

Knowledge, Attitudes and Preventive Practices of Indigenous Adolescents on Dog Associated Zoonotic Infections

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Abstract : Introduction: Indigenous adolescents are at higher risk of dog associated zoonotic infections (DAZI) as they live closely with free-roaming dogs and have limited access to veterinary care. This study aims to determine the effectiveness of health education interventions towards knowledge, attitudes, and preventive practices (KAP) of adolescents on DAZI. Methods: This one-group pre-and post-intervention study in 5 months period was conducted among Jahai adolescents aged 12 years and above. Jahai is one of the three major tribes of indigenous people in Peninsular Malaysia. Health education intervention programs using posters, slide presentations, comics, video clips, and discussion on DAZI were employed. Repeated measures of within-subjects analysis were used to identify the pre- and post- KAP of the adolescents. Results: There were 54 adolescents participated in this study with a mean age of 15.72 (SD: 2.49) and equal proportions of males (50%) and females (50%). Among the adolescents, 22.2% were married, 5.6% were illiterate, and 44.4% not continuing education at the time of data collection. The majority of them keep dogs as pets (64.8%), and few used dogs for hunting (11.1%). There was significant increase in mean scores of knowledge ($F = 40.92$, $p < 0.001$) and attitudes ($F = 6.43$, $p = 0.014$) of the adolescents. However, the preventive practices towards DAZI showed non-significant improvement on the intervention. Conclusions: The health education intervention programs showed to be effective in improving the attitudes and practices related to dog associated zoonotic infections. Emphasis on sustained health education programs is important to foster good health and wellbeing of the indigenous community.

Keywords : adolescent health, dog associated infection, zoonotic, KAP, indigenous

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