CHAPTER 4

Adolescence

Terminology
adolescence
puberty
menarche

Puberty and Menstruation

Puberty
Age of Onset
Emotional reactions
Physical changes
  secondary sex characteristics
  body fat

Biological Aspects of the Menstrual Cycle
Structures and Hormones Responsible for Menstruation.
  Hypothalamus
  Pituitary gland
  • Follicle-stimulating hormone
  • Luteinizing hormone
  • Estrogen
  • Progesterone
  Ovaries & ova
  Follicles
  Uterus
  Endometrium
The Events in the Menstrual Cycle.

Brain structures, hormones, and internal reproductive organs are carefully coordinated to regulate the menstrual cycle according to a feedback loop.

1. In response to a low estrogen level, the hypothalamus signals the pituitary gland.
2. The pituitary gland responds by releasing follicle-stimulating hormone, which stimulates the follicles to become more mature; this hormone also signals the ovaries to increase their production of estrogen.
3. The increased level of estrogen stimulates the development of the endometrium (essentially preparing for possible pregnancy every month). It also signals the pituitary gland to stop producing follicle-stimulating hormone.
4. The pituitary gland stops producing follicle-stimulating hormone and starts producing luteinizing hormone.
5. Luteinizing hormone usually suppresses growth in all follicles except one; therefore, only one egg typically reaches maturity.
6. The follicle then releases the ovum, or egg, on approximately the 14th day of the menstrual cycle, a process called ovulation.
7. The empty follicle matures into a round structure called the corpus luteum, which secretes progesterone and estrogen. The levels of both these hormones rise after ovulation.
8. The high level of progesterone inhibits the production of additional luteinizing hormone. As a result, the corpus luteum decomposes.
9. When the corpus luteum decomposes, the production of both progesterone and estrogen falls rapidly. With such low levels of hormones, the endometrium can no longer be maintained in the style to which it has grown accustomed. The endometrium is sloughed off, and it passes out of the vagina as menstrual flow.
10. The low level of estrogen signals the hypothalamus, causing a new cycle to begin.

Menstrual Pain

- Dysmenorrhea
- Prostaglandins
- Anxiety
- Treatments
The Controversial Premenstrual Syndrome

Symptoms
Psychological reactions
Controversy

Mood Swings

Research biases
Current research
• Expectations
• Hardie (1997)

Hormonal factors
Psychological factors
Cultural factors

Coping With Premenstrual Syndrome

Menstrual Joy

Chrisler and colleagues (1994)
Menstrual Joy Questionnaire (Delaney et al., 1988)

Cultural Attitudes Toward Menstruation

Taboos
Negative attitudes
Advertisements
Magazine articles

Self-Concept and Identity During Adolescence

Identity
Body image
Feminist identity
Ethnic identity
Self-esteem

Body Image and Physical Attractiveness

• Eating disorders
• Media
• Women of color
• Physical appearance vs. Athletic competence

Feminist Identity

• Feminism
• Feminist social identity
• Ego development
Ethnic Identity

- Ethnic identity
- White-as-normative attitudes
- Growth of ethnic identity

Self-Esteem

- Self-esteem
- Gender comparisons
- Meta-analysis
- Gender comparisons across the lifespan
- Ethnicity
- Social class

Education and Career Planning

Young Women’s Experiences in Middle School and High School

Early Experiences in Math and Science

Subtle biases
Male teachers
Male peers
Feelings of incompetence despite high performance
Parents
Extracurricular groups
Innovative programs

Higher Education

Demographics
The Academic Environment
- Chilly classroom climate
Women of Color and Higher Education
- Barriers
- Special programs
Career Aspirations

1. Adolescent males and females have equivalent aspirations with respect to advanced degrees, and they also aspire to similarly prestigious careers.

2. Adolescent females are more likely than adolescent males to choose careers that are nontraditional for their gender.

3. When considering their future careers, adolescent females are more likely than adolescent males to emphasize the importance of marriage and children.

4. Parents are more likely to let daughters make their own decisions about careers.

5. Adolescent females are more likely than adolescent males to report that they have been effective in gathering information about their future careers.

Personal characteristics
Parents' backgrounds

Career Aspirations Versus Reality

Romance
Downscaling Dreams

Interpersonal Relationships During Adolescence

Family Relationships
Adolescents and their parents
Family as basis of identification
Discussing emotions
Gender issues

Friendships
Intimacy
Loyalty & trust
Intimate conversation
Interdependence vs. Independence
Romantic Relationships

Heterosexual Relationships
  Media
  Research
  • Individual differences
  • Duration
  • Characteristics of romantic partners
  • Influence on academic performance and career planning

Lesbian Relationships
  Media
  Research
  Peers
  Coming out
  Self-image