

Adolescence Communication: an experiences from Nepal

Adhikari SR¹, Bhattarai S²

^{1,2}Department of Psychiatry, Kathmandu Medical College

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Communication is a vehicle of family and social interaction and it is also a process of transmitting feelings, ideas, facts, beliefs and attitudes. This study was done to find out the level of communication and its significance as perceived by adolescence and mother's towards each other.

Methods: This is a descriptive study done in a school situated in Kathmandu metropolitan city. Total of 150 students from class 7 to class 10 ages of participated in the study. Parent-adolescence Communication Scale (PACS) developed by Barnes and Olson was used. The responders of designs questions were School Children and their mothers.

Results: Total response rate was 69%. Girls and Boys ratio was 1.3:1. Significant positive score was observed in Mother Adolescent Communication (MAC) questions number 6, 13, 14,17,18,19 and 20. Likewise Child adolescent communication (CAC) questions number 7, 8 and 9 of open communication sub-scale and 11, 12, 13,14,17,18, 19 and 20 of problem communication sub-scale showed significant score.

Conclusion: Good and strong communication between parents and children is required to prevent from the various psychological disorders in adolescence period. A mother can play a vital role for the emotional and behavioral development of an adolescent who become healthy adults.

Key Words: Adolescent, mother, communication

INTRODUCTION

Communication is a vehicle of social interaction. It is also a process of transmitting feelings, ideas, facts, beliefs and attitudes. Communication is generally accepted as one of the most important aspects of interpersonal and family relationship during development especially in adolescence period.

In the adolescence phase, communication is either verbal (via a language) or non-verbal (listening, facial expression, gestures, touching, hearing, vision etc.).

Communication can be viewed as the index of family operations and the means by which family transacts the business of life¹. It provides blueprints by which child grows from infant to maturity².

With the changing political and socio-cultural context in Nepalese society, communication problems between parents and teenagers have become significant obstructers to smooth family functioning leading to communication gap between them.

Correspondence:
Dr. Shailendra Raj Adhikari

Lack of communication leads to lack of understanding and lack of empathy which leads to significant stress^{3, 4} and mental health problems among teenagers during this stormy period of time^{5, 6}. These adolescent's mental health problems can become a precursor for family breakdown, substance abuse and sexual problems among them.

Parent-child relationship changes during adolescence and demonstrate emotional distancing, characterized by withholding of feelings, diminished closeness and less frequently expressed affection. During this distressed relationship, both parents and adolescence experiences decreased positive affect and increased negative affect⁷. Most of the conflicts occur over the trivial issues of life. Conflicts and communication gaps increase during middle adolescence and decrease after that time⁸. So this study was done to find out the level of communication as perceived by adolescent and mother.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is a descriptive study done at Shiva Puri higher secondary school situated in Kathmandu metropolitan city from January 2008 to June 2008. Meetings were arranged with teachers, students and their parents separately. Orientation was done about semi-structured Proforma and Parent-adolescence Communication Scale. Repeated meetings and home visits was also done to get optimum participation in the process.

It was assumed that children aged 11 years above could have reading skills and could self administer the questionnaire form. Students from grade 7 were selected randomly with the help of school register. Students were stratified into age and sex.

Semi-structured Performa composed of name of students, age, sex, class, permanent address, religion, and caste. It also included type of family and birth order of the students. Regarding the student's family-mother's age, occupation, educational status will be considered. Total of 150 students from class 7 to class 10 participated in the study. Out of 150, 104 were responded to the questionnaire. Student with mental retardation were not enrolled in the study.

Working Guidelines

Parent-adolescence Communication Scale (PACS)

Parent-adolescent communication scale was developed by Barnes and Olson in 1982. The test consists of 20 items and is divided into two sub-scales – openness in communication and problem in communication⁹. Test assesses both positive and negative aspects of the content and process of the parent adolescent interaction. Mother Adolescent communication abbreviated as MAC signify communication scale reported by mother and Child adolescent communication also abbreviated as CAC signify communication scale reported by child. The open communication sub-scale measures the positive aspects of communication between adolescent and parent. It focuses on the free flowing exchange of information and the understanding experienced from communication. The problem sub-scale measures the negative aspects of communication between adolescent and parent. It focuses on caution and selectivity in the exchange of information and styles of interaction. The higher the score is on either sub-scale the stronger is the variable. A high value in the openness sub-scale denotes good amount of openness in communication, which is a positive factor. Similarly, higher value in the problem sub-scale denotes high

level of problem in communication within the family which is a negative factor. Scoring is done for every question in according to the response obtained, such as strongly disagree=1 to strongly agree=5.

All the primary data were analyzed using Statistical Software SPSS (Version 12) package for Windows. Proportion was calculated and p-value <0.05 was considered as significance level.

RESULTS

Out of 150 students, the response was obtained from 104. Male students were 43.26%(45) and female were 56.74% (59). As data were collected from students of class 7 to 10, majority of students were aged 15 years and 16 years respectively (Table 1).

Characteristics of Adolescents' Family			
Types of Family	Boys	Girls	Total
Nuclear	17(37.77%)	19(32.2%)	36
Joint	15(33.33%)	18(30.5%)	33
Broken	10(22.22%)	21(35.5%)	31
Others	3(6.68%)	1(1.7%)	4
TOTAL	45(10%)	59(100%)	104

Socio-demographic Characteristics of Adolescents (Birth Orders)			
Birth Order	Male	Female	TOTAL
First	16(35.5%)	15(25.4%)	31
Second	11(24.4%)	17(28.8%)	28
Third	11(24.4%)	16(27.1%)	27
Fourth	4(8.88%)	6(10.16%)	10
Fifth	1(2.22%)	4(6.77%)	5
Sixth	2(4.44%)	1(1.69%)	3
TOTAL	45(100%)	59(100%)	104(100%)

There were one male student and 4 female students even of 18 years of age. Highest number of female students came from broken family, 35.59% (21) followed by nuclear family 19 (32.2%) and joint family 30.50% (18) (Table 2). One of the male and 4 of the female students were 18 years of age. Majority of male students belonged to nuclear and joint family

Some students came from remote parts of Nepal and were working as a housemaid around the school area. Especially female students must have reported as having broken family in their family of origin. Table 3 depicts the majority of the students belonged to birth orders of first, second and third. Some students were female even of sixth birth or child.

Some questions showed high response rate which was statistical significant (Table 4). Mother adolescent communications question no 6 which is open communication sub-scale showed significance level higher than questions of problem communication sub-scale as MAC-13, MAC-14, MAC-17, MAC-18, MAC-19 and MAC-20.

Statistically significant was found in questions CAC-7, CAC-8 and CAC-9 of open communication sub- and CAC-11, CAC-12, CAC-13, CAC-14, CAC-17, CAC-18, CAC-19 and CAC-20 of problem communication sub-scale (Table 5)

Socio-demographic characteristics of Adolescents (Age and gender)			
Age	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
13	1(2.23%)	2(3.38%)	3(2.9%)
14	6(35.2%)	10(16.94%)	16(56.8%)
15	14(31.11%)	19(32.20%)	33(26.4%)
16	17(37.77%)	17(28.85%)	34(4.8%)
17	6(13.33%)	7(11.86%)	13(4.8%)
18	1(2.23%)	4(6.77%)	5(0%)
Total	45(100%)	59(100%)	104(100%)

Table-5: Questionnaire on “Child Adolescence Communication (CAC)” and distribution of response

Items	A ^a	B ^b	C ^c	D ^d	E ^e	“p” value
CAC1	8	11	7	43	39	0.108
CAC 2	22	15	6	43	18	0.084
CAC3	5	4	6	22	67	0.695
CAC 4	29	15	7	32	25	0.619
CAC 5	22	15	8	27	32	0.087
CAC 6	14	5	8	39	38	0.446
CAC 7	6	1	9	39	49	0.001
CAC 8	4	4	6	29	61	0.001
CAC 9	8	10	14	28	44	0.001
CAC 10	50	14	13	20	7	0.105
CAC 11	4	8	8	31	53	0.001
CAC 12	17	19	10	31	27	0.001
CAC 13	3	4	9	36	52	0.001
CAC 14	4	3	8	28	61	0.001
CAC 15	11	8	8	25	52	0.300
CAC 16	12	6	4	32	50	0.171
CAC 17	12	5	9	30	48	0.001
CAC 18	52	22	11	13	6	0.001
CAC 19	69	12	6	13	4	0.001
CAC 20	21	24	12	29	18	0.001

a - Strongly Disagree; b- Slightly Disagree; c - Can't Say/Don't Know; d - Slightly Agree; e- Strongly Agree

DISCUSSION

Some studies have found mothers reporting more openness and fewer problems in their communication with adolescents¹⁰. However in this study majority of problem in communication showed high scores in both mother and child.

Many adolescence issues such as academic, biological changes and sexuality are not discussed if communication is not open or if there are problems in communication. Study done in Mexico has showed that communication before onset of sexual activity about risk and prevention in teenagers has been associated with safe sex

**Table -4
Mother adolescence communication (MAC)” Questionnaire and distribution of response**

Items	A ^a	B ^b	C ^c	D ^d	E ^e	“p” value
MAC1	6	10	8	37	43	0.034
MAC 2	3	10	8	38	45	0.795
MAC3	4	13	12	51	24	0.220
MAC 4	60	21	5	11	7	0.038
MAC5	5	9	9	43	38	0.091
MAC 6	9	11	14	38	32	0.001
MAC 7	4	4	11	42	43	0.038
MAC 8	6	7	11	31	49	0.708
MAC 9	6	11	13	33	41	0.294
MAC10	52	21	7	16	8	0.294
MAC11	6	8	10	27	53	0.032
MAC12	24	14	7	24	25	0.105
MAC13	4	12	16	41	41	0.001
MAC14	2	9	14	43	36	0.001
MAC15	11	6	6	24	57	0.396
MAC16	6	9	7	39	43	0.107
MAC17	8	8	9	41	38	0.001
MAC18	33	30	11	21	9	0.001
MAC19	72	21	2	6	3	0.001
MAC20	23	20	17	27	17	0.001

a - Strongly Disagree; b- Slightly Disagree; c - Can't Say/Don't Know; d - Slightly Agree; e- Strongly Agree

practices in them¹¹. Whenever sexual topics arose, development and societal concerns, sexual safety is more discussed

rather than experiencing sex, and solitary sexual activity. Later are critical so that early detection will prevent sexual abuses, sexual promiscuities’ and sexually transmitted diseases. Mothers were reported as more frequent communicators about sexuality than fathers and girls received more communication than boys¹². Parents should frequently communicate to cover all four sexual dimension mentioned above.

Similarly, other studies also correlate more openness in parental communication leading to less likelihood of teenagers engaging in sexual activities and more knowledge regarding sexuality^{13, 14}.

CONCLUSION

Most of the parents were working class people and many children were domiciliary workers to give some kinds of support to their families living in remote village. Their problems in communication plays very critical role because many adolescence issues such as academic, biological changes and sexuality are left. If these subjects are left untouched and undisguised, it will lead

to various confusions in teenagers which lead to various problems such as substance abuse, sexual activities and various psychological problems. Poor quality of communication leads to various psychological disorders in adolescence. They are critical for the various emotional and behavioral developments of teenagers so that they become mentally healthy adults. Not only openness in communication but also solving problems during communication is important so that adolescence can pass through this turbulent transition.

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