

Adolescents and Sexual Health The Challenges

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Adolescent development

Assessment

Competence and confidentiality

Risk assessment

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Unique Clinical Challenges in Adolescence

Transition phase of adolescence produces ***specific disease patterns, unusual presentations and unique communication and management*** challenges for the practitioner

... in addition to risk taking behaviours



Risk taking behaviours

Part of normal adolescent development

Alcohol, drugs, cars, motorbikes, sexualised images ...

Difficulties arise because of

Ignorance (no prior experience or lack of information)

Impulsiveness (thrill-seeking)

Low self esteem

Cognitive immaturity

Abstract thinking

I didn't use a condom as I didn't have one but I didn't get Chlamydia.

I was lucky, he was obviously clean. I won't risk it again. I'll always have a condom with me in future.

Concrete Thinking

You said if I didn't use a condom I'd get Chlamydia and I didn't.

You were wrong, I obviously don't need condoms



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Sexual history in a nutshell

- When did you last have sex?
- Who with?
- Did you use a condom?
- What did you do?
- Do you have any other partners?



Psychosocial screening

- H**ome
- E**ducation/Employment
- A**ctivities and Peer Relations
- D**rugs/cigarettes/alcohol
- S**exuality
- S**uicide/depression



Practical points for communicating and working with adolescents

See young people by themselves as well as with their parents

Do not exclude parents

Be empathic, respectful, and non-judgmental

Be yourself. Don't try to be cool or hip: 'doctor, not friend'

Communicate and explain concepts appropriate to development.
"here and now" concrete examples; avoid abstract concepts ("if...then")

If appropriate, take a full adolescent psychosocial history

Assure confidentiality

Christie, D and Viner, R. BMJ 2005;330

Case1

16 year old girl

Attending for STI check up

Sexually active 6 months

40 partners

Never used condoms, no contraception

(script for COCP but didn't have \$20 to redeem it)

Delay in accessing services after initiation of SI

Influence of peer norms: “normal sexual behaviour”

Case 2

19 year old bisexual man

1st male sexual partner 3w before, only female partners before

Receptive AI, with condom

Small fissure at anus, not painful nor discharging

Rectal swabs: Chlamydia and gonorrhoea

serology/PCR: Syphilis and HSV negative

On closer questioning:

genital contact, rubbing and penetration without a condom;

Condom put on just prior to ejaculation

Condoms: consistency of use and correct use of

Case 3

16 year old girl

Advice about STIs and contraception

Sexually active for 6 months

Having “*safe sex*”

(= no vaginal intercourse but anal intercourse and oral sex)

Condoms “*sometimes*”

What do adolescents call ‘safe sex’

Common challenges in dealing with adolescents in a sexual health consultation

- Role of peer norms in sexual behaviour patterns
- Access to services
- Delay in seeking advice after initiation of SI
- Condoms: consistency of use and correct use of: asking the correct questions
- What adolescents call safe sex (terminology)?

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Competency

Competency to consent & confidentiality

Gillick Competency - House of Lords 1985 (Fraser Ruling)

The screenshot shows the BBC.co.uk website's 'ON THIS DAY' section for July 26. The main headline is '1983: Mother loses contraception test case'. The sub-headline reads: 'A mother of 10 has failed to prevent doctors prescribing contraception to under-16s without parental consent.' Below this, a paragraph states: 'Victoria Gillick appeared at the High Court seeking a declaration that none of her five daughters - aged 1 to 13 - could be prescribed or advised on birth control until they are 16.' To the right of the text is a 'Watch/Listen' section with a video thumbnail of Victoria Gillick. A caption below the video reads: 'Victoria Gillick says she will continue to fight for parental consent to contraception'.

Gillick. Gillick vs West Norfolk and Wisbech Area Health Authority (1986) AC112.

Competency

Competency to consent & confidentiality

Gillick Competency - House of Lords 1985 (Fraser Ruling)

... that a doctor would not be aiding in the offence of carnal knowledge by providing or discussing contraception if he or she:

- Discuss with the individual about them discussing with parents
- Ensure young person understands the physical and emotional consequences of sex
- Be convinced the young person is likely to have sex with or without contraception
- Be convinced the physical or mental health of the young person is likely to suffer if denied
- Be convinced he or she is acting overall in her best interest

or advised on birth control until they are 16.

Victoria Gillick says she will continue to fight for parental consent to contraception

Gillick. Gillick vs West Norfolk and Wisbech Area Health Authority (1986) AC112.

Competency

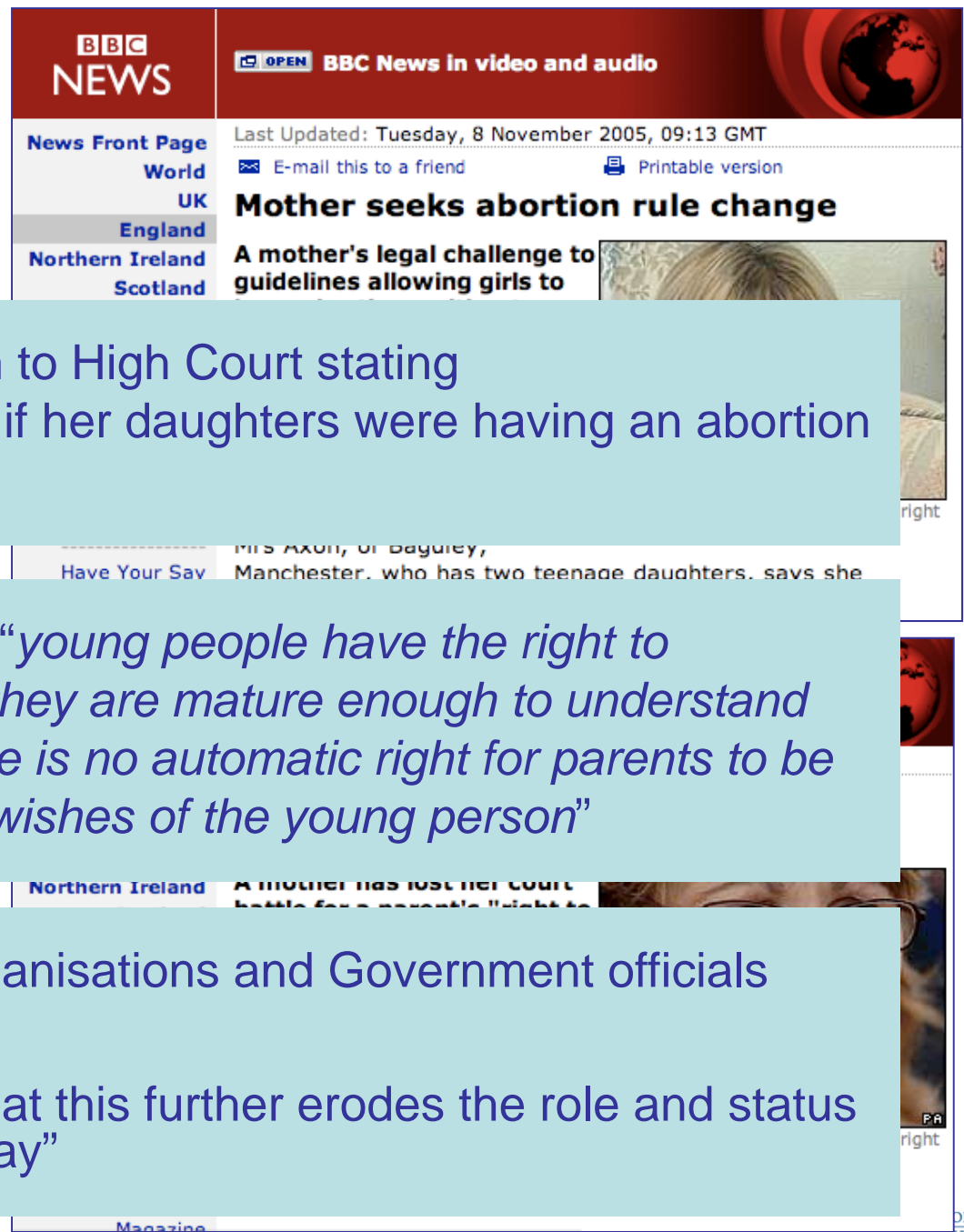
Competency to consent & confidentiality

Based on the mature minor principle from UK Gillick Case

Reconfirmed by Australian ***Marion's Case 1992***

- appeal to High Court because of conflicting prior decisions
- competence to make decisions aged based?
- labelled certain procedures as **Special Medical Procedures**
- majority of Judges agreed: individual assessment not age

UK 2006 High Court Case



The image is a screenshot of a BBC News website page. At the top left is the BBC News logo. To its right is a banner that says "OPEN BBC News in video and audio". Below the logo is a navigation menu with links for "News Front Page", "World", "UK", "England", "Northern Ireland", and "Scotland". The "UK" link is highlighted. To the right of the menu, it says "Last Updated: Tuesday, 8 November 2005, 09:13 GMT". There are also links for "E-mail this to a friend" and "Printable version". The main headline is "Mother seeks abortion rule change". Below the headline is a sub-headline: "A mother's legal challenge to guidelines allowing girls to". To the right of the sub-headline is a small photograph of a woman's hair. Below the main headline is a light blue text box containing the text: "Mrs Axon, pursued a claim to High Court stating 'she had the right to know if her daughters were having an abortion under the age of 16 years'". Below this text box is a small section titled "Have Your Say" with the text: "Mrs Axon, of Baguley, Manchester, who has two teenage daughters, says she". Below this is another light blue text box containing the text: "High Court confirmed that 'young people have the right to confidential health care if they are mature enough to understand the situation, and that there is no automatic right for parents to be informed if its against the wishes of the young person'". Below this text box is a small section titled "Northern Ireland" with the text: "A mother has lost her court battle for a parent's 'right to". Below this is a third light blue text box containing the text: "BMA, medical defence organisations and Government officials agreed with the finding". Below this text box is a fourth light blue text box containing the text: "Christian groups stated 'that this further erodes the role and status of the family in society today'". At the bottom of the page, there is a "Magazine" link and a "PA" logo.

BBC NEWS OPEN BBC News in video and audio

News Front Page
World
UK
England
Northern Ireland
Scotland

Last Updated: Tuesday, 8 November 2005, 09:13 GMT
E-mail this to a friend
Printable version

Mother seeks abortion rule change

A mother's legal challenge to guidelines allowing girls to

Mrs Axon, pursued a claim to High Court stating "she had the right to know if her daughters were having an abortion under the age of 16 years"

Mrs Axon, of Baguley, Manchester, who has two teenage daughters, says she

High Court confirmed that "young people have the right to confidential health care if they are mature enough to understand the situation, and that there is no automatic right for parents to be informed if its against the wishes of the young person"

Northern Ireland A mother has lost her court battle for a parent's "right to

BMA, medical defence organisations and Government officials agreed with the finding

Christian groups stated "that this further erodes the role and status of the family in society today"

Magazine PA right

Competency

Assessing competency

- Understand there are choices with consequences
- Be willing to make a choice and have the ability to do so
- Understand the nature and purpose of the procedure
- Understand risks and side effects of the procedures
- Understand the alternatives to the procedure and their risks
- Understand the consequences of no treatment
- Be free from pressure from third parties
- Degree of competency required for consent is proportional to complexity

Competency

Factors helpful in assessing competency

Age

Level of schooling

Independence

Maturity

Ability to articulate own choices

Confidentiality

US study

1,118 girls < 18y

33 family planning clinics in Wisconsin

Would informing parents stop use of certain services?

60% would change use of services

12% would delay treatment/testing of STIs

Only 1% would stop having intercourse

Confidentiality



Medicare Federal funding

Access to most services needs Medicare identification

Family card until 15 years; then can obtain own card

< 14y with family Medicare card:

parents can obtain detailed itemised statement of activities without consent of young person

> 14y with family Medicare card:

parents need written consent from young person

< 18y with family Medicare card:

parents can obtain statement of activity *without permission* for purposes of taxation (non itemised but will identify if services used)



Confidentiality



Medicare Federal funding

In 2003 Australian Government proposed detailed information on Medicare cards would be freely available to parent of those on family card < 16y

Is confidentiality impaired by this system?

Most services in Victoria require Medicare to access

No evidence that mandating parental involvement improves care and some work shows adolescents may stop using services

Confidentiality

What if minor is assessed as not being competent?

There is still an obligation to respect confidentiality even if you feel the minor is not competent to consent to procedure they are requesting

Need to be able always to justify breaching confidentiality (at risk of harm to self or community) that is automatically assumed in consultation that exists between HP and client/patient (even if not competent)

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Case 4

16 year old girl

Presents for 3rd time in 6 weeks for ECP

Has had (non consensual) SI with a 'friend'

Alcohol and drugs involved

Mandatory reporting?

Mandatory reporting

Some professionals mandated to report to child protection service if they form a belief (whilst undertaking professional duties) on reasonable grounds that a child (< 18y) has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical or sexual abuse and is in need of protection

NB form a belief
 reasonable grounds
 significant harm

Mandatory reporting

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NB **form a belief**
 reasonable grounds
 significant harm

Legality of Sex

Age of consent to sex in Victoria :

- < 12y: Never legal always **illegal** (consent never valid)
- 12 - 16y: Can be legal if **partner** < 2y older
- >16y: Can be legal **legal** if not under supervision of 'partner'

NB some additional considerations occasionally eg marriage

Case 5

14 year old girl

Presents for 3rd time in 6 weeks for ECP

Has had consensual SI with 17 year old boy

Alcohol and drugs involved

Comments.....

Take Home Messages

Take your time to assess an adolescent adequately

STI testing: easy!

Psychosocial assessment, competency and risk assessment:
more difficult and more important

You may need to ask advice and/or see them again

Remember health practitioners are a trusted source of information of
sexual health

Make your services as accessible as possible

Resources

Medical Practitioners Board of Victoria

ARCSHS:Latrobe University
www.latrobe.edu.au/arcshs

Christie and Viner: ABC Adolescence: BMJ 2005
Sexuality and adolescence: Moore and Rosenthal 2006

Bridging the Gaps: Healthcare for adolescents 2003
Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health UK:
Downloaded 2010 at www.rcpch.ac.uk

Melbourne Sexual Health Centre: www.mshc.org.au

Family Planning Victoria (Action Centre): www.fpv.org.au