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CHALLENGES OF HEALTH EDUCATION FOR MONGOLIAN AND HUNGARIAN ADOLESCENTS: EXPLORING SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE ATTITUDES

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Adolescent sexual and reproductive health needs (e.g., early pregnancy, HIV and other STIs, unsafe abortion) have intensified in recent years, therefore, sex education should be given priority. It should be more than the instruction of children and adolescents on anatomy and on the physiology of biological sex and reproduction. It has to cover healthy sexual development, gender identity, interpersonal relationships, affection, intimacy, and body image for all adolescents. The health attitudes and behaviors of adolescents are strongly affected by social factors at personal, family, community, and national levels. So there is a need to study contributors to adolescents' behavioral status and problems to support adolescents' reproductive health and prevent them from risky behavior, among others, cultural factors. For these reasons, we aim to study Mongolian and Hungarian adolescents' health education and sexual behavioral status, in relation to their traditional customs and modern lifestyle. At this point of the research project, before collecting data from adolescents from the two countries, we make a comparison of health and social statistics to clarify differences in sexual and reproductive behaviors. The aim of this presentation is to give an outline of these results. For example, compared to Hungary, Mongolia has a relatively young population, with over 38.6% of the population aged 0–19 years. Adolescent fertility rate, that is, births per 1,000 women ages 15–19 is higher in Mongolia compared to Hungary. In addition, in the past few years, young girls' unplanned pregnancies have been sharply rising. The birth rate among adolescents in Mongolia is higher than the average in the Asia and Pacific region. The unmet need for family planning is highest among this age group, at 36.4%. The mean age of marriage is also much lower in Mongolia than in Hungary. We think that exploring these cultural differences may contribute to the development of a comparative survey among Mongolian and Hungarian adolescents.

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