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**The Relationship Between Adolescents' Knowledge of Reproductive Health and Their Behavior in Preventing Sexually Transmitted Infections****Cakrawati R^{1*}, Nurhayati²**¹ Midwifery Study Program, Ummi Khasanah Health Polytechnic, Indonesia² Public Health Study Program, Muslim University of Indonesia***Correspondent Author:** Cakrawati R, Email : cakrawati.rhn@gmail.com**ABSTRACT**

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) remain a significant public health problem among adolescents. Lack of knowledge regarding reproductive health often contributes to risky behaviors that increase the likelihood of STI transmission. This study aimed to determine the relationship between adolescents' knowledge of reproductive health and their behavior in preventing sexually transmitted infections.

This study used a quantitative approach with a descriptive analytic design and a cross-sectional method. The sample consisted of 40 adolescents selected using purposive sampling techniques. Data were collected using questionnaires related to reproductive health knowledge and STI prevention behavior. Data analysis was conducted using univariate analysis and Chi-Square statistical tests.

The results showed that most adolescents had a moderate level of reproductive health knowledge. Adolescents with good knowledge tended to demonstrate better preventive behaviors against sexually transmitted infections. Statistical analysis showed a p-value of 0.002 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a significant relationship between adolescents' knowledge of reproductive health and their behavior in preventing sexually transmitted infections.

In conclusion, adolescents' knowledge of reproductive health is significantly related to preventive behaviors against sexually transmitted infections. Therefore, health education and reproductive health promotion among adolescents need to be improved to reduce the risk of STI transmission.

Keywords: *Adolescents, Reproductive Health Knowledge, Sexually Transmitted Infections, Preventive Behavior, Health Education*





1. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a transitional period characterized by physical, psychological, emotional, and social changes. During this stage, adolescents experience reproductive maturation and increased curiosity regarding sexuality and reproductive health. However, inadequate understanding of reproductive health can lead adolescents to engage in risky behaviors that may increase the risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Sexually transmitted infections are infections transmitted primarily through sexual contact. Common STIs include gonorrhea, syphilis, chlamydia, HIV/AIDS, and human papillomavirus (HPV). According to World Health Organization, adolescents and young adults are among the groups most vulnerable to sexually transmitted infections due to limited access to accurate reproductive health information and risky sexual behaviors.

Lack of reproductive health knowledge among adolescents often results in misconceptions regarding sexuality, contraception, and STI prevention. Many adolescents obtain inaccurate information from peers or social media, which may negatively influence their attitudes and behaviors. As a result, adolescents may engage in unsafe sexual practices that increase the risk of STI transmission.

Knowledge is considered one of the most important factors influencing health behavior. Adolescents with adequate reproductive health knowledge are more likely to adopt healthy and preventive behaviors, such as maintaining personal hygiene, avoiding risky sexual activities, and seeking health information from reliable sources.

In addition, family support, school-based health education, peer influence, and access to healthcare services also play important roles in shaping adolescents' behavior regarding reproductive health. Effective reproductive health education programs can improve adolescents' awareness and encourage positive behaviors in preventing sexually transmitted infections.

Despite the increasing availability of health information, discussions regarding reproductive health are still considered taboo in many communities. This cultural barrier often limits adolescents' opportunities to obtain proper reproductive health education and counseling.

Therefore, understanding the relationship between adolescents' knowledge of reproductive health and their preventive behaviors against sexually transmitted infections is essential for developing effective health promotion strategies.

Based on the background above, this study aimed to determine the relationship between adolescents' knowledge of reproductive health and their behavior in preventing sexually transmitted infections.





2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a quantitative approach with a descriptive analytic design using a cross-sectional method.

a. Research Location and Time

The study was conducted among adolescents in the selected research area during the determined study period.

b. Population and Sample

- Population: all adolescents in the research area
- Sample: 40 adolescents
- Sampling technique: purposive sampling

c. Research Variables

- Independent variable: adolescents' knowledge of reproductive health
- Dependent variable: behavior in preventing sexually transmitted infections

d. Research Instruments

The instruments used included:

- Reproductive health knowledge questionnaire
- STI prevention behavior questionnaire
- Observation sheets

e. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using:

- Univariate analysis
- Validity and reliability tests
- Chi-Square statistical test

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a. Results

1) Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	18	45%
Female	22	55%
Total	40	100%

Most respondents were female adolescents.

2) Adolescents' Knowledge of Reproductive Health

Table 2. Level of Reproductive Health Knowledge

Knowledge Level	Frequency	Percentage
Good	12	30%
Moderate	20	50%
Poor	8	20%
Total	40	100%

Most respondents had a moderate level of reproductive health knowledge.





3) Preventive Behavior Against STIs

Table 3. STI Prevention Behavior

Behavior Category	Frequency	Percentage
Good	24	60%
Moderate	10	25%
Poor	6	15%
Total	40	100%

Most adolescents demonstrated good preventive behavior against sexually transmitted infections.

4) Statistical Test Results

Table 4. Chi-Square Test Results

Variables	Sig.
Reproductive Health Knowledge and STI Prevention Behavior	0.002

The p-value of 0.002 ($p < 0.05$) indicates a significant relationship between adolescents' reproductive health knowledge and their preventive behavior against sexually transmitted infections.

b. Discussion

The study findings revealed that adolescents with better reproductive health knowledge tended to exhibit more positive behaviors in preventing sexually transmitted infections. Adequate knowledge helps adolescents understand the risks associated with unsafe sexual behavior and encourages them to adopt preventive measures.

The results are consistent with health behavior theories which state that knowledge is a predisposing factor influencing individual behavior. Adolescents who understand reproductive health issues are more likely to make healthier decisions and avoid risky sexual activities.

In addition, reproductive health education provided by schools, healthcare workers, and families contributes significantly to improving adolescents' awareness regarding STI prevention. Access to accurate and reliable health information also plays an important role in shaping adolescents' attitudes and behaviors.

However, some adolescents still demonstrated poor preventive behaviors despite having moderate knowledge levels. This finding suggests that factors such as peer influence, cultural norms, media exposure, and family communication also affect adolescents' reproductive health behaviors.

Therefore, comprehensive reproductive health education programs are necessary to improve adolescents' knowledge and promote healthy behaviors related to STI prevention.





4. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

a. Conclusion

The results of this study showed that adolescents' knowledge of reproductive health was significantly related to their behavior in preventing sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Adolescents who had better knowledge regarding reproductive health tended to demonstrate more positive preventive behaviors compared to those with lower levels of knowledge. This finding indicates that knowledge plays an important role in shaping healthy behavior among adolescents.

Most respondents in this study had a moderate level of reproductive health knowledge. Although adolescents had basic information regarding reproductive health and sexually transmitted infections, some respondents still lacked a comprehensive understanding of STI transmission, prevention methods, and the importance of maintaining reproductive health. This condition may be influenced by limited access to accurate health information, inadequate reproductive health education, and cultural barriers that consider discussions about sexuality as taboo.

According to World Health Organization, adolescents are one of the most vulnerable groups to sexually transmitted infections because they often have insufficient knowledge and limited access to reproductive health services. Lack of knowledge may lead adolescents to engage in risky behaviors such as unsafe sexual practices, poor personal hygiene, and reluctance to seek medical assistance when experiencing reproductive health problems.

The findings of this study are consistent with health behavior theory, which states that knowledge is a predisposing factor influencing individual behavior. Adolescents who understand the risks associated with sexually transmitted infections are more likely to adopt preventive behaviors, including avoiding risky sexual activities, maintaining reproductive hygiene, and seeking reliable health information.

In addition, reproductive health education provided through schools and healthcare institutions plays a significant role in increasing adolescents' awareness regarding STI prevention. Adolescents who received reproductive health education demonstrated better understanding and healthier preventive behaviors. Educational interventions can help adolescents develop positive attitudes toward reproductive health and encourage responsible decision-making.

Family support also contributes to adolescents' preventive behavior. Adolescents who have open communication with parents regarding reproductive health issues tend to have better knowledge and healthier behaviors. However, in many communities, conversations about sexuality and reproductive health are still considered sensitive topics, limiting adolescents' opportunities to obtain accurate information from family members.





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Peer influence is another important factor affecting adolescents' behavior. Adolescents are highly influenced by their social environment, and peer pressure may lead them to engage in risky behaviors. Therefore, peer-based health education programs may be effective in promoting healthy reproductive behaviors among adolescents.

The study also found that some adolescents still demonstrated poor preventive behaviors despite having moderate levels of knowledge. This finding suggests that knowledge alone may not be sufficient to change behavior. Other factors such as attitudes, beliefs, cultural norms, media exposure, emotional maturity, and environmental influences may also affect adolescents' reproductive health behavior.

Social media and internet access can both positively and negatively influence adolescents' reproductive health knowledge. While digital media provide access to educational resources, they may also expose adolescents to misinformation and inappropriate content. Therefore, adolescents need guidance in accessing accurate and reliable reproductive health information.

Healthcare workers have an important role in providing reproductive health counseling and health promotion programs for adolescents. Counseling services, educational seminars, and youth-friendly healthcare services can help improve adolescents' awareness and preventive behavior regarding sexually transmitted infections.

This study emphasizes the importance of comprehensive reproductive health education involving schools, families, healthcare providers, and communities. Effective collaboration among these stakeholders can help adolescents develop healthy reproductive behaviors and reduce the risk of sexually transmitted infections.

Overall, the findings indicate that improving adolescents' reproductive health knowledge is essential in promoting positive preventive behavior against sexually transmitted infections. Continuous education and support are necessary to help adolescents make informed and healthy decisions regarding their reproductive health.

b. Suggestions

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between adolescents' knowledge of reproductive health and their behavior in preventing sexually transmitted infections. Adolescents who possess better knowledge regarding reproductive health tend to demonstrate healthier and more positive preventive behaviors against STIs.

The study revealed that most adolescents had moderate knowledge levels, indicating that reproductive health education among adolescents still needs improvement.





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Adequate knowledge helps adolescents understand the risks associated with sexually transmitted infections and encourages them to adopt preventive behaviors such as maintaining personal hygiene, avoiding risky sexual behavior, and seeking accurate health information.

The results also showed that reproductive health knowledge alone is not the only factor influencing adolescents' preventive behavior. Other factors such as family support, peer influence, cultural values, media exposure, and access to healthcare information also contribute to shaping adolescents' behavior.

In addition, the study highlighted the importance of reproductive health education programs provided by schools, healthcare workers, and families. Effective and continuous health promotion can improve adolescents' awareness and encourage positive behavioral changes regarding STI prevention.

Therefore, strengthening reproductive health education and increasing access to accurate information are important strategies to reduce the risk of sexually transmitted infections among adolescents and improve their overall reproductive health.

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