







SHORT COMMUNICATION

Knowledge needs on the prevention of unwanted pregnancies in adolescents from the Alluriquín Parish, Santo Domingo

Necesidades de conocimientos sobre la prevención de embarazos no deseados y en adolescentes de la Parroquia Alluriquín, Santo Domingo

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: adolescent pregnancy is a public health problem that involves physical, emotional, and social risks.

Objective: to identify knowledge needs regarding the prevention of unwanted pregnancies and the promotion of sexual education in adolescents.

Methods: face-to-face interviews with open questions were applied in order to obtain real data based on personal criteria of adolescents from the Alluriquín Parish, Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas province, during the period November 2023 - April 2024. The surveys were conducted with a total of 54 adolescents, from a universe of 80. The adolescents included were basically selected based on their interest in participating.

Results: in this diagnosis, behavioral patterns and needs were recorded in relation to the importance of preventing teenage pregnancies and how they negatively affect health and personal development. It is essential to address the social affront associated with teenage pregnancy and facilitate a supportive environment for adolescents to make good decisions.

Conclusions: an intervention project was considered to measure variables that allow a more in-depth determination of learning needs on the subject in this population.

Keywords: Pregnancy; Adolescent; Prevention; Contraceptive Agents; Reproductive Health.

RESUMEN

Introducción: El embarazo en adolescentes es un problema de salud pública que implica riesgos físicos, emocionales y sociales.

Objetivo: identificar necesidades de conocimientos sobre la prevención de embarazos no deseados y promoción de educación sexual en adolescentes.

Métodos: se aplicaron entrevistas cara a cara con preguntas abiertas para poder obtener datos reales basados en criterios personales de las adolescentes de la Parroquia Alluriquín, provincia de Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas, durante el periodo noviembre 2023 – abril 2024. Las encuestas fueron realizadas a un total de 54 adolescentes, de un universo de 80. Las adolescentes incluidas básicamente fueron seleccionadas a partir de su interés en participar.

Resultados: en este diagnóstico se registraron patrones de comportamiento y necesidades en relación a la importancia de la prevención de los embarazos en adolescentes y cómo afectan negativamente a la salud y desarrollo personal. Es esencial abordar el afrento social afiliado al embarazo adolescente y facilitar un entorno de apoyo para que los adolescentes tomen buenas decisiones.

Conclusiones: fue considerado realizar un proyecto de intervención para medir variables que permitan determinar más a fondo las necesidades de aprendizaje sobre la temática en esta población.

Palabras claves: Embarazo; Adolescencia; Prevención; Anticonceptivo; Salud Reproductiva.

INTRODUCTION

Comprehensive sexuality education within schools can address topics such as anatomy and physiology, the method of preventing sexually transmitted diseases, and the use of contraceptives. It can also promote open communication about sexuality among young students and foster a healthy attitude toward relationships and intimacy. By presenting accurate information, schools and colleges can play a crucial role in reducing unintended adolescent pregnancies.⁽¹⁾

Lack of comprehensive and accessible sexuality education is a key factor in teenage pregnancy. When adolescents do not have access to accurate and reliable information about sexuality, contraception, and pregnancy prevention, they are more likely to make unprepared sexual decisions, which can lead to unintended pregnancies.

Adolescents may have difficulty accessing reproductive health services, including contraceptives and prenatal care. This is because of economic barriers due to lack of information about where to get help or stigma associated with adolescent sexuality.

Adolescent pregnancy is a worldwide phenomenon that requires specialized attention. Adolescent pregnancies are associated with higher rates of complications during pregnancy and childbirth, as well as with a higher risk of school dropout and limitations in educational and employment opportunities. In addition, it was found that adolescent mothers are at greater risk of facing economic hardship and falling into poverty. It is vital to take this problem into account in a comprehensive manner and access to reproductive health services, emotional and social support for pregnant adolescents.^(2,3,4,5)

Adolescent pregnancies pose a great risk to the physical health of both adolescent mothers and their babies. That is, adolescents have a high chance of experiencing difficulties during pregnancy and childbirth, such as preeclampsia, premature delivery and low birth weight. In addition, pregnant adolescents may experience emotional stress and anxiety due to the challenges associated with early pregnancy and childbearing.

Pregnant young women face various obstacles, such as: complications during pregnancy and childbirth due to their physical and emotional immaturity, difficulty in continuing their studies, as they are often forced to drop out of school to fulfill the responsibility of caring for their child, thus limiting future employment opportunities and personal development.^(3,6,7) The objective of this research was to identify knowledge needs regarding the prevention of unwanted pregnancies and the promotion of sexual education in adolescents.

METHODS

The present study project has a qualitative approach; a face-to-face interview with open-ended questions was applied in order to obtain real data based on personal criteria from the adolescents of Alluriquín Parish, province of Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas, during the period November 2023 - April 2024. The surveys were conducted with a total of 54 adolescents, out of a universe of 80. The adolescents included were basically selected based on their interest in participating.

In this diagnosis, behavioral patterns and needs were recorded in relation to the importance of teenage pregnancy prevention and how they negatively affect health and personal development. The method of open-ended questions was used to obtain a broader point of view on the subject.

The principles of medical ethics and the postulates of the Declaration of Helsinki were taken into account.

RESULTS

According to the interviews conducted with adolescent girls from the parish of Alluriquín, in the province of Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas, Ecuador. The following is indicated:

Question 1

Have you received any lectures on the use of contraceptives?

The interviewees stated that in their school they have received talks or training on sexual education, but they are isolated and lacking in content. When talking about the use of contraceptive methods, they agree that they have little knowledge of the topic in terms of its proper use or effectiveness. It is very important that young people receive talks or trainings where they are provided with accurate and evidence-based information about different methods available, as well as the importance of sex education, prevention of unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases to provide students with the opportunity to make wise decisions about their sexual and reproductive health, reduce unwanted pregnancies and prevent the spread of sexually transmitted disease

Question 2

Do they know what the consequences of having unprotected sex are? They mention that they are not clear about what the consequences are, but refer that they would have to drop out if they became pregnant, as they would have to give up their studies due to lack of support from their parents because of the pregnancy. It is important to note that not all adolescents who experience an unintended pregnancy face all of these consequences, and some may have strong support systems to help them cope with the challenges. However, it is crucial to take steps to prevent unintended adolescent pregnancy through sex education, access to contraception, and emotional and social support. In addition, it is critical to provide support to adolescents who are already pregnant so that they can access the necessary health care and educational opportunities.

SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM

Based on the above elements, an intervention project was considered to measure variables to further determine the learning needs of this population. Some key strategies have been considered to address this problem including: the implementation of comprehensive sexual education programs in schools and communities, from these programs will provide accurate information on sexual and reproductive health. Establish health centers that provide sexual and reproductive health services tailored to the needs of adolescents. Promote healthy and equitable relationships, which will contribute to a decrease in the rate of early adolescent pregnancies.

CONCLUSIONS

Making a difference in the knowledge of sexual and reproductive health education in schools provided accurate information and empowered adolescents to make informed decisions about contraception and barrier methods. Supporting adolescents with relevant information about free services offered by the Ministry of Public Health reduced barriers to adolescent sexual health care. The contribution of information on psychosocial and emotional support programs for adolescents of childbearing age was essential to address the emotional challenges associated with adolescent pregnancy.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

Author Contribution

RJAB, BCEL, GNAGA, VLLP: Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Research, Project management, Resources, Supervision, Visualization, Writing - original draft, Writing - review and editing. JFRR: Data Curation, Conceptualization, Formal Analysis, Research, Methodology, Software, Project Management, Validation, Resources, Visualization, Writing - original draft, Writing - review and editing.

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