex is only available with marriage. (of course especially for girls)

The Turkish parents have more authoritarian and protective structure. Every culture has a different parenting style. In general, we can examine two different cultures: oriental and occidental. Within the oriental cultures there is a close bond between parents and the child. Normally, we see that in the family the father is a symbol of the authority, that's the reason children are more connected to their mother. Turkey is a country which is shaped by two different cultures, but family relations are mostly oriental. There is an inseparable relation between the child and the parent. The child can be at 18, but generally until he gets married he will live his parents, especially if it is a girl. That's way the children become more or less dependent on their family and when they stay alone they will have trouble with their life. In general Turkish families are conservative , especially for their girls. Turkish families are more relax for their boys than their girls.

4.Teens Opinion

Youth in Turkey are losing the perspective of tradition but they can not put a healthy point of view instead. Because in tradition, marriage age is very early. Nevertheless today it is forbidden to be married under 18 with laws and also this age of marriage postpones for education, better circumstances, more wealth etc. But society reacts sexuality is not needed before marriage. This kind of behavior (act like there is no problem) makes teenagers felt desperate.



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Adolescents struggle with their family pressure, social norms, religious beliefs, physical needs and impulse of accepting by their peers . Furthermore teens have very limited information about sexuality. (for example even in universities nearly half of the students don't know that they can be pregnant if they do once a sexual relationship) this makes problem very complex.

The double standart for girls and boys makes teenagers unfaithful to ethic totally. So the adolescents trend rejecting social values as they think that this situation is hypocrisy.

5. Beneficiaries Needs

The concept of underage motherhood is not only a medical issue – it is a multi-dimensional problem with social, economic, cultural, religious, and legal aspects. Therefore, there must be collaboration with civil organizations, as well as other clinical and social services to consider the best interests of the child in the creation of social protection programs.

As the sexuality is also a tabu for our specialists, most of them don't have a professional point of view(because they grew up in an environment that sexuality is a tabu for underage).Talking about sexuality is difficult because of the social norms ,moreover it is harder to talk to teenagers.

Also there is lack of document and knowledge .For example there is nothing about the sexuality in the curriculums of the schools. Neither specialists of the schools have taken any courses about sexuality during their university degree,nor the students have taken any courses about sexuality in the VET schools. Even if the specialists would like to help individually,they have insufficient knowledge and methods.

In order to find the teenagers who need help and support,the specialists must know some indirect ways, methods.

Although the specialists are responsible for all the problems of the teenagers at schools(aproximately one specialist for 400 students), these specialists dont know what they will do when they face to teenage pregnancy and underage parenthood.There is no direct connection with the doctors,psychologists,legal experts,...

Conclusions

Diverse strategies are required for ensuring that the youth, especially the rural youth and females, can have access to educational institutions.

Youth need to have access to the required knowledge and training programs in order to lead their reproductive and sexual life in a healthy manner. This need would be met by the provision of reproductive and sexual health information beginning in the early childhood; and by covering this



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information especially in the formal education curriculum. Immediate measures should be taken in order to meet this need, and to minimize the inequalities in this field (gender, level of household welfare, urban-rural).

Powerful strategies are required related to the provision of correct information especially in the school programs and in the media for the youth to learn and adopt their reproductive and sexual rights. Reproductive and sexual health information should be systematically covered in the formal education curriculum.

Information and counselling services directed to the youth's needs should be provided through a coalition between educational institutions and health institutions.

Reproductive and sexual health information, counselling and services directed to the youth should be provided youth friendly by the health institutions.

The services aiming to follow the growth and development in the adolescence should be broadened. During this follow up, the worries of adolescents caused by the growth and development should be resolved by providing professional information and counselling services. This kind of service should be developed especially as part of primary health care.

It is required that the number and allocation of health institutions, which offer easily accessible information, counselling, and health services directed to the youth, should be increased. Reproductive and sexual health services should be offered to everybody, regardless of the marital status.

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