

Central Branch Activity

Stress Management, Nutrition, Menstrual Hygiene, Substance Abuse & Mental Health: A School Health Programme

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A session was conducted on December 11, 2023, at Government Girls Senior Secondary School, Azadpur Village, Delhi, for school adolescents of class 10th on topics ranging from stress management, nutrition, menstrual hygiene, substance abuse, and mental health. The session was delivered by Dr Jugal Kishore, Former HOD & Director Professor, Dr Vignita, Senior Resident, and Dr Rajashree Shankar, PhD Scholar, Department of Community Medicine VMMC & Safdarjung Hospital, New Delhi, in collaboration with the Indian Association for Adolescent Health (Figure 1).





Figure 1. Session Delivered by Dr Jugal Kishore, Dr Vignita, and Dr Rajashree Shankar

Dr Vignita enlightened students on the topics of nutrition and menstrual hygiene. She spoke about the importance of eating a balanced diet, particularly breakfast, for young female students to help them achieve optimum health, with no health conditions affecting them. She emphasised the importance of consuming home-cooked meals incorporating proteins, vitamins, and minerals available in seasonal foods, while avoiding fast foods, which are rampant everywhere nowadays. She mentioned menstrual hygiene practices that must be taken care of to prevent any reproductive health issues in females. Dr. Vignita highlighted the importance of changing menstrual pads every 6 hours to avoid infection, and ensuring that deworming tablets are consumed biannually by school children, as well as iron and folic acid tablets. Various concerns regarding iron tablets were discussed, and myths related to menstruation were debunked by the expert.

Dr Jugal Kishore spoke on the topic of substance abuse and mental health problems in youth. He addressed various types of substances available and abused by youth such as tobacco, alcohol, marijuana etc., and highlighted the increasing usage of e-cigarettes among youth, along with the harmful effects of using these substances on students' health & behaviour. He also discussed stress management and the importance of optimum stress levels using a stress curve to accomplish tasks in students' lives. Additionally, he emphasised the importance of regular exercise, proper diet, and stress management for academic performance. He mentioned the harmful effects of consuming alcohol, which is nowadays easily accessible to youth and has detrimental effects on their physical, emotional, social and academic well-being. He also advised students to refrain from unhealthy foods that are rich in Low-Density Lipoprotein (LDL), also known as "Bad Cholesterol", commonly found in processed food.

The students showed great enthusiasm and had very many questions for the expert related to the topic addressed, which were all answered and clarified by the subject experts. Around 100 female students attended the event, and a few of them had queries about their menstrual cycle, which were attended to personally as well by the experts. Overall, the session helped impart knowledge and education regarding significant topics, which will help these students take care of their health and ensure their families also learn through them.