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FEMALE ADOLESCENTS' HEALTH-INFORMATION NEEDS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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Introduction: Although much has been written about the health status of adolescents, little is known about adolescents' perception of their own educational health needs. The purpose of this article is to describe the educational health needs of female adolescents to plan support services.

Methods: This qualitative study was conducted in Mazandaran province, a province in the north of Iran. 67 female adolescents between 12-19 years of age participated in 8 focus group discussions. In addition, semi structured interviews were done with 11 key informants including 5 parents, 3 teachers and school counselors, 2 obstetricians and one midwife. Participants were selected based on purposeful sampling and with maximum variety. All tape-recorded data was fully transcribed and thematic analysis was done.

Results: Findings of this research around the adolescents' health-information needs emphasized on 5 overarching themes including necessary for education, need for appropriate content, need for suitable methods, need for suitable sources and appropriate age for education.

Conclusion: The results show that promotion of female adolescents' knowledge about reproductive health and life skills is one of the most important health needs of them. Education of this issue via parents, schools and health care providers could promote the health status of adolescents.