Mental Health Issues Among Adolescent Girls Related to Sexual Health: Interpretive Descriptive Design

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Background

• Sexual health incorporates a wide range of interlinked mental, physical, and emotional factors.
• The bi-directional links between sexuality and mental health have only been recently recognized, as such research in this important aspect of adolescent girls’ and their families’ well-being is almost non-existent.

Research Purpose

• To explore the experience of potential sexual health-related stressors in Pakistani adolescent girls in order to gain a better understanding of the possible interplay between sexual and mental health.
• Specific aims include to:
  a) investigate issues related to sexual health that may be perceived as stressors.
  b) increase understanding of the lived experience of adolescent girls in developing sexuality and the consequences of sexuality-related stressors and responses.
  c) explore participants’ perceptions as to what approaches would help them successfully adjust and cope.

Method/Design

Design

• The Interpretive Description (ID) approach will be used to study the complex phenomena of mental health and sexual health in depth.

Data Collection

• A purposive sampling strategy will be used to enroll adolescent girls (ages 15-19 years) from high school.
• Adolescent girls will be interviewed using a semi-structured interview guide to collect data regarding their perceptions of mental health issues as related to adolescent sexuality.

Sampling

• Sample size will depend on data saturation.
• In parallel, the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) data will be collected from the same participants to score the intensity of sexuality-related mental health stress among adolescent girls.

Analysis

• Iterative and inductive analysis approach will be used.
• NVIVO 11.0 will be used to organize and manage the datasets generated in the study.

Expected Outcomes

• The results of this research hold the potential to contribute to an integrated approach to adolescents’ mental and sexual health and the development of future policies, strategies, services and training.
• It will provide valuable preliminary evidence on the perceptions of sexuality-related stress and the consequences of the stressors among adolescent girls.