



Risky Behaviour Among Adolescents

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Abstract

Background/Aim: Nowadays, adolescents are exposed to some negative challenges. Bullying is one of the horrible phenomena that can be seen in the physical and mental harassment of children and teenagers. Another challenge is addiction to computer games as well as writing on social networks. Gambling addiction, habituation and exposure to psychostimulants are also a trap for causing severe pathology. The aim of this study was to present an insight into the possible challenges of today to which adolescents are exposed and how they affect their personality and maturation.

Methods: The authors collected data and materials on the mentioned topics from their daily medical work. They also used articles in professional magazines and newspapers and television shows.

Results: Society must make efforts to eradicate such events in schools. We are witnessing various challenges and pitfalls that affect youth, society, culture and civilisation. Among the bad things, drug addiction, alcoholism, smoking, addiction to the Internet and computer games are in the first place.

Conclusion: Due to negative challenges, the youth neglect their schoolwork and duties. The school environment can be a place for violent behaviour, brachial attacks (bullying and harassment). Recognising social interactions, family relationships and understanding the underlying psychiatric conditions which may be associated with risky behaviour in adolescents could be essential for treatment planning.

Key words: Adolescent; Risky behaviour; Social networks; Today's society.

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Introduction

Adolescence is the transitional period from childhood to adulthood, in which the physical, intellectual and social maturation of the personality occurs. Since the growth, development and maturation of various functions occur at different levels, maturity and assuming the role of adults depend on many social factors. The basic problem in that period is the search for one's own identity, which is accompanied by a pronounced desire for independence from adults and confrontation with peers.¹ Prolonged schooling, economic and social dependence of youth in our society, makes the period of adolescence long and

often dramatic and young people are faced with many challenges that are dangerous for young people.² Considering that, society should pay more attention to youth than it does. Society consists of every group of people connected with their specific human action. One of the challenges for the youth is how to gain social respectability. It is an assessment of the value of a young person's social role and it is based, first of all, on the profession that the individual performs, but also on his other social and personal characteristics. An individual's reputation also depends on how he performs certain activities, not only which

activities he performs, how he relates to the prevailing social values, whether he is traditionally or innovatively oriented. When determining the reputation of a young man, the reputation enjoyed by his family as a whole is also taken into account. Incomplete families, those from the margins of society, will mostly become problematic individuals.³ They opt for local groups that indulge in crime in their neighbourhood, city or street. These are criminals, bullies and violators of the rules of conduct. Belonging to such anti-social groups is also one of the challenges for certain young people. By doing so, they gain a negative reputation, ie "reputation", which is valued by the group of perpetrators of criminal acts.⁴

Since the beginning of time, people have placed bets on the unpredictable outcomes of events. Gambling was well known to the Babylonians, Etruscans, Romans, Greeks and Chinese. Examples of early gambling appear in ancient art and literature. Gambling becomes visible in the works of Homer, Chaucer and Shakespeare.⁵ Among the challenges faced by the youth in our country is betting, ie pathological gambling. Always eager for material means - money and at the same time naive and inexperienced, they are easily persuaded to try their luck by drawing lots. Modern society, unlike the socialist one, offers many offers in this sense.⁶ There have long been bars with machines for gambling games, lotteries, bingos, which are all very attractive for young people. Since they do not yet have a built-in instance of personality (superego), they easily lose control and indulge in excessive spending of money.⁷ They often come to them through violent appropriation, robbery, kidnapping and blackmail from peers or theft from parents (money, jewellery, gold or expensive items) which they then resell to get cash.⁸

There are several different types of Internet addiction and they can be distinguished based on the activity that the user is most engaged in while using the Internet. There can be distinguished addiction to different social networks, addiction to information, addiction to playing video games, addiction to online betting.⁹ When they are seized by the gambling passion for never before experienced winnings, they do not choose the means. Authors have had cases of parents who suspected their son, so they secretly searched his computer, smartphone and even followed him to casinos to see what he was spending so much money on. The same was the case with young

patients addicted to computer games, chatting on the Internet, who could not tear themselves away from it, but spent their nights in front of the screen. The next day, they were so sleepy and tired that they were unable to follow the lessons, deconcentrated for any kind of learning and participation in the educational process in general. Those with a weaker mental constitution have succumbed to the challenges that modern society generously offers.¹⁰

Pathological gambling and betting is based on "feeling" and the hope that Fortune and Kairos will strike them and generously provide them with material gratification and satisfaction. According to one theory, gamblers actually like to lose, because if they happen to win something, they immediately invest it in the next attempt to challenge the gods of luck.¹¹ If the aetiology is searched, exploring the early phase of growing up of these patients, one often encounters a lack of love at the earliest age.¹² From the experience of not being loved, they fantasise that they are essentially bad and then, frustrated, they charge with an imagined possibility of winning. And so indefinitely, they prove to themselves unconsciously that they are still good, if luck ever rewards them. Or they come to terms with the fact that they are bad and build their psychopathic personality, later indulging more and more in criminal activities. They defensively project their bad sides onto their parents and/or society. They take revenge on them for not being loved, they pay for the necessary love denied to them in early childhood.¹³

Bullying is a phenomenon of physical confrontation between peers or young people who are weaker than themselves. Harassment usually precedes brachial triggering of aggression in the form of teasing, verbal abuse, insults or humiliation. By doing so, they strengthen their conceit about their own power. In the absence of identity, they stick to the group and together they bully the weaker ones. This is Fromm's well known escape from freedom, where they identify with the group and feel stronger.¹⁴ Bullying myths are common disputes and fights between schoolmates. It happens that two girls fight for the love and attention of the same guy in front of a group that knows what it's about and enjoys fighting and rooting for one side. There are many cases of severe physical injuries, manifestation of sadistic perverse intentions, beatings, rape or murder.¹⁵

Alcoholism, drugs, tobacco smoking are also challenges that young generations face today.¹⁶ Surveys and research show that a large percentage of young people consume these unhealthy and addictive substances. Drinking beer and smoking is almost a common habit in school age. Deadly alcohol intoxications at parties as well as murders and perversions under its influence are not rare, as reported by black chronicles. Death from overdose occurs not only in drug addicts, but also in exceptional unaccustomed users of drugs, which are available everywhere.¹⁷

The aim of the research was to gain an insight into the possible challenges of today, to which children and adolescents are exposed. Another goal was to determine the connections with other habits and disorders in the juvenile population and how they affect their personality and maturation.

Methods

The authors collected information and material on the described topics through their daily medical practice, articles in magazines, texts in newspapers, TV and other electronic forms of information.

Discussion

Pressured by exogenous and endogenous problems of depression or some other illness, some adolescents may resort to self-destructive behaviour. From injury by "carving" the skin, the greater part of the left forearm to attempted or committed suicide.¹⁸ It would also be some psychopathological internal challenge stimulated by numerous possible external stimuli.¹⁹ For example, unemployment after graduating from high school or college fills young people with pessimism, resignation to the life ahead, melancholy, depression and even depression. The maladapted, eager for life, but burdened by the impossibility of fulfilment, reach for the rather Thanatos opposite "exits" of their own hand. Incidental deaths in traffic accidents or due to drug or alcohol overdose and intoxication are also challenges faced by psychopathologically predisposed young people.²⁰ Newspaper reports

are full of information about accidents with serious injuries and even deaths of young people. Returning from rural and urban parties, they lost control of the steering wheel and in uncontrolled conditions killing not only themselves, the passenger(s), but also innocent bystanders.^{21, 22} One of the challenges for young people is the so-called going abroad. "Brain drain" is a social and state problem, because the funds invested in the long-term education of young people will never be returned by work.²³ The pauperisation of the middle and lower classes took off. The middle class has effectively disappeared. All this affects young people as one of the external causes of depression and consecutive suicidal behaviour.²⁴ Disappointment in the life that they are just on the threshold of, de-idealisation and disillusionment push young people to take unwanted steps.²⁵ Disappointed in the social system, they become apolitical.²⁶ In a state of plutocracy, an oligarchy of the incompetent, which decapitates young people in an attempt to survive from today to tomorrow, they often indulge in juvenile crime and delinquency.²⁷ Juvenile crime is on the rise, participation in peer violence as abusers, young people expose themselves to victimisation. Peer violence and physical confrontations in early and late adolescence are often associated with psychopathological behaviours.²⁸ The connection of these behaviours as correlates with the intolerance of frustrating situations, irritability and internalising disorders such as depression is completely clear. (Un)intentional injury sometimes requires medical attention. Peer abuse of the victim along with alcohol and drug abuse was assessed through three questions: "I often drink alcohol, what do I drink?" "I drink excessively, why do I drink?" "I used drugs, why do I take drugs" - family attitudes, experience of family relations, cohesion and control in the family.²⁹

One of the few challenges of unstable personalities of young people is joining various occult sects. Dumbed down by prejudices, mentally unbalanced, they fall under the influence of a group of like-minded people. The hierarchy of the sect refers to a wise leader and blind subjects.³⁰ They are manipulatively managed to get all their earnings, property they have, legally transferred to the sect. Sects seek to declare themselves religions and be registered as civil associations. Indoctrination in the sect goes so far that the followers agree to sacrifices, injuries to the skin, giving blood in ritual rites and even

persuasion to commit suicide.³¹ Followers of sects participate in obscure esoteric cults and rites, isolate themselves from normal society and life, simply disappear from the family, without a trace. There are statistically verified data about this phenomenon. Since these are secret societies, investigations are difficult to access and appropriate measures to protect misguided youth are difficult to take. Only the church is bothered the most by sects because they steal their believers.³² Depending on their upbringing, from earlier experiences of abuse they experienced in childhood, some children are very aggressive, easily lose control and take advantage of weaker classmates. What others have done to them before, they are now doing to their younger selves.³³ Learned behaviour, victimisations, are passed down from generation to generation. Of course, there is no justification for this and such phenomena should be comprehensively investigated and appropriate punitive measures should be taken.³⁴ The phenomenon of bullying has taken on large proportions. It must not become a common occurrence. Violence is taught from an early age. Hatred for everyone who is different, as well as one's own frustrations and stresses, are projected through violence and transferred to school premises and in front of the school, to playgrounds and other meeting places for young people.³⁵ Corridors, alleys and hidden corners of yards, where there is no supervision of the elderly, are especially dangerous. It is dangerous to be alone in a tram at night, because criminals are returning from bars and parties and are especially aggressive and willing to deal with unprotected young people. Beatings also occur with a fatal outcome.³⁶ Recidivism is common in such cases, because the abusers even receive a gratuity if they remain undetected and unpunished. Then they don't learn from the experience of the punishment served, but from the abuse on their own skin.³⁷ Bullying also uses surrounding objects - chairs, levers, pipes, knives, baseball bats, bricks. Shoe-shoeing is common when the victim falls to the floor, so bloody traces remain. The police sometimes do not act promptly and appropriately towards violent people, as many experiences show. It happened that criminals used sadistic torture on their victims.³⁸ Terrible events also happened at student parties and drunken parties. Aggression as a drive component, from the id, is abused in bullying. Aggressiveness itself is necessary for survival in a cruel world. However, aggressiveness in bullying serves to release the accumulated

dissatisfaction and unconscious revenge of those who mistreated the bully in childhood.¹⁸

Adolescents also do not consciously control hidden and unconcealed aggressive outbursts on the streets, sports fields and in their own families, counting on avoiding punishment. They are aware of the analyses of psychologists and sociologists and use the "rights of their age" to reward their aggressive impulses.³³ Adolescence also carries impulses to acquire the ability to use a form of progressive gratification. They belong to maturity, accepting obligations and the joy of overcoming life's difficulties. Understanding the period of adolescence as a boundary between the tendencies of regressive and progressive gratification, the therapist supports progressive elements and enables the future mature person to easily reject the tendency of regressive gratification.³⁹

Conclusion

Adolescence is a time of transition from a child to an adult, a time of great parting. Separation from previous authorities, emotional security of childhood and economic dependence on parents is a painful and frustrating experience. Anxiety, which accompanies this frustration, leads, along with the biological and sociological impulse towards separation, to defences against that separation. The most common defence in that period of life is regression. The adolescent becomes ambivalent. Both tendencies: both separation and regression frustrate, but also gratify. The adolescents are aware of their position in the family and in society. They know that a lot of things have been forgiven them in advance because of the "crazy years". That is why they allow themselves such forms of behaviour, which they are aware are inappropriate for their age. They could easily control them, but the adolescents manage, due to their specific position, to mostly avoid the unpleasant consequences of such behaviour that gives them gratification. They are not motivated to look for other more constructive and progressive forms of behaviour.³⁷ Aggression in youth can be expressed in visible and invisible ways: through feelings, phantasms, desires, thoughts and movements. Pathological aggression exhausts the psychic apparatus that defends it-

self and exhausts it with increased discharge through the body and repeated defences such as repression, projection, projective identification, splitting, denial, rationalisation, reactive formation and conversion and compulsive symptoms.

Recognising social context, family relationships and understanding the underlying psychiatric conditions which may be associated with risky behaviour in adolescents are essential for treatment planning.

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Conflict of interest

None.

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