

The Effect of Family Aspects on Premarital Sexual Behavior at Risk of Unintended Pregnancy among Adolescents

A Qualitative Case Study at Pulogadung Sub-District Community Health Center, East Jakarta

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Abstract

Introduction: This study aims to find out an overview of the effect of family aspects on premarital sexual behavior at risk of unintended pregnancy among adolescents at Pulogadung Sub-District Community Health Center, East Jakarta.

Method: This is a qualitative study, using purposive sampling technique. Data were collected using in-depth interview technique and document review. The sample consisted of 16 informants, consisting of 4 pregnant adolescents as key informants, 8 parents, and 4 peers of pregnant adolescents.

Results: The results of this study revealed that the family aspect: communication between adolescents and their parents was not quite open and disharmonious. In addition, establishing communication with peers occurred very well especially regarding the problems experienced by the adolescents as one that causes them to obtain information and follow deviant behavior.

Conclusion: Promiscuity in adolescents, lack of attention and communication from family and the environment, and access to information are the most important aspects of premarital sexual behavior resulting in unintended pregnancy among adolescents. This study recommends the importance of activating the Youth Care Health Program and developing Information, Education, Communication (IEC) content in the reproductive health curriculum for adolescents.

Keywords: premarital sexual behavior, family communication, peer group, qualitative study

Introduction

Sex outside marriage or premarital sexual behavior among adolescents in Indonesia is increasingly at an alarming rate. Western friendship patterns seem to trigger adolescents' desire to imitate them, such as fashion, beauty tools, hairstyles, and especially promiscuity between boys and girls. Many factors have caused the moral decline of the younger generation in Indonesia, including the increasing number of movies or shows that can destroy the morale of children and adolescents. Accordingly, the role of parents and teachers is needed to supervise the interaction of their children to prevent unwanted things such as premarital pregnancy. (Puspitawati, 2012; Sofyan, 2014).

Data from the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that there are 20 million incidents of unsafe abortion in the world; 9.5% (19 out of 20 million unsafe abortions) occurred in developing countries. About 13% of all women who have unsafe abortions die. The risk of death from unsafe abortion in the Asian region is estimated to be 1 in 3700 compared with abortion. In the Southeast Asia region, WHO estimates 4.2 million abortions are performed annually, and about 750,000 to 1.5 million occur in Indonesia, of which 2,500 result in death. (Basuki,2013).

Moreover, in Bali, an average of 41 cases of unintended pregnancies among adolescents is recorded in one month. It starts with premarital sex which then causes unintended pregnancies. There are 2 things that adolescents can do, maintaining a pregnancy or ending a pregnancy (abortion). Abortion should not be done since Youth Care Health Service (Indonesian: *Pelayanan Kesehatan Peduli Remaja/PKPR*) has been implemented since 2003, by which health service providers should provide youth-friendly services. (Yulianti, 2012).

Optimal abortion control can be carried out in an integrated manner through increasing the behavior of a healthy and religious lifestyle, family resilience, education as early as possible to groups in the community, prevention of transmission, care, support and treatment of people with HIV and AIDS and respect the dignity of people living with HIV and AIDS and their families (Regional Regulation of DKI Jakarta Province, 2008).

Method

This is a qualitative study. It focused on adolescents aged 10-19 years who were potentially at risk of premarital sexual behavior by exploring information on premarital sexual behavior in adolescents who had the potential to increase the number of pregnancies among adolescents, by using purposive sampling technique.

This study was conducted in the Work Area of Pulogadung Sub-District Community Health Center, East Jakarta. It aimed to gather information about the characteristic aspects of adolescents: knowledge, attitudes and premarital sexual behavior; Family aspects: communication between adolescents and parents, openness and harmonious interaction; and Environmental Aspects: access to information, appropriate sources including mass media, health workers, religious leaders, and peers.

Importantly, the total sample of this study was 16 informants, consisting of 4 pregnant adolescents as key informants, 8 parents, and 4 peers of pregnant adolescents. Data and information were collected by in-depth interviews. Data analysis in this study was carried out in several stages: Transcription, Data Organization, Introduction, Coding, and Conclusion of the qualitative data obtained.

Results and discussion

Family Aspects

a. Communication with parents

Communication is indeed one of the critical points regarding the relationship between parents and their adolescent children. The simplest reason is because of different communication patterns. Different communication patterns cause the communication process to experience distortion and more closed between parents and their teenagers. It can be seen in the information they stated below:

“The communication pattern between me and my mother tends to be normal every day. However, I never talk about personal issues like boyfriends. I am afraid to tell my mother since she said that I am still a child and should not be close to boys. As a result, I was always scolded when I told my mother.” [1]

The information stated by adolescent [1] is in accordance with the statement of the parent (the informant's mother) as follows:

“I am rarely home. I take care of my child alone because my husband and I divorced since [1] was little, so I work and rarely stay home. My child and I often communicate every day whenever I am at home. [1] never told me anything. She tends to be introverted. I always told her to study hard in order to get a stable job when she graduates. She can think about boyfriends later after graduation and work.”

Furthermore, informant [2] emphasized more on the busyness of the parent (the informant's father) and being closed off to discuss dating to her mother:

“My mother and I often meet at home because my mother is not working. On the other hand, I rarely can talk to my father because he is working. My mother and I also usually talk casually but never talk about boyfriend, because I am too shy to talk about boyfriend.” [2]

The statement of informant [2] is in line with her father’s statement below:

“As a father, I rarely communicate with her because I am busy working. The one who is close to [2] is her mother.”

The statement of informant [2] is also in line with her mother’s statement below:

“Since I am a housewife, I am often at home. However, [2] she never told me about the problem she was experiencing. She usually went goes to her room after school. She comes out of the room just to eat and go to the bathroom. She sometimes asked for permission to go to her friend's house.”

The results of interviews conducted regarding informants' communication with parents indicated that most adolescents stated that they received less attention from their parents. Thus, they tended to be free to do premarital sexual behavior because as if there are no rules about how they should behave. Even though they received advice, confessions about their dating style to their parents were very closed.

b. Peer Communication

The results of interviews related to peer communication and interaction of adolescents on premarital sexual behavior showed that most informants admitted that they and their peers gave each other advice. However, their peers stated that they did not really interfere with their friends' affairs since dating was their own personal business. In this case, peers acted as confidants considering that the main informant's boyfriend (male) was a friend and neighbor of the main informant. Therefore, much communication was done to help their appointment. Information can be seen as follows:

“I have a close friend who really understands me, Y. She is always there when I am having a hard time. I am closer to her than my mother. I always tell about everything. She is very kind. Her house is also close to mine, so it is easy if I want to meet her any time.”[1], [2]

Additionally, the informant's friend stated:

“[1], [2], and I were initially close because she was dating my friend. Since then, we often meet and confide in each other. She is even now married to her boyfriend. I know her boyfriend so well that sometimes she follows my advice.”

“I am close to Mrs. D. We often hang out and talk, but she has never been open to me regarding her personal matters. For me, Mrs. D is a mature woman and can always solve her problems. Sometimes I never know what problem she is facing because she is not open with me.”

Discussion

Communication can be defined as the process of conveying meaning in the form of ideas or information from one person to another through certain media. Communication refers to actions by one or more people who can send or receive messages (Devito, 2019). Good communication and support from parents and children in discussing sex can influence their daughters' sexual behavior in positive ways. In fact, the implementation of a family-based approach in an effort to improve sexual risk communication is one of the ways to reduce sexual risk behavior among adolescents in urban areas (Hutchinson, Jemmott, Jemmott, Braverman, & Fong, 2003).

More importantly, it is necessary for parents to be able to maintain a harmonious relationship with understanding and compassion which will result in the development of behavior in children into good children's behavior. There are basically 3 types of communication behavior patterns between parents and children, including Authoritarian, Permissive and Authoritative. Parents should use Authoritative communication patterns to establish good interpersonal communication between parents and children (Hendri Gunawan, 2013). A study conducted by Mahardika found that adolescents have a defense and self-control against something that is considered to be detrimental to themselves, and those with high communication effectiveness with parents have low adolescent sexual behavior in their daily lives, because they will try to be able to avoid negative adolescent sexual behaviors (Supratiwi, Makmuroch, & Andayan, 2011).

The results of this study indicated that informants with parents who were not quite open about sex would usually seek information from other sources. In this case, the sources that can be easily reached by adolescents are their peers. However, they are both looking for information so that they search secretly from various sources, including books, magazines or videotapes as well as internet. Furthermore, Moore and Rosenthal affirmed that parents, peers, media, youth social and cultural institutions play a role in adolescent sexual

adjustment. A study conducted by Ika Nur Chaerani Tunggal Dewi entitled “The influence of personal and environmental factors on premarital sexual behavior among adolescents at SMA Negeri 1 Baturraden and SMA Negeri 1 Purwokerto in 2009 discovered that there is a relationship between peer influence and premarital sexual behavior in adolescents at SMA Negeri 1 Baturraden and SMA Negeri 1 Purwokerto (Nur, 2009).

Relationships occur between individuals and friends or other people of an equal nature. This pattern of relationships can be a source of different perceptions. The formation of subjective norms will be characterized by the motivation to comply with the demands to do or not to do a behavior. On the other hand, a hopeful relationship is formed descriptively so that the consequence is the desire to imitate or follow the behavior of other people around him/her. Parent-adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) communication is one of potential sources of SRH information for adolescents, which appears to be insufficiently practiced in Ethiopia. This study was designed to investigate factors that limit or enhance SRH communication between parents and adolescents in Harar, Eastern Ethiopia (Ayalew, Mengistie, & Semahegn, 2014)

Conclusion

The conclusion of this study focuses on how to identify or get to know more about the characteristics and phenomena experienced by adolescents in the global challenges of reproductive health problems among adolescents which can be likened to the iceberg phenomenon. Based on the results, the information obtained shows that their knowledge is still low and their informative and educational attitudes are not well directed.

Suggestion

There should be preventive efforts made, namely to establish a close and harmonious relationship between adolescents and their parents. In addition, promotion is the responsibility of all parties across programs and sectors including the local government, stakeholders of the Health Office which foster the work area of the community health center as the spearhead of primary health services.

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