

KNOWLEDGE OF SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AMONG ADOLESCENTS ATTENDING SCHOOL IN KELANTAN, MALAYSIA

Azriani Ab Rahman², Razlina Ab Rahman¹, Mohd Ismail Ibrahim², Halim Salleh²,
Shaiful Bahri Ismail¹, Siti Hawa Ali³, Wan Manan Wan Muda³, Maizun Ishak⁴
and Amaluddin Ahmad¹

¹Department of Family Medicine, ²Department of Community Medicine,
³School of Health Sciences, ⁴Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology,
School of Medical Sciences, Health Campus, Universiti Sains Malaysia,
Kubang Kerian, Kelantan, Malaysia

Abstract. The objectives of this study were to describe the knowledge of sexual and reproductive health among adolescents attending school and to compare the levels of knowledge between males and females and between older and younger groups of adolescents. A cross-sectional study was conducted among 1,034 secondary school students using a self administered validated questionnaire. The items with the fewest correct responses included: whether one can get pregnant after a single act of sexual intercourse (30.4%), whether sexual intercourse causes sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) (12.4%) and whether washing the vagina after sexual intercourse prevents pregnancy (17.0%). Their main source of sexual information was friends (64.4%). An independent *t*-test revealed the mean knowledge score was significantly higher among females than males on items assessing whether the genitalia may be touched freely by family members, females having attained menarche may become pregnant if having sex, whether pregnancy will occur if there is penetration of the penis into the vagina, whether premarital sexual intercourse causes pregnancy and if there is a relationship between abandoned babies and premarital pregnancies. The mean knowledge score assessing whether pregnancy can be prevented using condoms was higher among males than females. The mean knowledge scores were significantly higher among form four and form five students than forms one, two and three students. Lack of knowledge regarding important aspects of sexual and reproductive health warrant the need to strengthen sexual and reproductive health education.

Keywords: knowledge, sexual and reproductive health, school going adolescents

Correspondence: Dr Azriani Ab Rahman, Department of Community Medicine, School of Medical Sciences, Health Campus, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 16150 Kubang Kerian, Kelantan, Malaysia.

Fax: 609-767 6654

E-mail: azriani@kb.usm.my