

Motivation to learn during adolescence

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The excellent study published by Fernandes et al. (2024)¹, “Influence of motivation to learn on the quality of life and school performance of adolescents: a systematic review protocol with meta-analysis”, presents the opportunity to discuss a topic of extreme relevance in the field of hebiatrics, that is, cognitive development and teaching-learning relationships that are fundamental to the future of adolescents. Studies at this level are very important for the deepening and dissemination of knowledge, as tools for the daily work of educators and health professionals.

Adolescence, a period that comprises the second decade of life, is a phase in which important physical, emotional, and social transformations occur, thus, turning children into adult individuals, full of their potential². In addition to changes in height, weight and body complexion, brain development takes place during this period, with regions and rhythms evolving distinctly, concrete thinking being replaced by an abstract one, culminating in the complete maturation of the prefrontal cortex, which is the area responsible for the most elaborate functions. Still part of this phase of life is the search for autonomy, immediacy, the search for rewards and the feeling of invulnerability, which often place adolescents at risk².

These new mental structures enable adolescents to raise hypotheses, formulate more complex concepts, elaborate and reflect on their thoughts, reason in an abstract way and make judgments, highlighting their ability to relate to the outside world. All of these factors continually interact to influence adolescents to seek to overcome new obstacles, including the challenges presented by school and learning³.

One of the most debated aspects, today, concerns the motivation for studying/learning and its consequent performance in school accomplishment. Studies that assess motivation, whether intrinsic and/or extrinsic, and the various factors that can influence it, have demonstrated important differences related to sex, socioeconomic conditions, health status and quality of life⁴⁻⁸. However, although they are being publicized with some frequency, they are still insufficient for understanding this complex topic, especially given the strong influence of social media and the, unfortunately, secondary role to which schools have been relegated in current times. Therefore, a better understanding of the multiple factors related to the

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decline in academic motivation among adolescents is the main aspect to be elucidated, that can fill this gap in comprehensive health care for adolescents.

In this way, the study by Fernandes et al.¹. provides another instrument that will certainly contribute to deepening knowledge and enriching the debate, both bringing new results and stimulating the continuity of research in this field.

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