

# Puberty blues study

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Society has changed dramatically since the 1970's, especially for teenagers and the newer generations. Although in some ways it is still similar. It seems the biggest impact on these changes all result from technology. The introduction of the internet, mobile phones and social networking, in my eyes, has changed everything. The way families communicate is one of the major differences I have noticed after watching ' Puberty Blues', a television series set in the 1970's, about a series of families and teenagers making their way through life, puberty and problems they might encounter on a daily basis.

The show previewed the way people communicated with each other, always using a voice. Either they called each other via home phone, which meant minimum privacy from your parents. Or talking face-to-face... In one scene, the family were sitting down to dinner when the phone kept ringing, her mother, assuming it was her best friend, said it can wait. It was then from a murmur that it was established by the parents that it was in fact a boyfriend calling for her.

These forms of communications are in itself rare today as a majority of teenagers and adolescents text or message each other and these portable devices with locks and codes means maximum privacy. Today, we meet people on Facebook and other social networking sites. And it's from these profiles that you can establish many things about a person and make a first judgement. Statistics show 34% of Australia's population with a Facebook account are of those between 13 and 24. Not to mention the issue of fake accounts and predators online that can ' groom' vulnerable teenagers and drain personal information out of them.

School during these two different periods of time are quite similar. Cliche groups were very noticeable, the popular kids ECT. For instance in the show, the ' North Cronulla' teenagers were picked on and seen as weird, not as cool. You had the students who truanted, rebelled against their teachers although it was noticed how much bullying occurred back in the day, where as now, it is frowned upon, a majority of students are against it and will defend one-another. Another difference noticed was of sexual relationships, boyfriends and girlfriends, expectations and behaviour.

Knowledge about sex and expectations has been learnt very differently in the past. School sex education is important, yet most of us learn little of what we know about sex from our schooling especially in the 1970's. We're it appeared everything was learn from friends, from family whereas today the media has an effect on our knowledge and recourses. Professor Michael Reiss said the following about sex education in the 70's... ' By the start of the 1970s, school sex education was beginning to change significantly, no doubt largely in response to the great social changes of the 1960s and ' 70s.

Biology textbooks started to provide fuller accounts of the human reproductive systems, while methods of contraception began to be taught more widely. The emphasis was mostly on the provision of accurate information, and aims of sex education programmes included a decrease in ignorance, guilt, embarrassment and anxiety. Issues to do with relationships were probably more often discussed in programmes of personal and social education, or their equivalents, rather than in biology lessons. In the case of ' Puberty Blues' the relationships were based very much on sex life. The males had high expectations of the females, it didn't seem to affect the kids (except

some females) if they didn't talk or have fun as it was all about sexual activities. A majority of the males treated the girls horribly and talked disrespectfully to their mates about their sexual encounters. The girls would do anything to be accepted, to have a good relationship (although the standard of a decent relationship wasn't very high).

In the case of the protagonists in the series, they both began as regular students, in no particular group; they were at first bullied by the 'cool kids'. It was then that they started participating in dangerous activities just to fit in (drinking alcohol and smoking), this wasn't quite peer pressure, but under the circumstances of wanting to fit in, they felt it was necessary, which sadly worked for them. The pressure began after they had been accepted and became romantic with other boys; they were forced into sex by not only the males but the more experienced girls in the group.

The consequences that came with these actions included hurting their self-respect and general morals, sneaking behind parents' backs that wouldn't approve and having to give their black-mailing brother cigarettes to keep him quiet. They may have also gained a reputation in society's eyes, especially other parents and their own. Today, relationships are entirely different for teenagers. Yes in some cases there is an expectation for sexual activity down the track but nothing immediate like in 'Puberty Blues'.

It's more important to have a healthy and trustworthy relationship, to be able to talk and have fun, enjoy each other's company. I can't exactly speak on behalf of males but I still feel there is a touch of disrespect towards women in terms of the privacy of relationship details. According to 'TeensHealth' the 7 necessities for a healthy relationship are- Mutual  
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Respect, trust, honesty, support, fairness/equality, separate identities and good communications which the relationships in ‘ Puberty Blues’ and even most today were lacking some or a lot of. Other risk taking behaviour included drink driving and smoking for adults too.

At this stage in time, the severity and impacts smoking can have on someone had not been specified or broadcasted compared to what it is today. The only restriction was to younger people, not that it stopped them. Quote Terry Martin (article writer, 70’s smoker) - ‘ When I was a young smoker back in the mid 70s, attitudes about tobacco were a lot different than they are today. A person could light up just about anywhere, and while we all knew that cigarette smoking was hazardous to our health, we were in the dark ages about just how dangerous it really was.

Smokers were accepted by society and smoking was tolerated to a degree we can't fathom today. ‘ Drink driving was also swept under the carpet, it wasn’t seen as quite a big deal, whereas after many crashes and lives lost over the years, people started to spread awareness and bring in stronger law enforcement into place. Lastly, drug use was showed a lot on the series , notably by the teenage boys mainly smoking weed, as it is also quite relevant still today in high school students. In both scenarios it has been and is still illegal although this remains to change little to the situation.

Overall a lot has changed over the years, but this sense of rebellion by the younger generation remains and will continue too. We can only hope that after seeing so much improvement over the years after watching ‘ Puberty Blues’ that we can appreciate it and continue to improve it for years to come.

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