

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS: THE IMPORTANCE OF PROTECTION

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Abstract: Objective: to describe child sexual violence, the harmful effects and the rights of children and adolescents in Brazil. Method: bibliographic review study with searches for online articles available in full. The following descriptors were accessed “child”, “infant”, “adolescent”; “violence” and “sexual violence”. The articles were chosen based on their title, abstract, method and reading in full. With articles in hand, a random selection was applied by reading the chosen studies in full. Results: children and adolescents need greater attention from parents, guardians, schools and the state. The state is responsible for providing security and a dignified life for these people. Final considerations: sexual violence possibly generates trauma, fears and insecurities for the victim for life. It must be discussed with schoolchildren and teachers. The family’s commitment as a protector is fundamental to a healthy society. The provision of resources by the state and access to social determinants by the population are important. For all violence. The treatment and punishment of the aggressor while protecting new victims are necessary and provided for by Brazilian laws. **Keywords:** Children; Sexual Violence; Adolescent.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescents and young adults deserve attention due to their social representation in Brazil, as they are a category aged between 10 and 24 and are representatives of this generation that is changing Brazilian demography, representing 25,914,508 people, around 9.5% of the Brazilian population, with 17,284,281 adolescents between 10 and 19 years old and 8,630,227 young people between 15 and 24 years old, according to data from the 2010 census (IBGE, 2010; Brazil, 1988).

Adolescence, conceptualized from a biological and psychological perspective, has been limited to this period of life’s development

and growth as being problematic, disregarding them, who are transformative agents that act positively in their families, in the schools they attend and, in the groups, they belong to. However, it is up to health professionals and society in general to see the importance of adolescents in changing paradigms. In the field of medicine and psychology, adolescence is characterized as a transitional phase of life with major physical and psychological changes, with puberty being the initial milestone of adolescence. And it is associated with the development of sexual and reproductive functions. And the end of adolescence is associated with the arrival of adulthood. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines adolescents as the period of life between 10 and 19 years old; while young people are represented by individuals aged between 15 and 24 years old. According to the Child and Adolescent Statute (Law 8,068 of 13/07/1990), individuals between 12 and 18 years of age are adolescents (WHO, 1975; Brazil, 1990). Young people constitute a significant population throughout the world, with a representative population, between the ages of 10 and 24, corresponding to 29% of the population, and 80% of them live in developing countries, changing the demography of these countries, characterized as “young waves” (Horta and Sena, 2010). Data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) from 2010 highlights that, in Brazil, the age group from 10 to 19 years old constitutes 17.2% of the total population (IBGE, 2010).

The growing need for a policy of comprehensive care for adolescent health and the search for expanding its approach. It is believed that involving them more in everyday actions will reduce social inequities and health problems, such as morbidity and mortality, attributed to the group of adolescents and young people. In order to meet the needs of adolescents, it is important to understand the

physiological evolution of this population group. Its characteristics are articulated in increasing phases of human development and growth, with specificities of this period. With biological, psychological, physical, cultural, economic and social changes, depending on the reality in which the teenager lives in each country. To this end, physiological science describes the stages of adolescent growth and development, so puberty is one of the stages of adolescence that presents the accelerated development of reproductive structures and secondary sexual characteristics. Girls enter puberty between 10 and 11 years of age and boys between 11 and 12 years of age.

Sexual violence is a crime for all who perpetrate it and when involving children, it becomes even more reprehensible due to the fact that the victim, the child or adolescent, has to endure physical and emotional pain that can last a lifetime. Even though the negative impact of this type of violence can be treated and reversed, they are immeasurable, interfering with the healthy growth and development of those who suffered it. Children and adolescents, as they are still developing and, therefore, unable to act for their own protection, are considered vulnerable and, as such, need the attention and absolute protection of the family, society and the State, in order to effectively curb any form of violence committed against them, particularly sexual violence. Considering the importance of children's health and its consequences for healthy growth and development. The relevance of this study is due to children and adolescents in Brazil having the rights guaranteed by Law Number: 8,069/1990, in the Child and Adolescent Statute (ECA). And even so, many children and adolescents are vulnerable, suffering various types of violence, including sexual violence. Estimated in 70% of cases practiced by close relatives, stepfathers, parents, uncles, cousins, brothers, neighbors,

teachers and others. To this end, it is known that social vulnerability makes it possible and aggravates the situation of children and adolescents being exposed to aggressors, but this does not exclude those who have good socio-economic and cultural conditions, that is, regardless of socioeconomic level, there are cases of children and adolescents being sexually violated. But its greatest occurrence is due to social inequalities, especially countries with low socioeconomic and cultural indicators.

Brazil, a country with 12.8 million unemployed Brazilians in 2019, according to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE, 2019). In addition to these conditions, child sexual violence continues to rise with alarming figures, signaling to those responsible for children and adolescents to take permanent care of them. Accordingly, the objective of the study is to describe child sexual violence, the harmful effects and the rights of children and adolescents in Brazil.

METHOD

Bibliographic Review Research prepared based on the selection of key descriptors, listed according to its object. So, the descriptors were: "child", "childish", "adolescent"; "violence" and "sexual violence". In possession of the studies, initially, due to the title, there must be at least two of them. These studies were read, the Summaries, which must also contain the main subject, in addition to the descriptors. And having the summaries as established a priori, the researcher read the method, which must contain studies that could vary their method, but excluded experimental studies; clinical studies, conglomerates and systematic reviews with meta-analysis.

DISCUSSION

In Brazil, what drives the protection of children and adolescents are national policies; statute, laws and the Federal Constitution. And in describing the protection of parents or guardians, in other words, it must be of greatest relevance due to their role in their development and healthy growth. And governmental and non-governmental institutions also support and protect children and adolescents. It is also important here that we can reflect on the importance of clubs or associations that provide space for reception, protection and professional learning, allowing teenagers and children financial and professional autonomy. And for Brazilians, access to constitutional rights with health and education as the basis for a dignified life. Thus, children and adolescents receive full protection, enabling healthy growth and development, safe for family and community coexistence away from vulnerabilities. And the importance of the State how to provide means and policies subsidizing the full protection of healthy children and adolescents and those in high vulnerability. Providing the family with access to the social determinants of health, which are access to general socioeconomic, cultural and environmental conditions for all individuals. That is, when inaccessibility puts people at risk of disease, hunger, homelessness, or unsanitary housing, making them vulnerable and exposed, not only to physical illness, but also those related to their psyche. And when these are children and adolescents, the consequences are greater because the stages of development in this age group are already complex, even physiologically, imagine in the midst of vulnerable situations. That is why it is important for the State to be clear about this protection and the bodies and institutions that have and are designed to care for children and adolescents, regardless of their degree or size. It is about maintaining public supervisory

policies so that the structures are reliable and that they are really playing their role in protecting children and adolescents.

Child sexual violence is a public health problem with the majority of victims coming from the most vulnerable classes. The guarantee of protection for parents, guardians and the State sometimes fails to regulate the rights of children and adolescents established by the Child and Adolescent Statute (ECA) (Brazil, 1990). When the family and the State exempt themselves from their obligations, the child and/or adolescent become vulnerable, exposed to mistreatment and abuse. Data compiled by the 2018 Epidemiology Bulletin, on epidemiological analysis against children and adolescents, from 2011 to 2018, in Brazil demonstrate how inaccessible social and health determinants are, especially those with high vulnerability. In this it was evident that sexual violence appears more among females with 74.2% of cases and 25.8% of the victims were male. In a correspondence of absolute numbers, 43,034 and 14,996, together, 58 thousand children were sexually violated in seven years of compiled data (Brazil, 2018; Ministry of Health, 2023). This leads us to the lack of applicability of the protection of laws towards children and adolescents. For this purpose, educational actions, with clear information for children and adolescents through education in schools. This enables them to identify the possible aggressor before being raped, and thus seek help safely. Different spaces and locations must be constant and systematic channels of listening for them when they feel threatened or insecure in the environments where they live with the possible aggressor. So that victims can express their desires and fears because in many cases they live with the aggressor and are still under constant threat to their own lives. And training educators in order to prepare them to diagnose events of sexual violence and other

events that children are being victims of. Data from the Bulletin revealed a percentage of 51.2% of children aged between one and five years old, of which 45.5% were black. And a further 3.3% were disabled or had some disorder.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Children and adolescents who suffer sexual violence, possibly the trauma, lasts their entire lives. Therefore, there is a need for uninterrupted monitoring and with a multidisciplinary team. That is, also for

parents or guardians when they are victims of the event. And when parents or guardians are or are complicit in the crime, they must face justice in accordance with the laws protecting children and adolescents. In schools, it is one of the spaces for training teachers and discussing the topic with children and teenagers. And with family members, debates and teachings can be held to demonstrate the role of the family in a healthy society. Alerts the aggressor to comply with the law, with actions that facilitate reports that offer security to the victim.

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