A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY ON THE COUNSELLING NEEDS OF UNDERGRADUATE GIRL STUDENTS ON REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH ISSUES IN MADURAI

J.Chitra Devi
Ph.D in Sociology

ABSTRACT

Young girls particularly teenage girls aged between 10-19 years face on an average twice the risk of dying from pregnancy or childbirth than women aged 20-34 years old due to lack of reliable reproductive health information and the basic knowledge to make responsible choices regarding their reproductive behavior (D Neelofur-khan, WHO, 2007). This report presents the results of study conducted to assess the awareness of final year undergraduate girl students at Madurai Corporation and to explore the counselling needs on reproductive health issues.

Objectives

1. To assess the socio-economic profile of undergraduate girl students in the college.
2. To find out the awareness level of the reproductive health issues among undergraduate girl students.
3. To know the pre-marital counselling needs of the study population.
4. To impart knowledge on reproductive health issues among study population.

Hypotheses

Based on the objectives, the Present Study had following hypotheses:

1. The mean difference of demographic profile of the respondents does not differ significantly with the Need for Reproductive Health Education.
2. The mean difference of demographic profile of the respondents differs significantly with the Need for Reproductive Health Education.

Methods:

For quantitative data collection, questionnaire was used among 500 U.G. final year girl students (250 arts and 250 science students) who were selected through a stratified random sampling method. Qualitative data were collected by conducting focus group discussions (48 participants), case study and observation methods.

Results:

Majority (65.2%) of the respondents do not aware of the term ‘reproductive health’. 84% of arts students and 77.6% science students are not aware of STD symptoms. But most of them (90.4% arts & 95.2% science) students are having awareness on HIV. Among 96
respondents who have irregular menstrual cycle, 58.3% of them do not take any treatment for their problems. Majority (72.6%) of the respondents discuss about reproductive health issues with their friends. There is a significant (p=0.016) relationship between educational qualification of mother and need for reproductive health education of the respondents. It is also observed that respondents have very low awareness on family planning methods and fertile & infertile period of the menstrual cycle. They (54.4% respondents) also do not have knowledge on the impact of infertility. It is evident from the study that majority (73.31%) of the respondents were not sufficiently taught about reproductive health.

Conclusion

Strategies aimed at appropriate reproductive health education through nutritional counselling, sex education and life-skill education in a friendly way would help adolescents to increase their knowledge on reproductive health issues and lead a healthy and happy life.

Suggestions

1. Organization of students friendly counselling at colleges.
2. Establishment of Pre-marital counselling centres in the colleges.
3. Organization of sensitization programmes for parents, teachers and adolescents on reproductive health education.

Key words: Adolescents, Reproductive health, Reproductive education, HIV, AIDS.