

## **The value of health education in adolescents and adults: an educational approach**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Health Education is the interdisciplinary branch of pedagogy, medicobiological sciences and health sciences, which addresses issues of prevention and the adoption of practices and strategies to reduce morbidity and mortality of the general population. This brief review aims to emphasize the value of health education in adolescents and adults through an educational approach. Health education should definitely include components such as the concept of participation, volunteering, oral health education programs, prevention of cyberbullying, prevention of accidents in children and it has to be focused on children's rights. It is important to highlight the manners and methods by which a Health Education program can be implemented in schools. Key points include identifying of program needs, student activities, evaluation and sustainability of the program after its completion.

**Keywords:** pedagogy, health sciences, school, education

### **INTRODUCTION**

Health Education is the interdisciplinary branch of pedagogy, medicobiological sciences and health sciences, which addresses issues of prevention and the adoption of practices and strategies to reduce morbidity and mortality of the general population. It is a science with a strong biological background, which manages to interconnect elements from other similar sciences such as pedagogical psychology and medical sociology. The problem is that in contrast to other human sciences this discipline is underestimated (Delimaris, 2021; Delimaris & Piperakis,2014; Delimaris, 2011; Delimaris, 2012; Delimaris, 2012; Delimaris, 2019). Both parents and teachers are influenced by the media and adopt views of life that have zero medical basis. Children and parents' misunderstandings about public health issues often lead to destructive behaviors that harm society as a whole and burden the national health system. The aim of the present brief review is to highlight the value of Health Education in adolescents and adults via an educational approach. The material of the study included literature available in the online databases Medline and Google Scholar. The research methodology referred to the review of the available published scientific studies. The literature search was conducted using the following terms/keywords: "health education", "adolescents" and "adults".

## **THE VALUE OF HEALTH EDUCATION IN ADOLESCENTS AND ADULTS**

The concept of participation is the central idea of any modern health policy and/or Health Education program. Its content is not clearly defined and various terms are used interchangeably; two definitions widely accepted in the international literature refer to the approach at the level of individual (individual participation) and that to groups of individuals (community participation). The process of participation consists in the transfer of experiences, attitudes, values and expectations of consumers in decision-making centers and their integration into the processes for the provision of services that meet their needs and expectations. Therefore, participation must be a continuous and systematic process in the operation of the health sector while the members of the primary care team must be "burdened" by systematically promoting participatory processes, as an integral part of their job duties (Howard-Grabman et al, 2017; Bath & Wakerman, 2015; Synnot et al, 2018; Murray, 2015).

The global economic crisis has multiple implications, both socially and individually. Phenomena such as business instability and unemployment lead to uncertainty that sometimes has serious effects on one's biological and mental health. It is generally accepted that work provides multiple biopsychological benefits, such as a sense of competence, self-esteem, a sense of belonging and more. The unemployed, regardless of gender and age, presents high levels of anxiety and apathy, and feelings of helplessness and disability. From the other side volunteering reduces isolation and excessive self-preoccupation, while it can create a sense of mission in life. In many cases, volunteering activities allow the use of personal skills, facilitating their further development. Volunteering reduces isolation, improves self-esteem, fights pessimism and gives the opportunity to achieve goals, data which can be associated even with preventive action against depression. Based on its multifaceted benefits, the promotion of volunteering should be one of the priorities of Health Education programs (Herbig et al, 2013; Houssemand et al, 2020; Maguire et al, 2014; Wade-Bohleber et al, 2020; Yeung et al, 2018).

The socio-economic determinants that affect oral health are extremely important in Health Education (oral health education programs). The most important socio-economic factors that determine the level of oral health of a person include: level of education, vocational rehabilitation, type of occupation, income, the area of residence, the region of birth, race, nationality, marital status, the insurance coverage of dental work, the access to dental services, stress, eating habits, addiction to chemicals (alcohol, drugs). The formulation and implementation of health education programs by each country will help promoting oral health throughout the population (Cai et al, 2017; Vettore & Aqeeli, 2016; Wide & Hakeberg, 2018).

A crucial issue regarding adolescent Health Education is high school students' perceptions of the concept of health, as well as their main sources of information on health and prevention issues. The main sources of information for students on health issues are television, doctors, magazines and newspapers, and the internet. Adolescents give a lot of importance to the media news concerning medicine or health (a fact which is not always safe). Most of adolescents visit the doctor for diagnostic or therapeutic reasons and not preventive. The majority of students do not have a complete

understanding of the concept and dimensions of health. Therefore, Health Education programs need to change the wrong patterns projected by the media in order to improve the health of adolescents biologically, psychologically and socially (Zhang et al, 2013; Müssener et al, 2020; Torrens Armstrong et al, 2011).

It is important to emphasize in the manner and methods by which a Health Education program can be implemented in schools. Key points include: a) identifying program needs: finding and contacting stakeholders, brainstorming, creating working groups, searching and processing information, utilization of educational technology b) student activities: grouping, searching and processing of information, making brochures c) evaluation of the program: it can be done with questionnaires and through free expression about the experiences and knowledge gained from the program, e.g. drawings, texts, d) sustainability of the program after its completion: creating a DVD with the activities of the students, so that their work becomes known. The results of the program can be given to some educational web portals (Atkey et al, 2016; Rowthorn & Olsen, 2015; Noormal et al, 2010).

Another important parameter that needs to be highlighted is the utilization of Health Education programs to prevent cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is a form of verbal aggression of various types (direct, indirect, relational, social) through modern technological devices (especially mobile phones and the internet). The main subcategories include text messages, photos and videos via mobile phones, phone calls, emails, chat-room bullying, instant messaging and website bullying. The phenomenon is an international public health problem affecting millions of children and adolescents. The etiology of cyberbullying is common with traditional forms, but there are special predisposing factors, such as the characteristics of the use of technological devices. The psychological consequences for victims of cyberbullying can be serious, including anxiety, school phobia, depressive symptoms, low self-esteem, and suicide attempts. Health Education programs for children and their families related to the safe use of new technologies and up-to-date models of good practice related to school bullying can help in extent (Ortega et al, 2012; Wright & Wachs, 2020; Wright, 2020; Krešić Ćorić & Kaštelan, 2020; Ramos Salazar, 2021).

Health Education is very important for the prevention of accidents in children. The majority of school accidents occur in boys (usually occur during the gym class and during breaks). The main points of injury are the upper and lower limbs and the head, while the main causes of injury are mainly attributed to the carelessness of children, especially during play. In addition, there is an increased vigilance for the immediate restoration of the cause of the accident (an insecure situation remained for a long time). Finally, there is an increased sensitivity on the part of teachers to constantly intervene with pleas to their students for the safe way of moving within the school space (Gabari Gambarte & Sáenz Mendía 2016; Gomes et al, 2016; Miccoli et al, 2012).

Health Education is meaningful concerning the rights of the child / adolescent. Such a Health Education program should include: a) information on rights : through the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, b) skillful thinking: development of creativity, communication, interpersonal relationships, collaboration, dialogue, critical thinking, personal responsibility, c) attitudes: development of empathy, tolerance for the different, self-respect, respect for the other, development of sensitivity

to poverty, and cooperation. In conclusion, there is a need for Health Education focused on children's rights so that young people are able to know their rights and learn to fight for their rights (Lansdown et al, 2014; Amon et al, 2012; Lansdown et al, 2015).

## CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the science of Health Education has a lot to contribute to the wider society. It is a subject based on the sciences of Pedagogy, Biology, Medicine and Psychology. Its value must be documented in practice. It is necessary to carry out Health Education programs inside and outside schools aiming to raise the awareness of society as a whole about Public Health issues. In any case, new studies are needed which will utilize the latest bibliographic data and will give the impetus for the development of strategies that will promote the biological, psychological and social health of the population based on the oath of Hippocrates "to benefit and not to harm".

## Conflict of Interests

The author declares that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of this paper.

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