Precocious Puberty in Girls: A Literature Review

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Abstract

**Background:** Precocious Puberty (PP) is defined as the early onset of physical and hormonal changes in a child under the age of 8. The incidence of PP is increasing causing emotional and developmental challenges to children.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this literature review is to identify possible causative factors of PP in females.

**Method:** Using search terms such as precocious puberty, early puberty, menarche, psychological factors, premature thelarche, and premature puberty, a literature review was conducted. Of the 152 articles reviewed, 25 met the inclusion criteria.

**Results:** The prominent factors discovered in the literature are obesity, early childhood stressors, exposure to environmental toxins, increased access to the internet, and socioeconomic class.

**Implications:** PP has several implications for nursing and the family including family preparation, education, and the psychological and social well-being of the child. It is important for nursing professionals to support and educate parents and children of those with PP or at risk for PP.

Methods

- **Search Terms used:** precocious puberty, early puberty, menarche, psychological factors, premature thelarche, premature puberty
- **Databases used:**
  - Google Scholar
  - EBSCOhost
  - PubMed
  - Elsevier Clinical Key
- **Inclusion Criteria:**
  - Articles that focused on PP
  - Articles in English
  - Publications within the last 10 years
- **Number of articles reviewed:**
  - 152 articles were reviewed
  - 25 met the inclusion criteria

Results & Solutions

**Results**

- **Obesity:** The incidence of obesity lasting longer than 2 years, increases the risk of PP.
- **Early Childhood Stressors:** The highest correlation is a father’s absence and a combination of multiple adversities in the risk community.
- **Environmental Exposures:** Phthalate metabolites in girls with precocious puberty were significantly higher than those in the control groups in some reviewed studies.

**Implications for Nursing Practice:**

- Support for the children with PP through education.
- Be knowledgeable in treatment and management.

**Implications for Family, Child, and School Preparation:**

- Families should seek education on how to best support their children in order that their child can flourish to their greatest potential.
- Children should have readily available sources that are age appropriate to help prepare and educate them.
- The school nurse should be educated on PP so that he can help support the children and help them succeed during this time in their lives.

Gaps & Future Research

**Gaps in the Literature:**

- The incidence of mental health issues in relation to PP.
- Several factors contribute to PP such as one with a low socioeconomic class to determine the potential.
- There was no specific screening or tracking of children during the at-risk age of PP.
- The school nurse should be educated on PP so that he can help support the children and help them succeed during this time in their lives.

Future Research:

- Longitudinal studies, specifically in an at-risk community such as one with a low socioeconomic class to determine stronger correlations with risk factors.
- The incidence of mental health issues in relation to PP.
- Fertility in girls with PP

References


5. **Note:** Additional references are available.