

S39-03 - RISK BEHAVIOR IN ADOLESCENTS: WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW

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Objectives: Knowledge of the prevalence and the different types of risk behavior in adolescence is needed to prevent unwanted health consequences.

Methods: In general, risk behavior in adolescence is quite common. It comprises patterns such as smoking, alcohol consumption, hazardous driving, drug use, delinquency, dares, sporting risks, rebellious behavior, school-related risks, sexual intercourse as well as other socially inconspicuous behavior that nonetheless poses a risk to health (e.g. bad nutrition, lack of physical activity, or excessive sunbathing).

Results: The different types of risk behavior are described also addressing the issues of gender differences and individual risk factors as well as protective factors. Temperament factors (novelty seeking) and peer group influences are discussed as well as genetic factors and brain maturation in adolescence.

Conclusions: The knowledge of adolescent risk behavior and the possible causes as well as prevention strategies is important for all professionals dealing with adolescents and young adults.