

# HEALTH CONCERN AND CHALLENGES OF ADOLESCENTS

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**Background and Aims:** Adolescence is a time where they tend to become involved in high-risk, health compromising behaviors and yet feel invincible to the negative consequences of their actions. The aim of this study is to assess the health concerns and challenges and factors influencing their health care utilization to fill gaps of scarcity of literature in Jimma zone Southwest Ethiopia.

**Methods:** this is a cross-sectional study conducted among adolescents 10-19 years. The source population for the study were all (N= 11, 048) adolescents aged 10-19 years enrolled in 8 Junior and senior high schools in seven Districts. 1768 adolescents were proportional to class size were randomly selected from the school rosters stratified (grades 7&8; 9&10, & 11&12th) according to operational definition of age of the adolescents. Pre-tested, self-administered questionnaires were used to collect the required information. Data was analyzed using SPSS/PC + computer statistical package version 12.0.

**Results:** 1768 adolescents responded to the questionnaire making a response rate of 100%. Male respondents (53.6%) and female (55.1%) age lies in the age group of 17-19 and 14-16 years respectively. 75.1% reported ill-health conditions that include headache (29.9%), dental problems (20.6%), Sexually Transmitted Infections (20.4%) and abdominal problems (8.7%). 56.8% sought help for their health problem. Gender, grade, occupation of parents and living with both biological parents showed statistically significant association with encountered health problems reported and seeking health care ( $p < 0.001$ ).

**Conclusions:** this study showed important health problems of adolescents, with their influencing factors. The proportion of treatment seeking behaviors is discouraging. Factors contributing to health seeking behavior should be strengthened and sustained to the current trend. Identification and early prevention of adolescents behavioral, social and physical health problems, establishment of special adolescent health service in schools and at the community setting at large is recommended.

**References:**

World Health Organization (WHO) (2003). Adolescent Friendly Services, An agenda for change: WHO

Ministry of Health (MOH) (2008). National Strategic Plan for Prevention and Control of STIs and HIV/AIDS