Urbanização e idade da menarca na população portuguesa: evolução secular (1880-90 a 1980)

Maria Augusta Rocha
Museu Antropológico
Universidade de Coimbra
3000-056 Coimbra. Portugal

Cristina Padez
Departamento de Antropologia
Universidade de Coimbra
3000-056 Coimbra. Portugal

Maria Helena Xavier de Morais
Rua Bernardo de Albuquerque, 125
3000-073 Coimbra. Portugal

Abstract
The purpose of this study is to analyse the influences of the degree of urbanization in the occurrence of the first menstruation, and to present the secular trend of this important indicator of sexual maturation in Portugal, between 1880/90 and 1980. Menarcheal age was studied in 8261 school girls from the north and centre of Portugal. The sample was collected, between 1981 and 1983, by status quo method and the median age at menarche, estimated by probits, was 13.18 (S.D.±1.20 years). Urban girls had always earlier median age at menarche than rural ones. A secular trend towards earlier menarche was observed – age at menarche declined from 15 (girls born in 1880/1890) to 12.42 years (girls born between 1970 and 1980). This trend must be related to the general improvement in the population’s standard living conditions, as the striking drop of post-neonatal mortality rate shows after the 1960s and 1970s.

Keywords
Menarche, secular trend, puberty, growth, urbanization, Portugal

Resumo
Neste trabalho pretendemos analisar a influência do grau de urbanização no aparecimento do primeiro fluxo menstrual e apresentar a evolução da idade da menarca, em Portugal, no período de 1880/90 a 1980. Uma amostra de 8261 escolares do norte e centro de Portugal foi recolhida, entre 1980 e 1983, pelo método status quo. A idade de menarca estimada por análise probítica foi de