Abstract: Introduction: Puberty is a significant period of transition from childhood to adolescence. While there is a great deal of variation in the rate of such changes, some adolescents experience puberty sooner or later than others. Usually it is difficult for a girl child to deal with these changes. Existing research shows that puberty is significantly associated with health and behavioral problems such as physiological, emotional and psychological changes; however, previous studies have largely applied quantitative research methods to explore the issue. Little research on the experience of adolescences is supported by qualitative research designs. This qualitative study aimed to explore the experience of adolescent girls on puberty in Zahedan.

Materials and Methods: A qualitative research design was used. We recruited a sample of 56 interviewees including 48 female students (N=24) and their mothers (N=24) as well as eight principals and teachers of secondary schools) to participate in focus groups and in-depth interviews. Full text transcripts of interviews were coded and analyzed using principles of content analysis.

Results: In total 56 interviews were available for analysis. Findings showed that the experience of puberty among Zahedan adolescent girls is divided into two major categories: I) psychological and emotional reactions including fear, worriness, anxiety, humbleness happiness, shame, and normal reactions II) Objective and functional reactions including aggressiveness and arrogance, seclusion and or reasonable behavior.

Conclusion: These findings provide evidence that there are many different undesirable experiences that distress adolescent girls. Families, schools and communities and their interactions play a significant role in reducing limitations associated with psychological and objective reactions.

Experience of puberty, adolescent girls, qualitative study

Presentation: Poster