

Factors Associated with Risky Sexual Behaviour in Adolescent Girls and Young Women in Cambodia: A Systematic Review

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Abstract : There is an increase in risky sexual behavior and unsafe sex in adolescent girls and young women aged 15 to 24 years in Cambodia, which negatively affects their reproductive health by increasing the risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections and unintended pregnancies. Risky sexual behavior includes 'having sex at an early age, having multiple sexual partners, having sex while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and unprotected sexual behaviors'. A systematic review of quantitative research conducted in Cambodia was undertaken, using the theoretical framework of the Social Ecological Model to identify the personal, social and cultural factors associated with risky sexual behavior and unsafe sex in young Cambodian women. PRISMA guidelines were used to search databases including Medline Complete, PsycINFO, CINAHL Complete, Academic Search Complete, Global Health, and Social Work Abstracts. Additional searches were conducted in Science Direct, Google Scholar and in the grey literature sources. A risk-of-bias tool developed explicitly for the systematic review of cross-sectional studies was used. Summary item on the overall risk of study bias after the inter-rater response showed that the risk-of-bias was high in two studies, moderate in one study and low in one study. The search strategy included a combination of subject terms and free text terms. The medical subject headings (MeSH) terms included were; contracept* or 'birth control' or 'family planning' or pregnan* or 'safe sex' or 'protected intercourse' or 'unprotected intercourse' or 'protected sex' or 'unprotected sex' or 'risky sexual behaviour*' or 'abort*' or 'planned parenthood' or 'unplanned pregnancy' AND (barrier* or obstacle* or challenge* or knowledge or attitude* or factor* or determinant* or choic* or uptake or discontinu* or acceptance or satisfaction or 'needs assessment' or 'non-use' or 'unmet need' or 'decision making') AND Cambodia*. Initially, 300 studies were identified by using key words and finally, four quantitative studies were selected based on the inclusion criteria. The four studies were published between 2010 and 2016. The study participants ranged in age from 10-24 years, single or married, with 3 to 10 completed years of education. The mean age at sexual debut was reported to be 18 years. Using the perspective of the Social Ecological Model, risky sexual behavior was associated with individual-level factors including young age at sexual debut, low education, unsafe sex under the influence of alcohol and substance abuse, multiple sexual partners or transactional sex. Family level factors included living away from parents, orphan status and low levels of family support. Peer and partner level factors included peer delinquency and lack of condom use. Low socioeconomic status at the society level was also associated with risky sexual behaviour. There is scant research on sexual and reproductive health of adolescent girls and young women in Cambodia. Individual, family and social factors were significantly associated with risky sexual behaviour. More research is required to inform potential preventive strategies and policies that address young women's sexual and reproductive health.

Keywords : adolescents, high-risk sex, sexual activity, unplanned pregnancies

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