STUDY TO EVALUATE THE KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES REGARDING THE HEALTH AND LIFE SKILLS OF STUDENTS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

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Study conducted in 20 vocational schools, colleges and centres of excellence within youth aged 15-19

**Quantitative:**
- 923 students
  - girls - 63%
  - boys - 37%

**Qualitative:**
- 2 focus-group discussions with teachers and vocational trainers
- 3 focus-group discussions with students, including students with disabilities.

Within the study, a comparative analysis was conducted between the students who studied the course “Decisions for a Healthy Lifestyle” and those who did not study it, in order to assess the impact of the course.
37.7% students reported two or more signs of illness more frequently than once a week.

The level of health literacy among students who have studied the course "Decisions for a Healthy Lifestyle" is higher than in those who have not (52.2%, compared to 42.5%). Increased level of literacy is also attested among students from centres of excellence and colleges - 59.5% where the course is mandatory, compared to 43.05% for those in vocational schools where the course is optional.
Students reported a worrying state of mental health. Thus, weekly, girls and boys face:

- 26,3% a state of apathy
- 22,9% irritation/nervousness/bad mood
- 20,4% anxiety
- 20,7% increased stress

During the COVID-19 pandemic, 26% of all students felt much more stressed. Girls report this condition almost twice as often as boys.
The health problems faced by young specialists during vocational training and at work are:

**According to students:**
- increased stress levels, due to lack of experience;
- visual disturbances;
- overwork;
- obesity.

**According to vocational trainers and teachers:**
- backache, pain in the hands or feet;
- intellectual fatigue;
- lack of physical endurance.
21% of the respondents have well-developed interpersonal skills.

Students who have studied the course "Decisions for a Healthy Lifestyle" have better developed interpersonal skills than those who have not (21.8% compared to 13.8%).
Employability Skills

Employment skills are twice as high in students who have studied the course "Decisions for a Healthy Lifestyle" than in those who have not.

Only 11.3% have well developed skills that can help them get hired.

43.4% cannot work independently.

46.8% cannot work as part of a team.

55.4% cannot work with persons with different abilities and in diverse environments.
Students who have attended the course "Decisions for a healthy lifestyle" eat breakfast much more often and are more physically active than those who have not.

Daily

- Only 4 out of 10 students eat breakfast
- 2 out of 10 students consume fruit and vegetables
- 1 out of 3 students consume sweets
- 1 out of 5 students consume carbonated beverages

1 out of 8 students engage in physical activity at least 60 minutes a day.

Compared to boys, girls practice physical activities 2 times less often.
Among students who have attended the course "Decisions for a Healthy Lifestyle" the proportion of those who consume alcohol abusively is two times lower - 5.6% than among those who have not - 11.4%.

Over the last 30 days:

- 15.5% of students consumed tobacco-based for 1-2 days and more
  - Girls: 6.2%
  - Boys: 31.4%

- 45.1% consumed beverages 1-2 days and more
  - Girls: 38.2%
  - Boys: 52%

- 12.8% of respondents were at least once in a state of acute alcohol intoxication

- 2.2% used cannabis

- 1.1% used synthetic drugs (ethno-botanical - spices, salts, etc.)

- 1.4% used intravenous drugs

Among students who have attended the course "Decisions for a Healthy Lifestyle" the proportion of those who consume alcohol abusively is two times lower - 5.6% than among those who have not - 11.4%.
36.5% of students reported being sexually active.

1/3 of them had their first sexual contact at the age of 15 or younger.

For 3.6% of the students, the first sexual intercourse was forced.

Girls: 26.6%, Boys: 53.4% (36.5% total)
Girls: 5.8%, Boys: 1.6% (3.6% total)
Students who have attended the course "Decisions for a Healthy Lifestyle" tend to use condoms more frequently – 85.7%, compared to those who have not – 73.8%.

Unprotected casual sex is a common practice

**Boys:**
41.8% (on average, 3 occasional partners in the last 12 months), of which 20% without the use of a condom

**Girls:**
14.2% (on average, 1-2 occasional partners in the last 12 months), of which 37% without the use of a condom
The data show that teen pregnancy among girls studying in VET institutions is quite common. One in 5 girls who got pregnant dropped out of school/college because of the pregnancy.

Only 19% of the respondents indicated correctly all appropriate modern methods to prevent unplanned pregnancy.

Girls 21.8%  Boys 14.1%

50% of the students still consider traditional methods such as interrupted intercourse and the calendar method to be appropriate.

Used a

75.8% At the first intercourse
73.3% At the last intercourse

Used contraceptive

8.8% At the first intercourse
7.1% At the last intercourse

40% don’t know where they can benefit from free condoms

The results show that students who have studied the course "Decisions for a Healthy Lifestyle" relied on condoms and birth control pills at their first sexual intercourse significantly more often, and the use of modern methods of contraception becomes more frequent over time, compared to those who have not studied the course.
Only 1 in 10 young people knows comprehensive information about HIV.

- **Girls**: 11.5%
- **Boys**: 7.3%

About 37.2% of students believe that mosquitoes can transmit HIV.

- **Boys**: 7.3%
- **Girls**: 11.5%

About 1/3 of respondents have discriminatory attitudes towards people infected with HIV.

- **Boys**: 43%
- **Girls**: 43%

53.7% believe that they can become infected with HIV by eating with an HIV-infected person.

- **Boys**: 43%
- **Girls**: 53.7%

Among those who have studied the course "Decisions for a healthy lifestyle" the HIV prevention literacy level is higher than among those who have not (72.9% and 62.3%, respectively).
Only **20.6%** of the students are aware of all forms of gender-based violence

In the last 12 months:

- **48.3%** of respondents have been exposed once and more often to at least one form of gender-based violence
- **20%** have been exposed to forms of sexual abuse
  - Girls: 17.3%
  - Boys: 24.6%
- **1/3** of girls and boys applied on other persons at least one form of violence, at least once.
  - Girls: 28.5%
  - Boys: 32.3%

Students who have studied the course "Decisions for a healthy lifestyle" showed a higher literacy of gender-based violence forms compared to those who have not (22.2% and 15.4% respectively).
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