

A CAREFUL LOOK TO POSTMODERN TRIBES: CARING FOR ADOLESCENT HEALTH IN THE CONTEXT OF THEIR EVERYDAY LIVES

Juliana Fernandes da NÓBREGA^a, Rosane Gonçalves NITSCHKE^b,
Fernanda Pravato da SILVA^c, Cláudia Anita Gomes CARRARO^d, Cristiane ALVES^e

ABSTRACT

This is a theoretical reflection, based on Michel Maffesoli's Comprehensive Sociology, which is concerned with the health care of adolescents in contemporary everyday life, and particularly with the phenomenon of urban tribes. These are understood as groups of people who have emotional ties, building a bond of sociality towards a common goal. This study focuses on the importance to take into account the lifestyle of adolescents and aims to raise awareness among health professionals about such issues, seeking for strategies tuned with reality and care needs in order to promote health, devising ways to improve caring, rethinking health policies for adolescents in contemporary society.

Descriptors: Adolescent health. Health promotion. Nursing. Activities of daily living.

RESUMO

Trata-se de uma reflexão teórica, fundamentada na Sociologia Compreensiva de Michel Maffesoli. Tem como objetivo refletir sobre o cuidado com a saúde dos adolescentes no cotidiano contemporâneo, considerando um olhar sensível para o fenômeno das tribos urbanas. As tribos são compreendidas como estruturação de grupos de pessoas que se reúnem afetivamente, construindo um vínculo de socialidade com um objetivo comum. Esta reflexão enfoca a importância de se considerar a maneira de viver dos adolescentes e visa ampliar os horizontes dos profissionais da saúde, em busca de estratégias de atuação, sintonizadas com a realidade e as necessidades de cuidados para promover a saúde, delineando, assim, maneiras de cuidar afetivas e, portanto, mais efetivas, contribuindo para repensar as políticas de atenção à saúde dos adolescentes na contemporaneidade.

Descritores: Saúde do adolescente. Promoção da saúde. Enfermagem. Atividades cotidianas.

Título: Um olhar sensível às tribos pós-modernas: cuidando da saúde dos adolescentes no cotidiano.

RESUMEN

Se trata de una reflexión teórica, basada en la Sociología Comprensiva de Michel Maffesoli. Tuvo como objetivo reflexionar sobre el cuidado de la salud de los adolescentes en la vida cotidiana contemporánea, teniendo en cuenta un aspecto sensible en el fenómeno de las tribus urbanas. Estas son entendidas como la estructuración de grupos de personas que se reúnen afectivamente para la construcción de un vínculo de sociabilidad hacia una meta común. Esta reflexión, centrándose en la importancia de considerar el modo de vida de los adolescentes tiene como objetivo ampliar los horizontes de los profesionales de la salud en la búsqueda de estrategias de acción en sintonía con la realidad y necesidades de atención para promover la salud, delineando así formas de cuidar, contribuyendo a repensar las políticas de atención de la salud de los adolescentes en la sociedad contemporánea.

Descritores: Salud del adolescente. Promoción de la salud. Enfermería. Actividades cotidianas.

Título: Una mirada sensible a las tribus postmodernas: el cuidado de la salud de los adolescentes en la vida cotidiana.

a Nurse. Master degree in the Postgraduate Program in Nursing at Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (PEN/UFSC). Member of the Center of Studies on Nursing, Everyday Life. Collective Imagination and Health of Santa Catarina (NUPEQUIS-SC). Professor at the Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology of Santa Catarina (IFSC) – Câmpus Florianópolis. Florianópolis, Santa Catarina, Brazil.

b Nurse. Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing (PEN-UFSC/SORBONNE) Professor at the Department of Nursing and at the Postgraduate Program in Nursing at Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (PEN-UFSC). Leader of NUPEQUIS-SC. Coordinator of the Nest Project. Florianópolis, Santa Catarina, Brazil.

c Psychologist. Master degree in Education at Universidade do Vale do Itajaí. Member of NUPEQUIS. Florianópolis, Santa Catarina, Brazil.

d Nurse. Deputy Professor of the Department of Public Health of UFSC. Student at the Postgraduate Program in Nursing at UFSC. Member of NUPEQUIS-SC. Florianópolis, Santa Catarina, Brazil.

e Nurse. Specialist in Labor Nursing at Universidade do Vale do Itajaí (UNIVALI). Clinical nurse specialist at Hospital Regional Homero de Miranda Gomes. Membro do NUPEQUIS-SC. Florianópolis, Santa Catarina, Brazil.

CONTEXTUALIZING

Brazil's Statute of the Child and Adolescent (ECA), created in 1990, paved the way for the emergence of new fields of knowledge focused on children and adolescents. Three decades later, appropriate strategies to improve the healthcare of adolescents are still needed. This study is aimed to raise awareness on adolescent healthcare in the context of their everyday life, considering the phenomenon of postmodern tribes, with a careful look at contemporary society, in the light of Michel Maffesoli's Comprehensive Sociology.

It is necessary to understand people's daily lives in order to develop ways to deliver health care, which are effectively and affectively tuned with their everyday life. Everyday life is understood here as "the way of living of human beings, expressed in their daily activities, through interactions, beliefs, values, images and symbols that are part of their process of life, which involves health and sickness, the Life Cycle."⁽¹⁾

Postmodernity and urban tribes call attention to the occurrence of a social mutation that involves the valuation of characteristics considered obsolete by modernity, with a synergy between the old lifestyle and technological advances⁽²⁾.

Postmodernity, which is based on connections and share of emotions, is deeply marked by affection, or else, the strength of affections, valuation of the present time, moments of effervescence, organic solidarity (that expresses a spontaneous wish to be together), valuation of hedonism⁽²⁾.

In this context, adolescence is an important period of transition towards the formation of identity, which is marked by doubts and self-knowledge, involving self-criticism in the identification of social needs and health⁽³⁾.

In postmodern times, there is no more room for individualism, for there is a sociality that calls for the creation of micro groups who have emotional ties "urban tribes", characterized by affective bonds between individuals toward a common goal. Within this community, the self is empowered and characterized by emotional roles that each one plays while belonging to the tribe⁽⁴⁾.

Being a member of a given tribe socializes adolescents, reaffirms their choices and supports the transition between independence and autonomy.

It makes it possible for adolescents to justify their attitude, shaping their perception of forms of behavior⁽³⁾.

The phenomenon of tribalism is not unique to adolescents. However, at this stage of life it spreads more, satisfying the need to experience new sensations and to affirm their youth", while maintaining a bold and evolving image that is pervaded by the consumer society⁽⁵⁾.

Adolescence is marked by the heroic archetype, which refers to their search for differentiation, stimulating the individual to face new situations in life, as in a sort of initiation ceremony (rites of passage) that involves the search for self-affirmation, autonomy and for an identity other than that of the family⁽⁶⁾.

Although this heroic journey looks like a solitary and individual pursuit, it also depends on the collective experience, on the feeling of belonging to and identifying with a group, a tribe, whose members are alike.⁽⁷⁾

The heroic archetype provides the adolescent with self-confidence to face major challenges. However, this can lead to risky behaviors, and, therefore it is necessary that health professionals are aware of them.

The risky behaviors associated to adolescence include legal and illegal drug use, sexually transmissible diseases and premature pregnancy that cause strong impacts on their lives⁽⁸⁻⁹⁾.

In 2010, the Ministry of Health launched the "*Diretrizes Nacionais para atenção integral à saúde de adolescentes e jovens na promoção, proteção e recuperação da saúde*"⁽¹⁰⁾ (National guidelines for comprehensive healthcare for adolescents and youngsters in health promotion, protection and recovery), indicating a holistic approach. However, interactions with adolescents require certain abilities, with a broader understanding of their everyday lives.

Adolescence is a stage of preparation for adulthood in which the individual experiences their maximum health and vitality. Thus, it is necessary to adopt preventive measures that stress that living together in a tribe⁽¹¹⁾ is very important because it provides many opportunities for personal development, but can also limit individual growth and maturation when violence, drugs and "harmful effects" associated to today's high-tech ultra-fast paced world are involved⁽¹²⁾, i.e. the

high rate of accidents and obesity among young people, witnessed everyday in mortality statistics.

The metaphor of the tribes can help understanding adolescents, putting aside stereotypes and preconceptions that cannot handle the current needs⁽⁵⁾.

Therefore, our study represents an attempt to understand the process of life (health and sickness) of adolescents and developing effective healthcare interventions, considering dimensions that go beyond biological aspects.

Notions of the everyday life of postmodern tribes

The everyday life of tribes is composed of a plurality of ways of thinking and acting, collectivities and individualism, good and evil, dying and living.

In the collective imagination, pervaded by group knowledge and practices, adolescents expose their qualities vehemently, hoping to remain visible and getting recognition and approval in the sociability game. Nowadays, emphasis is no longer in the future, but rather in here and now, the “presentism”, consistent with the current effervescences according to which the cycle that affirms the absolute value of good and the search for perfection is coming to an end.

Adolescents feel the need to join the tribes to “breathe”, and no longer consider the logic of labor as crucial. However, the tribes themselves need labor activities to support their exacerbated consumerism, indicating another paradox of this postmodern way of living.

Because it is historically inseparable from human beings who live and (survive), consumption is influenced by the media, which suggests as a requirement for inclusion in some tribes the purchase of consumer goods, the valuation of a physically fit body, often triggering risky behaviors and sickness.

Therefore, experiencing new sensations and incessantly pursuing situations pervaded by emotions, adventures, “adrenalin” is part of being an adolescent. At this point the health professional becomes an essential element in the promotion, protection and recovery of health, integrating the dynamics of tribalism, reinforcing the need to replace the logic of “ought to be”, which is widely

adopted in the academic environment and implemented in the professional practice, with a logic of “it is required”, because the former does not apply to changing habits⁽⁶⁾.

Rethinking healthcare to the adolescent

The *Política Nacional de Atenção à Saúde Integral de Adolescentes e Jovens*⁽¹⁰⁾ (National Policy on Comprehensive Health of Adolescents and Youngsters) is focused on full protection to adolescents, and the Unified Health System (SUS) assures them universal and equal access to actions and services for the promotion, protection and recovery of health. Recognizing the vulnerability of youngster, the referred policy emphasizes the repercussions of socioeconomic and political provisions on the process of life (health and sickness) of adolescents.

The guidelines of this Policy aim to raise awareness among managers about a holistic and systemic view of the individual. So, they stress the importance of the implementation of strategies to reduce vulnerability and promote a healthy development that considers the several cultures and backgrounds of Brazilian youngsters.

The document states that society and family require that these youngsters become more responsible for their own lives, and refer that they are influenced by the elements that integrate their daily lives such as vehicles of mass media, entertainment, community and religious institutions. The policy also stresses the conditions for a proper development of adolescents: access to formal education, healthcare services, leisure activities, vocational training and job opportunities.

Physical and mental violence, social unrest, associated to the natural curiosity of individuals who are discovering the world are factors that contribute to the adoption of risky behaviors such as “technosociality” i.e., this bond between people formed by social networking technologies. Therefore, the social networks pervade the lives of youngsters, exposing them to risks such as dependence, bullying and obesity⁽¹³⁾.

A humanized approach that deepens the discussions on standards of conduct and values, social inequalities and their causes involves important aspects that influence the social roles that impact the healthy growth and development of adolescents.

In our society, the health of adolescents has become a major challenge for health professionals who, using a multidisciplinary team approach seek to implement a policy that advocates a significant change in the form of providing and organizing health services.

The increase in obesity among the youngsters highlights the lack of studies on intervention strategies tuned to the needs of this population⁽¹⁴⁾. The following question must be posed: have we considered in the healthcare of adolescents, their lifestyle, way of being and living, effervescences, valuation of a physically fit body, consumerism, technosocialities, “presentism”?

In the search for more effective actions to improve the health of adolescents it is essential to respect their characteristics, their everyday lives, that is, their way of living and living together, which is marked by an ethics of aesthetics, i.e., sharing common feelings, guided by affection.

Thus, the metaphor of the tribe can facilitate the task of health professionals to promote the health of people, avoiding and mitigating risky behaviors, through the maintenance of affective and horizontal bonds between the contemporary tribes who are cared for and the tribes who care, that is, health professionals.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Despite the advances, the policies under construction that advocate a holistic approach to health care of adolescents they are still permeated by modernity aspects, far from the context of the contemporary tribes that perspire post-modernity.

To provide better health care to adolescents it is essential to understand their everyday lives, which include their interactions, beliefs, values, culture and collective imagination, capturing the nuances of the contemporary times. Thus, it should be emphasized that the construction of public strategies and policies for adolescents involves thinking about postmodernity, with a careful look at the urban tribes present in the various healthcare settings.

Our policies are still focused on the individual dimension, the logic of “ought to be” and not in the logic of “it is required” that stems from

everyday life, from the way youngsters are, live and live together, and this may cause difficulties in the interaction between the healthcare team and the adolescents. So, focusing on adolescents, taking into consideration the characteristics of the different urban tribes may help understanding their codes of conduct, because they can point us ways of caring tuned to the reality of this population, which are affective and therefore effective!

REFERENCES

- 1 Nitschke RG. Pensando o nosso cotidiano contemporâneo e a promoção de famílias saudáveis. *Cienc Cuid Saúde.* 2007;6(1):24-26.
- 2 Maffesoli M. *Saturação.* São Paulo: Iluminuras; 2010.
- 3 Freitas KR, Dias SMZ. Percepções de adolescentes sobre sua sexualidade. *Texto & Contexto Enferm.* 2010;19(2):351-7
- 4 Maffesoli M. *O tempo das tribos: o declínio do individualismo nas sociedades de massas.* 4ª ed. Rio de Janeiro: Forense Universitária; 2006.
- 5 Maffesoli M. *Elogio da razão sensível.* Rio de Janeiro: Vozes; 1998.
- 6 Cardoso IF. A sociedade pós-moderna e o fenômeno das tribos urbanas. *Lato & Sensu.* 2003;4(1):3-5.
- 7 Grinberg LP. *Jung: O homem criativo.* São Paulo: FDT; 1997.
- 8 Beatriz BB, Maria FMZ. A adolescente grávida na percepção de médicos e enfermeiros na atenção básica. *Esc Anna Nery Rev Enferm.* 2012;16(1):64-72
- 9 Teresa HS, Maria SSV. Tenho medo do quê? *Rev Paul Pediatr.* 2012;30(1):72-8.
- 10 Ministério da Saúde (BR). *Diretrizes Nacionais para atenção integral à saúde de adolescentes e jovens na promoção, proteção e recuperação da saúde.* Brasília (DF): Ministério da Saúde; 2010.
- 11 Cléa ASG, Artênio JIG, Suzely ASM, Patrícia EG. A saúde na percepção do adolescente. *Physis (Rio J).* 2009;19(1):227-238.
- 12 Honoré C. *Devagar.* Rio de Janeiro: Record; 2005.

-
- 13 Souza AIJ, Silva LC, Nitschke RG. Atuação na saúde do adolescente com enfoque na família. In: Borges ALV, Fujimori E, organizadores. Enfermagem e a saúde do adolescente na atenção básica. Barueri: Manole; 2009. p.168-188.
- 14 Luna IT, Moreira RAN, Silva KL, Caetano JA, Pinheiro PNC, Rebouças CBA. Obesidade juvenil com enfoque na promoção da saúde: revisão integrativa. Rev Gaúcha Enferm. 2011;32(2):394-401.

**Author's address / Endereço do autor /
Dirección del autor**

Juliana Fernandes da Nóbrega
Rua da Vitória Régia, 384, Santa Mônica
88025-330, Florianópolis, SC
E-mail: julianavf@hotmail.com

Received: 07.08.2012
Approved: 13.08.2013