

Effectiveness of Peer Reproductive Health Education Program in Improving Knowledge, Attitude, and Use Health Service of High School Adolescent Girls in Eritrea in 2014

Authors : Ghidey Ghebreyohanes, Eltahir Awad Gasim Khalil, Zemenfes Tsighe, Faiza Ali

Abstract : Background: reproductive health (RH) is a state of physical, mental and social well-being in all matters relating to the reproductive system at all stages of life. In East Africa including Eritrea, adolescents comprise more than a quarter of the population. The region holds the highest rates of sexually transmitted diseases, HIV, unwanted pregnancy and unsafe abortion with its complications. Young girls carry the highest burden of reproductive health problems due to their risk taking behavior, lack of knowledge, peer pressure, physiologic immaturity and low socioeconomic status. Design: this was a Community-based, randomized, case-controlled and pre-test-post-test intervention study. Setting: Zoba Debub was randomly selected out of the six zobas in Eritrea. The four high schools out of the 26 in Zoba Debub were randomly selected as study target schools. Over three quarter of the people live on farming. The target population was female students attending grade nine with majority of these girls live in the distant villages and walk to school. The study participants were randomly selected (n=165) from each school. Furthermore, the 1 intervention and 3 controls for the study arms were assigned randomly. Objectives: this study aimed to assess the effectiveness of peer reproductive health education in improving knowledge, attitude, and health service use of high school adolescent girls in Eritrea Methods: the protocol was reviewed and approved by the Scientific and Ethics Committees of Faculty of Nursing Sciences, University of Khartoum. Data was collected using pre-designed and pretested questionnaire emphasizing on reproductive health knowledge, attitude and practice. Sample size was calculated using proportion formula (α 0.01; power of 95%). Measures used were scores and proportions. Descriptive and inferential statistics, t-test and chi square at (α .01), 99% confidence interval were used to compare changes of pre and post-intervention scores using SPSS soft ware. Seventeen students were selected for peer educators by the school principals and other teachers based on inclusion criteria that include: good academic performance and acceptable behavior. One peer educator educated one group composed of 8-10 students for two months. One faculty member was selected to supervise peer educators. The principal investigator conducted the training of trainers and provided supervision and discussion to peer educators every two weeks until the end of intervention. Results: following informed consent, 627 students [164 in intervention and 463 in the control group] with a ratio of 1 to 3, were enrolled in the study. The mean age for the total study population was 15.4 ± 1.0 years. The intervention group mean age was 15.3 ± 1.0 year; while the control group had a mean age of 15.4 ± 1.0 . The mean ages for the study arms were similar ($p = 0.4$). The majority (96 %) of the study participants are from Tigrigna ethnic group. Reproductive knowledge scores which was calculated out of a total 61 grade points: intervention group (pretest 6.7 %, post-test 33.6 %; $p = 0.0001$); control group (pretest 7.3 %, posttest 7.3 %, $p = 0.92$). Proportion difference in attitude calculated out of 100%: intervention group (pretest 42.3 % post test 54.7% $p = 0.001$); controls group (pretest 45%, post test 44.8 $p = 0.7$). Proportion difference in Practice calculated out of 100 %: intervention group (pretest 15.4%, post test 80.4 % $p = 0.0001$); control group (pretest 16.8%, posttest 16.9 % $p = 0.8$). Mothers were quoted as major (> 90 %) source of reproductive health information. All focus group discussants and most of survey participants agreed on the urgent need of reproductive health information and services for adolescent girls. Conclusion: reproductive health knowledge and use of facilities is poor among adolescent girls in sub-urban Eretria. School-based peer reproductive health education is effective and is the best strategy to improve reproductive health knowledge and attitudes.

Keywords : reproductive health, adolescent girls, eretria, health education

Conference Title : ICPD 2015 : International Conference on Population and Development

Conference Location : London, United Kingdom

Conference Dates : May 25-26, 2015