



Impact of Life-Planning Skills Training Among Senior High School Students in Shangcai

The study was designed to evaluate the impact of sexual and reproductive health education using life-planning skills (LPS) training among senior high school students in Shangcai, a rural county in central China with high HIV prevalence.

Methods

The study was conducted in three senior high schools with comparable characteristics. Two of the high schools were used as intervention sites, and one served as a control. Program staff conducted a three-month LPS training course among all grade one students in the intervention schools; half of the students in these two intervention schools also received peer education at the same time. The control school received no interventions.

Researchers conducted a baseline survey in the three sites prior to the intervention and a similar survey in the same sites three months after the intervention was initiated. The researchers collected data through questionnaires, focus group discussions, and in-depth interviews to evaluate:

- The impact of the LPS training course on the status of sexual and reproductive health of adolescents, particularly knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors.
- Possible differences in the acceptability and effect between LPS training alone and LPS training coupled with peer education.
- The impact of peer education on the peer educators' own knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors.

Findings

In all, 1,178 and 1,101 students participated in the baseline and the endline surveys, respectively.

At baseline, there was no difference between the intervention and control groups in their rates of correct answers to the survey questions. At the endline survey, the intervention group's rate of correct answers was significantly higher than the baseline group's for nearly all questions on reproduction; contraception; adolescent development; dating and intimacy behaviors; and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.

At baseline, all groups showed high levels of general awareness of HIV. At endline, the results showed a significant decrease in misconceptions about HIV transmission (e.g., insect bites can cause transmission) in the intervention group, when compared to the control.

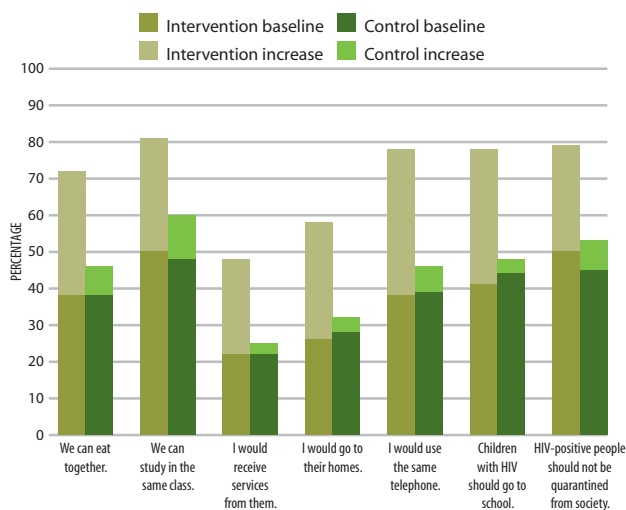


Similarly, at baseline, the control and intervention groups were comparable in their attitudes toward people living with HIV and AIDS; the majority in both groups reporting unwillingness to interact with people infected with HIV for routine activities such as eating together or receiving services from them. After the training, students in the intervention group showed significant improvements in their attitude toward people living with HIV and AIDS and a greater willingness to interact with them.

Within the intervention group, the combination of LPS training and peer education had a limited impact on students who received both, compared with those who received only LPS training. Peer educators benefited from their role, however; they improved their knowledge, attitude, and skills not only in reproductive health but also in public speaking, interpersonal communication, and organization. Peer educators had significantly higher scores than non-peer educators on knowledge of adolescent development and sexually transmitted infections/HIV. Compared with non-peer educators, peer educators expressed a greater willingness to receive services from HIV-positive people and would not avoid contact with them. However, 20 percent of peer educators still thought HIV-positive people should be quarantined. This proportion was slightly higher than among the non-peer educators, but the difference was not statistically significant. To improve the peer-education intervention, staff concluded that educators need more opportunities to get training, supervision, and improved information sources.

After the intervention, more students in the intervention group approved of high school students dating than in the control group. However, those who opposed premarital sex accounted for a larger proportion than in the control group, and the proportion of those who believed they could refuse unwanted sex was higher in the intervention group than in the control.

Attitudes toward people living with HIV and AIDS



Conclusions

The three-month LPS training, which provided short-term sexual and reproductive health education, significantly increased students' knowledge and resulted in more positive attitudes toward people living with HIV and AIDS.

Perhaps because of the short duration of the intervention, the study's findings about LPS combined with peer education were inconclusive.

Equally important, students in the intervention group reported reduced intimacy behaviors. The logistic regression analysis showed that the intervention did not prompt students to have sexual intercourse.

For more information

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