

PARENTAL SUPPORT FOR SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH INFORMATION AND SERVICES FOR UNMARRIED YOUTH IN CHENGDU, CHINA

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Abstract. The objective of the study was to explore parental perspectives and attitudes towards the provision of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) information and services to unmarried youth in Chengdu, China. A representative sample of parents was drawn using multi-stage stratified cluster sampling technique, and information was collected using a structured questionnaire. The eligible respondents were parents (both fathers and mothers) who had at least one unmarried adolescent and/or youth aged 15 to 24 years old. A total of 2,871 fathers and mothers were interviewed. Parents' SRH-related knowledge was poor and dissonant attitudes of tolerance and ambivalence towards provision of SRH information and services to unmarried youth were found. About 80% of parents accepted and understood unmarried youth seeking SRH counseling service, but the percentages of such positive attitude was much lower for premarital contraceptive use. Over half of the parents were supportive of providing SRH education and information to unmarried youth; whereas on the provision of contraceptive services to sexually active unmarried youth, 27% were negative, 25% accepted, 36% indicated an understanding, and the rest 12% had no opinion. Parents' SRH-related knowledge and attitudes were associated with parental social-demographic characteristics. Findings from this study suggest that parent-oriented programs are needed to apprise them of the existing SRH conditions of the unmarried youth in China, to allay fears and misconceptions of parents, and to enhance family-based sex education in terms of increasing parents' SRH knowledge and their capacity and skills of providing such information to unmarried youth.

Keywords: parental attitudes, unmarried youth, sexual and reproductive health, China

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