

Reproductive Health: Concealed Issues among Rural Adolescent School Girls

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Abstract

Introduction: World Health Organization (WHO) defines adolescence as the period of life between 10 and 19 years of age. Adolescents compose 24% of the total population in Bangladesh, and about 54% of them are females. Various government and nongovernment agencies have conducted some limited studies on the awareness of reproductive health among adolescents in isolation. Therefore, this study was a modest attempt to explore the issues like; knowledge about sexually transmitted diseases (STDs and AIDS), opinion about reproductive health problem, opinion as their choice for any health care center for reproductive health problems, opinion about information need to be added in school books on reproductive health.

Objective: To explore the alertness on the reproductive health problems among rural adolescents school going girls.

Methods: This was a descriptive cross sectional study carried out among 185 adolescent girls (10-19 years of age) in two schools (Ased and Shahin school) at Savar Upozilla, Dhaka. The respondents were selected purposively as per non-probability sampling technique.

Results: The mean age of the respondents were 14.5 years. Majority (57.3%) respondents had knowledge about STDS & AIDS and rest 42.7% did not know about STDS & AIDS. Regarding discussion of reproductive health problems with others almost all (95.7%) discuss with others and only 3.3% did not. Concerning choice to select health care centre for solving their reproductive health problems (64.3%) respondents opined that they select any health care centre for sowing their reproductive health probuns and rest 35.7% did not do that. Regarding opinion about adding of reproductive information in school books, majority (74.6%) think that it should be added and rest 25.4% did not agree with the opinion of adding of reproductive information in school books.

Conclusion: The study showed that adolescent school going girls had various misconceptions about reproductive health. This situation was due to the fact that not only the teachers, even their parents hesitate to discuss such issues with them and more over there is no much knowledge on this subject among the parents.

Key words: Reproductive health, adolescents, rural school girls

Introduction

World Health Organization (WHO) defines adolescence as the period of life between 10 and 19 years of age. The adolescent experiences not only physical growth and change but also emotional, psychological, social, and mental change and growth. Adolescence is a period of increased risk taking and therefore susceptibility to behavioral problems at the time of puberty and new concerns about reproductive health¹. Limited access to Reproductive Health (RH) information among female

adolescents can increase their vulnerability to health problems. Therefore, it is important to provide them with accurate and age-appropriate information². Adolescents compose 24% of the total population in Bangladesh, and about 54% of them are females. To date, little is known about the awareness of reproductive health among adolescent girls in Bangladesh. Various government and nongovernment agencies have conducted some limited studies on the awareness of reproductive health among adolescents in isolation³. Among adolescents, girls are biologically more susceptible to sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV infection. Thus, in order to lead a healthy, responsible, fulfilling life and to have protection from reproductive health problems, adolescents need to have sound information about the physical, psychological and social changes that take place through childhood and adolescence⁴. Mothers, mostly illiterate and ill informed themselves, restrict their communication with daughters to the topic of menstruation only and are reluctant to touch on issues of safe sex or reproductive wellness⁵. Adolescent girls lacking adequate knowledge about sexual matter and contraception which results in early pregnancy, increased risk of STD infections maternal morbidity and mortality and unsafe abortions⁵. Many young girls without proper knowledge about menstruation

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are shocked to find themselves bleeding during that phase.⁶ This study revealed to assess the alertness on the reproductive health problems among rural adolescents school going girls.

Material and Methods

This was a descriptive cross sectional study carried out among the adolescent girls among 185 girls (10-19 years age) selected purposively from two schools (Ased and Shahin school) at Savar Upozilla, Dhaka. The area was purposely selected for convenient data collection and to get adequate sample of study group where communication were easily approachable. The total study period was from 8th November 2017 to 8th December 2018. A non-probability sampling technique was followed. Data were generated using a pre-tested structured questionnaire on given date. The generated information were manually collected and edited at first then analysis was done by SPSS Program (17 version).

Results

Table 1: Distribution of the respondents by age (n=185)

Age (In years)	Frequency	Percentage
10-12	48	25.9
13-15	135	73.0
16-19	2	1.1
Total	185	100.0

Table 1 shows that most (73.0%) of the respondents were in of 13-15 years age group and the mean ages of the respondents were 14.5 years.

Table 2: Distribution of the respondents by their knowledge about sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and AIDS (n=185)

Knowledge about sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and AIDS	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	106	57.3
No	79	42.7
Total	185	100

Table 2 shows that among the respondents 106(57.3%) had the knowledge about STD and AIDS and among 79 (42.7%) did not know about STD.

Table 3: Distribution of the respondent by their opinion about discussion of reproductive health problems with others (n= 185)

Opinion of the reproductive health problem discuss with the others	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	177	95.7
No	8	4.3
Total	185	100.0

Table 3 shows that amongst 95.7% girls had the view regarding the discussion of reproductive health problems with others and midst 4.3% did not discuss with others.

Table 4: Distribution of respondent by their opinion as their choice to go to health care center for solving the reproductive health problems (n=185)

Opinion as their choice to go health care center for solving the RH problems	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	119	64.3
No	66	35.7
Total	185	100.0

Table 4 shows that 64.3% girls had their opinion as their choice to go any health care center for solving the reproductive health problems and 35.7% did not do that.

Table 5: Distribution of respondent by their opinion about RH information need to be add in school books

Opinion about RH information need to be added in school books	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	138	74.6
No	47	25.4
Total	185	100.0

Table 5 shows about 74.6% of the respondents think that RH information needed to be add in school books & rest 25.4% respondents did not.

Discussion

The study was done to determine the knowledge about the reproductive health among the rural adolescent school going girls. This study same as Kotwal N, Khan N, Kaul S. their study “Knowledge of reproductive health among adolescent school girls of Jammu district” (labelling of the RO, N=150, total score=156, mean score 1.04±0.5 4).⁴ Almost 106 (57.3%) had knowledge regarding STD and AIDS, 79 (42.7%) did not have (Table 2). Reviewing the literature available regarding awareness level of adolescents towards sex related issues it is found that majority of the adolescents were aware of certain aspects of sex education as HIV, AIDS, Menarche, but not much of it.⁷⁻⁹ Respondents opinion about information on reproductive health should be added in school books all most 138 (74.6%) girls answered yes and 47 (25.4%) no (Table 5).The students in the study also agreed on the importance of learning about RH while they are in school, stating, This opinion is same as mina working series Sara, A. Hanafy et.al. study “We have limited knowledge so it is important to gain more information if it's within culture and norms.”¹⁰.

Conclusion

This study revealed that there was limited access to reproductive health for the adolescent school going girls. Advocate for reproductive health service need to develop better innovative ways to provide this important services. Government should paying attention to raise awareness on reproductive health problems among the adolescent girls and their parents.

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