

Knowledge, Attitude and Practice on Sexual Health among Students of Centre for Foundation Studies

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Sexual health is not merely just avoiding infectious disease or unwanted pregnancy, but it is broader issue that required serious attention. People with sexually transmitted infection or unwanted pregnancy also have the chances to be sexually healthy. In order to be sexually healthy, ones must recognize the sexual rights that we share, having the access to get the sexual health education, and able to communicate with the healthcare providers regarding the issues of sexual health and empowered to prevent sexually transmitted disease and unwanted pregnancy. **Aims:** This study aims to determine the level of knowledge, attitudes, and practices on sexual health among the students of centre for foundation studies (CFS). **Method:** A cross-sectional study was conducted among 320 participants by using a close-ended question. **Result:** The results showed that, there were high level of knowledge on sexual health among CFS students with excellent understandings on non-permissible premarital sexual intercourse displayed by their non-experience confessions. **Conclusion:** This study findings can be used for future to develop intervention in order to decrease the sexual health problems by enlightening the students on proper knowledge, attitude and practice on sexual health.

Keywords: Sexual health, Knowledge, Attitude, Practice, Students

INTRODUCTION

World Health Organization (WHO) defined sexual health as “a state of physical, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality (1). It requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence”. There are about 5.5 million adolescents in Malaysia, and more than half of the number is still schooling (2). Numbers of issues have been

highlighted among the adolescent’s population in Malaysia and among the serious one was on sexual health (2). Teenage and unwanted pregnancy, sexual abuse, sexual grooming, sexually transmitted diseases were among the frequently highlighted.

However, sexual and reproductive health with the rights education is not fully been integrated in the school curricula and it is a short-term course (3). The students believed that sex education is a time-consuming project (3). There also lack of community involvement in making the sex education a success. A study has found that there is lack of knowledge on important sexual and reproductive health among adolescents (4). The findings from the studies warrant the need for a proper sexual education in schools (5). This highlight the importance of sexual health knowledge and safety to be included in current curriculum. Furthermore, the people’s attitudes towards sex is influenced by their religious beliefs which caused them to be more conservative rather than being open in discussing sex (6,7).

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A study done in the central zone of Malaysia stated that the risky behaviour practiced by the sexually active persons in the study is alarming. 66.7% of the respondents are having sexual intercourse with multiple partners while 18% are practicing sexual activities with commercial sex workers (8). Knowledge, attitudes, and practices in sexual health are the vital factors that need to be considered to resolve issues affecting the implementation of sex education in schools (9). This is because an improved knowledge of sexual health may prevent the students from engaging with the sexual health problems therefore contribute in decreasing the sexual issues incidence. Consequently, examine knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding the sexual health will enable the adolescent's management to get the best information on any gaps about the education regarding sexual health. Hence, this study aimed to determine the level of knowledge on sexual health, their attitudes towards sex, and their practice regarding adolescents' sexual health among centre for foundation studies (CFS) at International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) students in Kuantan.

METHOD

This study used a descriptive cross-sectional design. This study was conducted at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Kuantan campus. A total of 320 out of 2026 students from Centre of Foundation Studies (CFS) in IIUM Kuantan campus were participated in this study. Raosoft sample size calculator was used to calculate the required samples for this study (10). Convenience sampling method was used in recruiting the studied participants. All participants that meet the inclusion criteria such as Malaysian, CFS IIUM students, 18 or 19 years old, can understand Malay and English language, and willingly to participate in this study. The data was collected from April 2019 to end of May 2019 after obtaining the approval from Kulliyah of Nursing Postgraduate and Research Committee (KNPGRC) and IIUM Research Committee (IREC).

The self-administered questionnaire which was adopted from the "Keep Our Teens Safe" under the doctoral research by previous study was used in this study (11). The approval to use this tool has also taken from the original author. The questionnaire consists of 4 sections with the total of 17 questions as following; Section 1: socio-demographic characteristics of participants, Section 2: Knowledge of sexual health, Section 3: attitude on pre-marital sexual intercourse, Section 4: Practice of sexual health.

The scoring for knowledge, attitude and practice was classified as; total score of 0 to 10 as low level of knowledge, 11 and above as high level of knowledge, total score of 4 to 8 considered as permissible and 9 to 16 as non-permissible for attitude, total score of "0" considered as no experience and 1 and above is considered as have experience of sexual intercourse. All the collected data was analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 software.

RESULTS

A total of 320 participants from CFS IIUM in Kuantan were participated in this study. Of the 324 questionnaire responses received, two were incomplete and two participants submitted an empty questionnaire thus leaving total of 320 valid surveyed for analysis with descriptive and inferential statistics using SPSS Version 20.0 (IBM SPSS Statistics). From the 320 participants, 116 (36.3%) were male and 204 (63.7%) were female. They were from different age which 53 (16.6%) of them were 18 years old, and the remaining 267 (83.4%) of them were 19 years old. Participants were from two different foundation program, 140 (43.8%) studying in science foundation, while 180 (56.3%) were studying in arts foundation program respectively as shown in table 1.

Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of Participants (N=320)

Variables	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	116	36.3
Female	204	63.7
(Mean ± SD) = 0.64 ± 0.481		
Age		
18 years old	53	16.6
19 years old	267	83.4
(Mean ± SD) = 0.83 ± 0.372		
Stream of Study		
Science	140	43.8
Arts	180	56.3
(Mean ± SD) = 0.56 ± 0.497		

Table 2 described the overall findings of the studied participants' level of knowledge, attitude and practice towards sexual health. Most of the studied participants demonstrated high level of knowledge regarding sexual health with total of 282 (88.1%). Only 38 (11.9%) of the participants are having low level of sexual health knowledge. Regards to the participants' attitudes towards sexual health, most of the participants were having a non-permissible attitude on premarital sex with the number of 301 (94.1%) while the remaining having a permissible attitude on premarital sex with the number of 19 (5.9%). For the studied participant's practices towards sexual health, 5 (1.6%) admitted on having experience in sexual intercourse while another 315 (98.4%) admitted never done any sexual intercourse before.

Table 2: Level of Knowledge, attitude and practice towards sexual health (N=320)

Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Level of knowledge on sexual health:		
Low	38	11.9
High	282	88.1
Total	320	100
Level of attitude on sexual health:		
Permissible	19	5.9
Non-permissible	301	94.1
Total	320	100
Level of practice on sexual health		
No experience	315	98.4
Have experience	5	1.6
Total	320	100

Chi-square test has used to analyse the association between socio-demographic characteristics and the level of knowledge, attitude and practice of studied participants towards sexual health. As shown in table 3, the result the association between socio-demographic and knowledge of sexual health showed that there was a significant association between the gender and the level of knowledge with the p-value of 0.038 and for the statistical decision. Furthermore, there was no significant association between age and level of knowledge with the p-value of 0.743. The p-value for stream of study was 0.107.

Table 3: Association between socio-demographic characteristics with the level of knowledge towards sexual health (N=320)

Variables	Frequency (n)	Level of knowledge on sexual health		X ² Statistics (df)	*p-value Values
		Low n (%)	High n (%)		
Gender					
Male	116	8 (2.5)	108 (33.75)	4.310 (1)	0.038
Female	204	30 (9.37)	174 (54.37)		
*Chi-square test, p<0.05 as significant 95%CI.					
Age					
18 years old	53	7 (2.18)	46 (14.37)	0.108 (1)	0.743
19 years old	267	31 (9.68)	236 (73.75)		
*Chi-square test, p<0.05 as significant 95%CI.					
Stream of study					
Sciences	140	12 (3.75)	128 (38.43)	2.596 (1)	0.107
Arts	180	26 (8.125)	154 (48.12)		
*Chi-square test, p<0.05 as significant 95%CI.					

As shown in table 4, there was significant association between the gender and the level of attitude with the p-value of 0.000 and for the statistical decision. There was also significant association between stream of study and level of attitude as the p-value 0.025. There was no significant association between the age and the level of attitude with p-value of 0.587 and for the statistical decision.

Table 4: Association between socio-demographic characteristics with the level of attitude towards sexual health (N=320)

Variables	Frequency (n)	Level of attitude on sexual health		X ² Statistics (df)	*p-value Values
		Permissible n (%)	Non-permissible n (%)		
Gender					
Male	116	15 (4.68)	101 (31.56)	15.935 (1)	0.000
Female	204	4 (1.25)	200 (62.5)		
Age					
18 years old	53	4 (1.25)	49 (15.31)	0.295 (1)	0.587
19 years old	267	15 (4.68)	252 (78.75)		
Stream of study					
Sciences	140	13 (4.06)	127 (39.68)	4.996 (1)	0.025
Arts	180	6 (1.87)	174 (4.37)		

*Chi-square test, p<0.05 as significant 95%CI.

As shown in table 5, the result showed that there is significant association between gender and level of practice with p-value of 0.003 and for the statistical decision. There was also significant association between stream of study and level of attitude with p-value less than 0.05 which is 0.04. There was no significant association between age and level of practice regarding sexual health with p-value 0.315 which is higher than 0.05.

Table 5: Association between socio-demographic characteristics with the level of practice towards sexual health (N=320)

Variables	Frequency (n)	Level of practice on sexual health		X ² Statistics (df)	*P Values
		No experience n (%)	Have experience n (%)		
Gender				8.933 (1)	0.003
Male	116	111 (34.68)	5 (1.56)		
Female	204	204 (63.75)	0 (0)		
*Chi-square test, p<0.05 as significant 95%CI.					
Age				1.008 (1)	0.315
18 years old	53	53 (16.56)	0 (0)		
19 years old	267	262 (81.87)	5 (1.56)		
*Chi-square test, p<0.05 as significant 95%CI.					
Stream of study				3.951 (1)	0.047
Sciences	140	140 (43.75)	0 (0)		
Arts	180	175 (54.68)	5 (1.56)		
*Chi-square test, p<0.05 as significant 95%CI.					

DISCUSSION

The main findings of this study revealed that majority of studied participants had high level of knowledge (88.1%) regarding sexual health. However, they have a non-permissible attitude on pre-marital sexual intercourse (94.1%) and most of them have never experienced any sexual intercourse before (98.4%).

Most of the participants demonstrated high level of knowledge regarding sexual health. However, the result of the current study was contradicted with the previous study which they found that more than half of their participants had low knowledge of sexual health (4). Majority of the respondents also having a non-permissible attitude regarding pre-marital sexual intercourse which is supported by a previous studied (12). Current study showed that almost all of the participants have no experience on any sexual

intercourse before. This differs from the previous studied which they found that 60% of their respondents had done sexual intercourse during adolescent age (13). Gender and level of knowledge is found significantly associated in this study which has similar finding from previous study (14). There is also significant association between gender level of attitude. Previous research also found the association between gender and attitude on sexual health (15). Gender of participants also found to be significantly associated to level of practice which has similar to the findings of previous study (16).

The findings of this study can be used to develop intervention in order to decrease the sexual health problems in the future by enlightening the school students on proper knowledge, attitude and practice on sexual health. This could give an idea of where efforts in education should be directed. This is due to education may have the impact of how our school students act in their sexual behaviour and that attitude is an important factor in order to follow the safe sexual behaviour. Besides that, the students can implement and share their knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding sexual health on themselves as well as decreases the statistics of sexual health problems.

CONCLUSION

Although the studied participants already have good knowledge, attitude and practice regarding sexual health, the universities can also provide annual seminar or workshops about sexual health. This is to increase the awareness and refresh students' knowledge and understanding on keeping sexually healthy as well as gaining detail updated information about sexual health. Furthermore, as an Islamic University, we can instil Islamic values about the importance of taking care of our sexual health especially for foundation studies students. This can improve the quality of sexual health among young stars as well as decrease the statistical rate of sexual disorders and problems in our country.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest in this study.

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