An Exploratory Study to Assess the Reproductive Sexual Health Behaviour and its Relationship with Academic Performance among Adolescent Students in the Selected School of Manipur

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Abstract

Introduction: Adolescence is a period when the individual is vulnerable and exposure to sexually implicit/explicit programs on television and internet can influence their sexual behaviour and make them more permissive towards premarital sex, which is known to influence their academic performance. Keeping this in view, an exploratory study was done to assess the reproductive sexual health behaviour and its relationship with academic performance among adolescent students in the selected school of Manipur. The main objectives of the study were to identify sexual health behaviour among adolescent students, to study the factors responsible for the development of risky sexual health behaviour among adolescent students, to assess the academic performance of the adolescent students and to establish relationship between risky sexual health behaviour and academic performance.

Materials and Methods: The study was conducted in Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya located in Chandel District of Manipur State. A quantitative research approach was used to achieve the objectives of the study. A non-probability sampling method was adopted and a convenience sampling technique was employed for the study. Data was collected via structured questionnaire from 100 students belonging to the age group of 16-18 years studying in 11th and 12th class.

Results: 75 per cent of adolescent students were found to be in romantic relationship, 25 per cent of the students reported to have dropped out from school due to unplanned/premarital pregnancy, 12 per cent of the students reported having indulged in sexual intercourse and these same students used condoms as a protective measure during the intercourse and 50 per cent of the students reported having watched porn. There was significant relationship between reproductive sexual heath behaviour and academic performance among adolescent students.

Conclusion: Sexual health education helps students protect their sexual health and avoid these negative outcomes. By providing sexual health education programs, schools can support student health and foster their academic achievement.

Keywords: Academic Performance, Adolescent Students, Chandel, Manipur, Reproductive Sexual Health Behaviour
Introduction

World Health Organisation (WHO) defines adolescence as the period of life between 10-19 years of age in human growth and development that occurs after childhood and before adulthood. It represents one of the critical transitions in the life span and is characterized by a tremendous pace in growth and change that is second only to that of infancy. Adolescence is a transitional stage of physical, physiological and psychological development from puberty to legal adulthood. Worldwide more than 1.2 billion are adolescents: this indicates that roughly one in every six persons is an adolescent. About 21 per cent of Indian population is adolescents (about 243 million). They are the future of the nation, forming a major demographic and economic force. They have specific needs which vary with gender, life circumstances and socio-economic conditions. They face challenges like poverty, lack of access to health care services, unsafe environments etc. Adolescence is also a period of preparation for undertaking greater responsibilities like familial, social, cultural and economic issues in adulthood. Unfortunately, in our country, one of the most neglected age groups is that of adolescence, in spite of the fact that 21 per cent of our population is of growing adolescents. It is only recently that the need for a separate specialty for adolescents to manage their medical, social, psychological, sexual problems or ailments, whether they are about menstrual disorders, contraceptive advice, pregnancy-abortion counselling, or the more serious matter of malignancy has been acknowledged. Adolescents need to be heard and understood patiently and given friendly practical advices.

Adolescence is a period when the individual is vulnerable and exposure to sexually implicit/explicit programs on television and internet can influence their sexual behaviour and make them more permissive towards premarital sex, which is known to influence their academic performance. This can be modified by parental discussion on these matters with their children. In India there is growing evidence that more adolescents are becoming sexually active. It is feared that this will lead to an increase in spread of HIV/AIDS among adolescents, increase the number of unwanted pregnancies and abortions, and give rise to conflict between contemporary social values. Adolescents have relatively poor access to health care and education. With cultural norms opposing extramarital sexual behaviour “these implications may acquire threatening dimensions for the society and the nation”.

Internet is a growing form of media to which children are exposed. Exposure to sexually implicit content on the internet is likely to initiate early sex. Early sexual activity among adolescent students has been known to influence their academic performance. Those exposed to sexual content on television are more permissive towards premarital sex. Is it the content or the duration of exposure to television that affects academic and sexual activity? Studies have shown that when parents moderate/supervise and discuss such matters with their adolescent children it is likely that they get less influenced by media, though not many Indian parents do so.

There have been only few studies from India that have explored such issues especially effects of television and internet on adolescent students. With increasing penetration of cable TV, satellite television and internet into our homes, it is only prudent that we study impact of these on adolescents’ sexual behaviour and academic performance. Hence, this study found it appropriate to assess the reproductive sexual health behaviour among adolescent students so as to get some baseline data on deficit in knowledge regarding reproductive sexual health and its relationship with academic performance among adolescent students.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study was:

- To identify sexual behaviour among adolescent students.
- To study the factors responsible for the development of risky sexual behaviour among adolescent students.
- To assess the academic performance of the adolescent students.
- To establish relationship between risky sexual behaviour and academic performance among adolescent students.

Materials and Methods

The research approach used in this study was quantitative research approach which was considered best to assess the reproductive sexual health behaviour and its relationship with academic performance among adolescent students. The sample of the study consisted of 100 adolescent students from selected government school in the age group 16-18 years through Non-probability (convenience sampling) technique. The subjects were selected based upon their convenient availability and proximity to the researcher. A structured questionnaire was used to assess the reproductive sexual health and behaviour and factors responsible for development of risky sexual behaviour of adolescents. Academic performance rating scale was used to assess the impact of reproductive sexual health behaviour of adolescents. The tool was validated by seven experts from the field of Community Health Nursing and Psychiatry and Mental Health Nursing. The reliability of the tool was established by using Cronbach alpha and was found to be 0.7.
Results

Description of Sample Characteristics

Table 1. Frequency and percentage distribution of adolescent students by the demographic characteristics

| Sample Characteristics | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Sex                    |              |                |
| Male                   | 48           | 48             |
| Female                 | 52           | 52             |
| Age                    |              |                |
| 16 Years               | 34           | 34             |
| 17 years               | 40           | 40             |
| 18 years               | 26           | 26             |
| Class                  |              |                |
| XI                     | 52           | 52             |
| XII                    | 48           | 48             |
| Stream                 |              |                |
| Science                | 62           | 62             |
| Arts                   | 38           | 38             |
| Religion               |              |                |
| Hindu                  | 31           | 31             |
| Christian              | 69           | 69             |
| Category               |              |                |
| General                | 13           | 13             |
| SC                     | 16           | 16             |
| OBC                    | 3            | 3              |
| ST                     | 68           | 68             |
| Community              |              |                |
| Meitei                 | 32           | 32             |
| Naga                   | 56           | 56             |
| Kuki                   | 12           | 12             |
| District               |              |                |
| Chandel                | 69           | 69             |
| Thoubal                | 29           | 29             |
| Churachandpur          | 2            | 2              |
| Staying in hostel      |              |                |
| Yes                    | 95           | 95             |
| No                     | 5            | 5              |
| Monthly family income (in Rupees) |          |                |
| Below 10000            | 15           | 15             |
| 10000-20000            | 33           | 33             |
| 21000-30000            | 25           | 25             |

Table 2. Frequency and percentage distribution of adolescents by their sexual behaviour

| S. No. | Item                                                                 | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1.     | Indulgence in sexual intercourse                                      |           |                |
|        | Yes                                                                  | 12        | 12             |
|        | No                                                                   | 88        | 88             |
|        | Indulgence in consensual sexual intercourse for the first time (out of 12) | 5          | 41.7           |
| 2.     | No of indulgence in sexual intercourse so far                         |           |                |
|        | Once                                                                 | 6          | 6              |
|        | Twice                                                                | 6          | 6              |
|        | None                                                                 | 88         | 88             |
| 3.     | Indulgence in masturbation                                            |           |                |
|        | Yes                                                                  | 33         | 33             |
|        | No                                                                   | 67         | 67             |
| 4.     | Use of condom during sexual intercourse                                |           |                |
|        | Yes                                                                  | 12         | 12             |
|        | No                                                                   | 88         | 88             |
| 5.     | Indulgence in sexual relationship under the influence of alcohol     |           |                |
|        | Yes                                                                  | 12         | 12             |
|        | No                                                                   | 88         | 88             |
| 6.     | Time spent with boy/girlfriend indulging in sexual activities including masturbation in a day |           |                |
|        | Less than 30 min                                                      | 23         | 23             |
|        | Between 30 min and 1 hour                                             | 10         | 10             |
|        | Not spending time with boy/girl friend                                 | 67         | 67             |
Table 3. Frequency and percentage distribution of adolescents by the factors responsible for the development of risky sexual behaviour (n=100)

| S. No. | Item                                      | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------|-------------------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1.    | Any kind of addiction                     |           |                |
|       | Alcohol/ Cigarette                         | 23        | 23             |
|       | None                                      | 77        | 77             |
| 2.    | Romantic relationship                       |           |                |
|       | Yes                                       | 75        | 75             |
|       | No                                        | 25        | 25             |
| 3.    | No. of lovers                              |           |                |
|       | 1-2                                       | 24        | 24             |
|       | More than 2                                | 52        | 52             |
|       | None                                      | 24        | 24             |
| 4.    | Watching porn clips/ videos                |           |                |
|       | Yes                                       | 50        | 50             |
|       | No                                        | 50        | 50             |
| 5.    | Preferred books/magazines to read related to sex |   |                |
|       | Yes                                       | 19        | 19             |
|       | No                                        | 81        | 81             |
| 6.    | Visiting brothels/commercial sex workers   |           |                |
|       | Yes                                       | 5         | 5              |
|       | No                                        | 95        | 95             |
| 7.    | Understanding about safe sex:              |           |                |
|       | Sex between couples after marriage         | 30        | 30             |
|       | Sex with trusted partners                  | 20        | 20             |
|       | Sex using condoms/protective measures      | 50        | 50             |
| 8.    | Methods of contraception that was ever used (Condom) |   |                |
|       | Yes                                       | 12        | 12             |
|       | No                                        | 88        | 88             |
| 9.    | Frequency of sexual activities after parties at several time |   |                |
|       | Yes                                       | 12        | 12             |
|       | No                                        | 88        | 88             |
| 10.   | Number of times had a one-night stand      |           |                |
|       | Once                                      | 5         | 5              |
|       | None                                      | 95        | 95             |
| 11.   | Frequency of sexual relationship           |           |                |
|       | Planned                                   | 12        | 12             |
|       | Unplanned                                 | 88        | 88             |

Table 4 shows that the computed p-value of 0.016 for determining relationship between risky sexual health behaviour with academic performance was lesser than 0.05* level of significance. This indicates that there was a significant relationship between watching porn videos and academic performance among adolescent.

Findings Related to Sample Characteristics

In the present study, out of the selected adolescents, female respondents were 52%; (n=52) male were 48%; (n=48).

The selected sample constituted of adolescent students aged 17 years (40%; n=40) followed by students of the age of 16 years (34%; n=34). The oldest age of 18 years in the study were 26%; (n=26).

Out of the total respondents, 52% (n=52) of the respondents were from class XI and the remaining respondents (48%; n=48) belonged to class XII.

From the total respondents, (62%; n=62) were from class XI and the remaining respondents (38%; n=38) were from the Arts Stream.

Majority of the respondents interviewed (69%; n=69) belonged to Christianity and the remaining respondents (31%; n=31) followed Hinduism.

The maximum respondents interviewed (68%; n=68) belonged to Schedule Tribe, followed by Schedule Caste (16%; n=16), General (13%; n=13) and Other Backward Class (3%; n=3).

The study had more than half of the total respondents from Naga community (56%; n=56), followed by Meitei community (32%; n=32) and the least from Kuki community (12%; 12).

Maximum respondents of the study belonged to Chandel district (69; n=69), followed by Thoubal district (29; n=29) and Churachandpur district (2%; n=2).

Almost the entire study sample (95%; n=95) were staying in hostel while the remaining respondents (5%; n=5) did not.

Monthly family income of the respondents varied to a great extent. Most of the respondents (33%; n=33) had a monthly family income between Rs. 10,000/- & Rs. 20,000/-. Only few respondents (15%; n=15) had a monthly family income of above Rs. 40,000/-. Out of the total 100 respondents; few respondents (25%; n=25) reported of their female friends dropping of school due to unplanned/ premarital pregnancy.

Findings Related to Adolescent Regarding their Sexual Behaviour

Out of the total sample of 100 adolescent students, few respondents (12%; n=12) reported having indulged in sexual intercourse while the remaining majority (88%; n=88) denied the same.
Table 4. Association between risky sexual health behaviour and academic performance among adolescent students

| Sexual Behaviour                                      | Poor Academic performance (<50) n=44 | Good Academic performance (>50) n=56 | Test used and its value            | DF  | p-value |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----|---------|
| Drug addiction high risk                              | 12                                   | 11                                   | Chi square test value=0.810         | 1   | 0.368   |
| Low risk                                              | 32                                   | 45                                   |                                    |     |         |
| Romantic relationship at high risk                    | 34                                   | 41                                   | Chi square test value=0.810         | 1   | 0.642   |
| Low risk                                              | 10                                   | 15                                   |                                    |     |         |
| Watching porn clips at high risk                      | 28                                   | 22                                   | Fishers exact test value=5.844      |     | 0.016*  |
| Low risk                                              | 16                                   | 34                                   |                                    |     |         |
| Books that preferred to read sex related at high risk | 12                                   | 7                                    | Fishers exact test value=3.494      |     | 0.062   |
| Low risk                                              | 32                                   | 49                                   |                                    |     |         |
| Visiting brothels/commercial sex workers at high risk  | 44                                   | 53                                   | Fishers exact test value=2.430      |     | 0.253   |
| Low risk                                              | 0                                    | 3                                    |                                    |     |         |
| Indulgence in sexual intercourse high risk            | 7                                    | 5                                    | Chi square value test=1.137         | 1   | 0.286   |
| Low risk                                              | 37                                   | 51                                   |                                    |     |         |
| Methods of contraception that have ever used at high risk | 44                                   | 55                                   | Fishers exact test value=1.000      |     | 1.000   |
| Low risk                                              | 0                                    | 1                                    |                                    |     |         |
| Frequency of sexual activities after parties at high  | 10                                   | 6                                    | Chi square test value=2.646         | 1   | 0.168   |
| Low risk                                              | 34                                   | 50                                   |                                    |     |         |
| Have many times had a one-night stand at high risk    | 2                                    | 3                                    | Fishers exact test value=0.034      |     | 1.000   |
| Low risk                                              | 42                                   | 53                                   |                                    |     |         |
| Frequency of planned sexual relationship at risk       | 10                                   | 11                                   | Chi square value test=0.141         | 1   | 0.7     |
| Low risk                                              | 34                                   | 45                                   |                                    |     |         |

Out of the respondents (12%; n=12) indulged in sexual intercourse; 6 (6%) respondents apiece reported having indulged in sexual intercourse once and having it twice so far in their lives.

Further, of the same respondents (12%; n=12) indulged in sexual intercourse 7 (7%) respondents had a non-consensual sexual intercourse and only 5 (5%) respondents had a consensual sexual intercourse.

Of the total sample of 100 adolescent students quite a large number of respondents (33%; n=33) admitted to indulging in masturbation.

Of the total sample of 100 adolescent students, use of condom during sexual intercourse was reported by 12 (12%) respondents. The same number of respondents (12%; n=12) also had engaged in sexual relationship while being under the influence of alcohol.

Among the respondents who had spent time with their boy/girlfriends indulging in sexual activities including masturbation; 23 (23%) respondents reported having spent less than 30 minutes and 10 (10%) respondents had reported spending between 30 minutes and 1 hour.

**Findings Related to Factors Responsible for the Development of Risky Sexual Behaviour among Adolescent Students**

Out of the total sample of 100 adolescent students, few respondents (23%; n=23) had reported addiction to alcohol and cigarette while majority of the respondents (77%; n=77) were not addicted to any substances.

Majority of the study respondents (75%; n=75) were into romantic relationship whereas only 25 (25%) respondents were not into romantic relationship.
More than half (52%; n=52) of the total sample reported having more than 2 lovers. While 24 (24%) respondents reported having had 1-2 lovers, another 24 (24%) respondents reported having no lovers at all.

Half of the study sample (50%; n=50) reported having watched porn clips/videos. Quite a few numbers of respondents (19%; n=19) had preference for books/magazines related to sex and few respondents (5%; n=5) had visited brothels/commercial sex workers out of curiosity.

Half of the study sample (50%; n=50) were aware that safe sex means using condoms/protective measures while having sex. While 30 (30%) respondents felt sex between couple after marriage to be safe sex remaining 20 (20%) respondents considered sex with trusted partners as safe sex.

A small number of respondents (12%; n=12%) out of the total sample of 100 respondents reported having sexual activities after parties at several times.

Of the total sample of 100 respondents, only 5 (5%) respondents had had a one-night stand (single sexual encounter with no expectation for further). While majority of the respondents (88%; n=88) reported that the frequency of sexual relationship to be unplanned only a few respondents (12%; n=12) reported that frequency of sexual relationship was planned.

Findings Related to Assessment of the Academic Performance of the Adolescent Students

Of the total 100 adolescent students more than half of the respondents (56%; n=56) were assessed to have good performance and less than half of the total respondents (44%; n=44) were assessed to have poor performance.

Out of 100 sample 56 (56%) were having good performance and 44(44%) have poor performance.

Findings Related to Relationship between Risky Sexual Health Behaviour and Academic Performance among Adolescent Students

The computed Fisher’s exact value is 5.884. Obtained p value of 0.016 is lesser than 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that there is significant relationship between watching porn videos and academic performance among adolescent.

Discussion

In addition to the mentioned health risks (like unwanted pregnancies and infection transmissions), other risks have been associated with early sexual activity. For example, a recent study (2017) found that those who start having sex at an earlier age have higher risks of not using a condom; not having good memories of that first experience; and having had that relationship for non-autonomous reasons (such as partner pressure, peer pressure or the influence of substance use).

This article also summarizes other risks (found in previous studies) associated with earlier sex: having an increased number of sexual partners or of casual sexual partners; perpetrating or being a victim of forced sex; engaging in paid sex; depression and behaviour problems.

Pham C et al. conducted study on evaluating impacts of early adolescent romance in high school on academic outcomes. The study sample included 2895 9th graders from the National Longitudinal Study of Youth, 1997. Findings from the study uncovered mixed effects of early adolescent romance on student performance. While frequent dating behaviours and early sexual experiences showed significant negative impacts on both academic outcomes, moderate dating activities had an estimated positive impact. Implications from this study may help inform educators and families in developing appropriate policies and educational conversations to guide youth toward a moderate, timely manner of dating.

The present study found that there was a significant association between watching porn videos and its impact on academic performance among adolescent students. Hence early intervention should be made both at home and in school to keep young students away from such elements that will in a long run harm their academic career.

Conclusion

It is important for schools to keep students healthy, so that, they help students get higher grades and attain their academic goals. Students who are involved in pregnancy or experience STDs or HIV face major obstacles to academic success, but schools have the opportunity to help students avoid these barriers to success. Sexual health education helps students protect their sexual health and avoid these negative outcomes. By providing sexual health education programs, schools can support student health and foster their academic achievement.

Conflict of Interest: None

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