

Young People and Sexual Health: Towards Improved Standards for Sexual Education in Europe



Wednesday 21st October 2015

Thon Hotel Brussels City Centre,
Brussels



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Overview

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), sexual and reproductive health can be defined as a state of physical, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality and the reproductive system. It implies a positive and respectful approach to sexuality with the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences as well as the capability to reproduce and engage in healthy relationships without experiencing coercion, discrimination or violence.

In order to reach and maintain a good sexual and reproductive health, people need to be granted access to accurate information on how to protect themselves from sexually transmitted infections. They should also be able to access services that can help them have safe pregnancies. However, for many young people puberty is a time of great vulnerability. Research has showed that the majority of adolescents lack the necessary knowledge required to make responsible decisions related to their sexual and reproductive health, leaving them particularly vulnerable to sexually transmitted infections (STIs), unintended pregnancy and violence.

The World Health Organisation's European Child and Adolescent Health Strategy (2015-2020) indicates that 25% of 15-year-olds have had sexual intercourse. In some countries more than 30% of these are not using condoms or any other form of contraception. Alongside this, the Annual Epidemiology Report (2015) of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) shows that in 2012, Chlamydia was reported in more than two thirds (68%) of young people between 15-24 years of age, the highest rate reported among women aged 20-24 years. Similarly, young adults are an important risk group for gonorrhoea as they contribute 40% of cases, with the highest rate in the group of 20-24-year-old men. HIV is also a matter of growing concern, with 11 % of HIV infections reported in young adults aged 15-24 years (2012).

These figures demonstrate the need to further develop early childhood comprehensive sexuality education. A comprehensive approach can enable young people to make informed decisions about their sexuality and health, and to build healthy life skills while empowering them to develop more responsible behaviours. A 'joined-up' approach which encourages greater parental involvement, together with promoting more youth-friendly health services, health-promoting schools and responsible social marketing, is regarded by many as a viable answer to successfully reduce the number of young people engaging in risky behaviour, and help prevent unwanted pregnancies, harmful relationships and the transmission of STDs/STIs.

This timely symposium provides an invaluable opportunity to discuss different strategies aimed at improving young people's access to information, contraception and advice services. This symposium will also examine the importance of addressing the challenges related to young adolescents' sexual and reproductive health through a multilevel approach that encompasses developing youth-friendly health services, parental capability, health-promoting schools as well as empowering young people to participate in the decisions that affect their lives.

“ Adolescence is a decisive age for girls and boys around the world. What they experience during their teenage years shapes the direction of their lives and that of their families. Investments in adolescents' education and health are life-time investments that are likely to have positive effects on behaviours and lifestyles during their entire life course. ”

Heimo Laakkonen, Director, UNFPA Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia
June 2014

Venue and Accommodation

Thon Hotel Brussels City Centre
Avenue du Boulevard 17
1210 Brussels
Belgium



Why Attend?

- ✓ **Assess data collection and monitoring at national and European level on STIs/STDs and teenage pregnancy**
- ✓ **Discuss how to improve young people's access to information, contraception and advice services**
- ✓ **Explore ways to promote and improve sexual and reproductive health education in family and school settings**
- ✓ **Determine ways to develop youth-friendly health services**
- ✓ **Discuss ways to empower young people to make good decisions, challenge peer pressure and rebuff risky behaviours**

Who Should Attend?

- Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinators
- Sexual Health Strategy Co-ordinators
- Local, Regional and National Health Services
- Sexual Health Treatment/Advisory Services
- Teachers and Senior Schools Staff
- Counselling Services
- Child Psychologists
- Sexual Health Support and Outreach Services
- Local and Regional Education and Children's Services
- Health Promotion Advisers
- School Nurses and Health Visitors
- Child and Education Psychologists
- Family Planning Specialists/Associations
- Looked After/Children in Care Teams
- Drug and Alcohol Action Teams
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
- Social Care Professionals
- Child Protection Officers
- National Governmental Agencies
- Third Sector Representatives
- Academics
- Social Services
- Gender and Development Organisations
- Sexual Health NGOs
- Sexual Health Associations
- Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare Services
- Reproductive Health Alliances
- Health Education and Research Centres
- National Societies for Sexology
- Sexuality and Health Foundations
- Associations for Clinical Sexology
- Youth Forums
- Youth Organisations
- Social Inclusion Organisations
- National Schools for Public Health
- Institutes of General Practice and Community Medicine
- Psychoanalysts
- Family Practitioners

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Programme

09:15	Registration and Morning Refreshments
10:00	Chair's Welcome and Opening Remarks
10:10	Assessing Young People's Sexual and Reproductive Health in Europe <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluating Current Data on STIs/HIV, Teenage Pregnancy and Abortions• Assessing EU Actions and Policies on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights• Discussing Challenges in Data Collection and Monitoring• Recommendations for Future Policy Action
10:40	First Round of Discussions
11:10	Morning Coffee Break
11:30	Implementing and Fostering a Comprehensive Sexuality Education <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promoting CSE at an Early Stage: The Role of Schools and Communities in Reducing Risky Behaviour• Tackling Unintended Pregnancy and STDs/STIs Contraction: Enhancing Equitable Gender Relations, Strengthening a Tailored Sexuality Education• Reaching Out to the Most Vulnerable and Marginalised Young Adolescents• Future Policy Recommendations
12:00	Second Round of Discussions
12:30	Networking Lunch
13:30	Promoting Youth-Friendly, Accessible Health Services <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improving Young People's Access to and Use of Sexual Health Services• Developing Adolescent-Friendly and Out-of-Facility SRHS• Providing Specific SRH Trainings for Health Professionals and Social Workers• Sharing Knowledge and Best Practice
14:00	Third Round of Discussions
14:30	Afternoon Coffee Break
14:50	Encouraging Young People's Involvement: Promoting Dialogue and Empowerment <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building New Sexual Health Communication Strategies for Young Adolescents• Ensuring Youth Participation in SRH Policies and Programmes Development• Effectively Engaging Young People to Influence and Improve their Sexual Behaviour• Conclusions and Recommendations
15:20	Fourth Round of Discussions
15:50	Chair's Summary and Closing Comments
16:00	Networking Reception
16:30	Close

** Please note that the programme is subject to change without notice*

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Event Details

Date: Wednesday 21st October 2015
Time: 10:00am – 4:30pm
Venue: Thon Hotel Brussels City Centre, Brussels



Speakers Include:

- ✓ **Dr Michelle Hindin**, MHS, PhD, Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Senior Scientist, Department of Reproductive Health and Research, Adolescents and At-Risk Populations Team, World Health Organization
- ✓ **Dr Evert Ketting**, Senior Fellow, Guttmacher Institute, New York
- ✓ **Nick Batley**, Externals Coordinator, Sexpression:UK
- ✓ **Dr. Joyce Dreezens-Fuhrke**, MPH, SPI-Forschung
- ✓ **Christiana Nöstlinger**, Department of Public Health, Institute of Tropical Medicine
- ✓ **Prof. dr. Kristien Michielsen**, International Centre for Reproductive Health (ICRH)

Forthcoming Events

- ✓ Smart Cities: Supporting an Innovative and Sustainable Development of Urban Areas
27th October 2015
- ✓ Addressing Europe's Drug Problem: Combating Drug Trafficking and Substance Misuse
28th October 2015
- ✓ Delivering on EU Food Safety: Promoting a Safe and Sustainable Agri-Food Chain
17th November 2015
- ✓ Tackling Youth Unemployment in Europe: Improving Outcomes for the Young Generation
25th November 2015