



Impact of a Comprehensive Youth Reproductive Health Intervention Among Vocational School Students in Shanghai

This evaluation measured the impact of life-planning skills (LPS) training, peer education, and youth-friendly counseling services among vocational middle school students in Shanghai.

Methods

Two vocational middle schools in Pudong New District served as intervention groups; a third served as the control group. The study population consisted of all grade one students at the three schools in 2002. Intervention group 1 received LPS training, youth-friendly counseling services (YFS), and peer education; intervention group 2 received only LPS training facilitated by teachers. The control school followed its regular curriculum. The intervention lasted two semesters. Researchers collected data through questionnaire surveys, focus group discussions (at midterm, with peer educators, and participants from each intervention school), and periodic record review. A total of 1,612 students from the three schools participated in the surveys.

Findings

Neither of the intervention programs prompted or postponed respondents' sexual debut or other intimate sexual behaviors. In intervention group 1, respondents' sex-related attitudes became more conservative.

Although there was no statistical difference in the knowledge scores for the three groups at baseline, at endline, scores on all topics—reproductive health in general, HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections, contraception,

and reproductive physiology—were significantly higher in the two intervention groups than in the control group ($P < .05$). For sexually transmitted infections and HIV, knowledge improvements in the intervention groups were significant for all questions. Contraceptive knowledge scores rose most, followed by reproductive physiology scores.

Among contraceptive methods, knowledge about emergency contraception improved most significantly in the two intervention groups—up to 32 percent for intervention group 2. Respondents from the two intervention groups had more positive attitudes toward condom use at endline than at baseline, while the proportion of those with positive attitudes decreased in the control group. Both positive and negative changes were significant, and the difference of effect between the intervention groups was not statistically significant.



Surprisingly, knowledge scores in intervention group 2 increased significantly more than those in intervention group 1, except for knowledge of sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS. However, the general knowledge scores of both intervention groups were still less than 60 percent at endline.

Conclusions

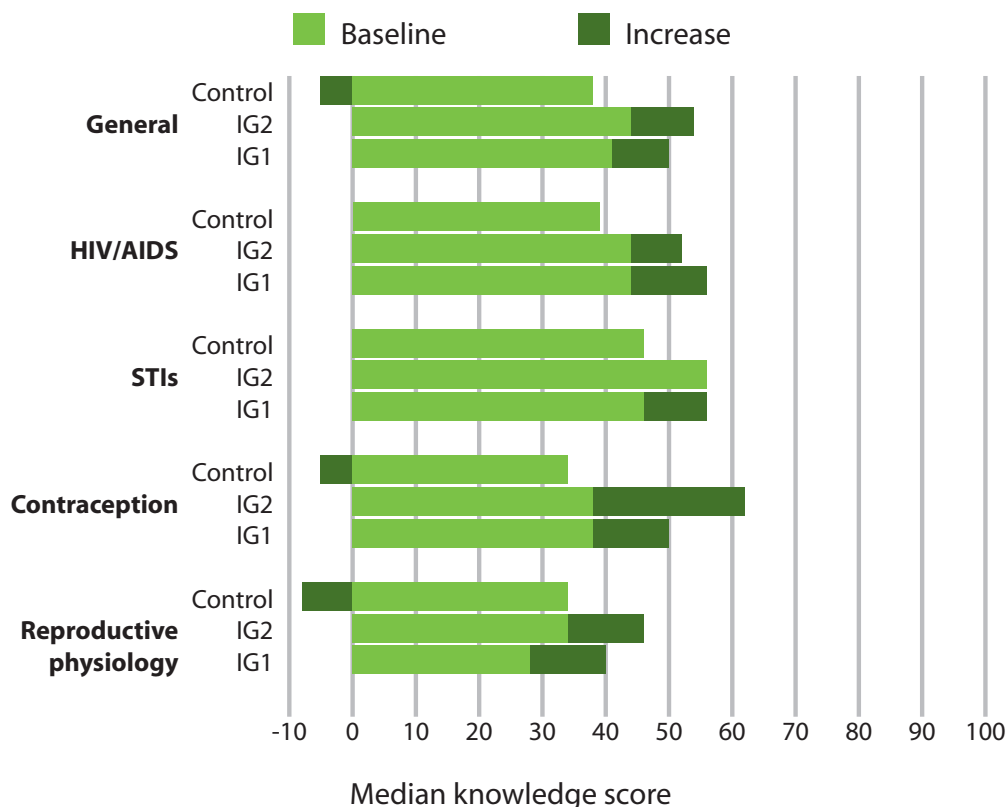
Although knowledge on all topics improved significantly in both intervention groups, compared with the control group, a surprising finding is that the knowledge of students in intervention group 2, who received LPS training only, improved consistently more than that of

students in intervention group 1, who received LPS training, YFS, and peer education. At the same time, the study found positive changes in intervention group 1 for some knowledge, attitudes, and (although not statistically significant) even some behaviors. The differences between the impact of different interventions requires further research.

For more information

To learn more about this study, please contact Qian Geng, senior program officer, at qgeng@path-dc.org, or Lisa Mueller, program officer, at lm Mueller@path-dc.org.

Comparison of median reproductive health knowledge scores



Note: IG1, intervention group 1; IG2, intervention group 2; STIs, sexually transmitted infections.

February 2006