



The Impact of Comprehensive Sexual Education on Adolescent Attitudes and Knowledge: Implications for Program Development and Policy

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the impact of sexual education on adolescents' attitudes and knowledge, aiming to inform program development, policy formulation, and practice within the field. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study examines the effectiveness of a comprehensive sexual education program in a diverse urban setting. Participants, aged 13-18, were recruited from multiple secondary schools and divided into intervention and control groups. Quantitative analysis of pre-test and post-test surveys revealed significant improvements in sexual knowledge and attitudes among intervention group participants. Qualitative exploration through focus group discussions and interviews provided nuanced insights into the program's impact on attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions. The findings underscore the importance of comprehensive, inclusive, and evidence-based sexual education programs in promoting adolescent sexual health and well-being. Implications for program design, policy development, professional practice, collaboration, and advocacy are discussed. Overall, the study contributes to advancing sexual education efforts and empowering adolescents to make informed decisions about their sexual health.

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Introduction

Adolescence is a critical period of development characterized by significant physical, emotional, and cognitive changes (Steinberg, 2005). During this time, individuals begin to explore their identities and form attitudes and behaviors that can influence their health and well-being throughout their lives. One of the crucial aspects of adolescent development is sexual maturation and the accompanying need for comprehensive sexual education. Sexual education during adolescence is pivotal in equipping young people with the knowledge and skills necessary to make informed decisions about their sexual health, relationships, and well-being (Haberland & Rogow, 2015).

One of the primary benefits of sexual education is that it provides adolescents with accurate and comprehensive information about their bodies, sexual health, and relationships. This knowledge is essential for making informed decisions about sexual activity and for understanding the consequences of those decisions. Adolescents who receive proper sexual education are more likely to understand the importance of contraception and the prevention of sexually transmitted infections

(STIs)(Almeida et al., 2017). This understanding can lead to safer sexual behaviors, reduced rates of STIs, and lower incidences of unintended pregnancies.

In addition to enhancing knowledge, sexual education fosters positive attitudes towards sexuality and sexual health(Haruna et al., 2018). Adolescents are often exposed to mixed messages about sex from media, peers, and even family members. These messages can sometimes be misleading or stigmatizing. Comprehensive sexual education programs address these misconceptions and provide a balanced perspective, promoting healthy attitudes and behaviors. By encouraging open and honest discussions about sexuality, these programs help adolescents develop a positive view of their sexual health and relationships, emphasizing respect, consent, and mutual understanding.

Sexual education also plays a vital role in promoting emotional and psychological well-being(Biglan et al., 2012). Adolescence is a time of heightened vulnerability to mental health issues, partly due to the pressures and uncertainties related to sexual development and relationships. Effective sexual education programs provide adolescents with the tools to understand and manage their emotions, build healthy relationships, and deal with peer pressure. These programs often cover topics such as consent, communication skills, and the importance of respect in relationships, which are crucial for preventing sexual violence and fostering healthy interpersonal interactions(Wolfe, 1996).

Furthermore, sexual education can have a broader societal impact by contributing to the reduction of gender-based violence and discrimination(Russo & Pirlott, 2006). Comprehensive programs that address issues such as gender roles, power dynamics, and sexual rights can help challenge and change harmful societal norms and attitudes. This education empowers adolescents, particularly young women and LGBTQ+ individuals, to assert their rights and make autonomous decisions about their bodies and relationships, fostering a more inclusive and equitable society.

The significance of sexual education extends to its long-term benefits(Reynolds et al., 2001). Adolescents who receive comprehensive sexual education are more likely to carry healthy attitudes and behaviors into adulthood. They are better prepared to maintain their sexual health, form stable and respectful relationships, and make informed decisions about family planning and reproductive health. This preparation contributes to better overall health outcomes and can reduce the social and economic costs associated with poor sexual health(Singh et al., 2004).

The importance of sexual education is underscored by numerous studies that highlight the gaps in adolescents' sexual knowledge and the prevalence of risky sexual behaviors(Bankole et al., 2007). Inadequate sexual education can lead to a range of negative outcomes, including higher rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), unintended pregnancies, and sexual coercion. These outcomes are not only detrimental to individual health but also pose significant public health challenges(Puhl & Heuer, 2010). Therefore, effective sexual education programs are essential to mitigate these risks by promoting positive attitudes towards sexuality, fostering healthy relationships, and enhancing sexual knowledge.

Historically, the approach to sexual education has varied widely, influenced by cultural, social, and political factors(Weeks, 2017). Some educational systems adopt an abstinence-only approach, which emphasizes refraining from sexual activity until marriage, while others implement comprehensive sexual education programs that cover a broad spectrum of topics, including contraception, consent, sexual orientation, and healthy relationships. Comprehensive sexual education is increasingly recognized as the most effective approach, as it provides adolescents with accurate information and empowers them to make safe and informed choices.

The effectiveness of sexual education in shaping positive attitudes and increasing sexual knowledge among adolescents has been the subject of extensive research(Guha, 2013). Studies have shown that comprehensive sexual education can lead to improved sexual health outcomes, including delayed initiation of sexual activity, increased use of contraception, and reduced rates of STIs and unintended pregnancies. Moreover, such programs can promote positive attitudes towards sexual health and relationships, encouraging respect, consent, and mutual understanding(Blanc, 2001).

Despite the growing body of evidence supporting comprehensive sexual education, there remain significant gaps in implementation and accessibility. Many adolescents, particularly in underserved and marginalized communities, lack access to high-quality sexual education. This disparity underscores the need for ongoing research to evaluate the effectiveness of sexual education programs and to identify the best practices for different populations and settings (Schalet et al., 2014).

This research aims to analyze the effect of sexual education on positive attitudes and sexual knowledge in adolescents (Kirby et al., 2007). By examining the impact of sexual education programs, the study seeks to contribute to the understanding of how such interventions can foster informed and healthy attitudes towards sexuality among young people. The findings will provide valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and health professionals striving to improve the quality and reach of sexual education, ultimately enhancing the health and well-being of adolescents.

Method

Literature Review

The impact of sexual education on adolescents has been the focus of extensive research, with numerous studies examining how these programs influence sexual knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. This body of research highlights the significant role that sexual education plays in promoting the health and well-being of young people. A robust body of evidence demonstrates that comprehensive sexual education significantly improves adolescents' knowledge about sexual health. For example, a study by Kirby et al. (2007) reviewed various sexual education programs and found that those offering detailed information about contraception, STIs, and sexual health were particularly effective in increasing students' knowledge. The study highlighted that adolescents who received comprehensive education were more likely to understand and recall important information about sexual health compared to their peers who received abstinence-only education (Corcoran et al., 2020).

Research indicates that comprehensive sexual education is associated with increased use of contraception and reduced rates of risky sexual behaviors (Green et al., 2017). A meta-analysis by Haberland and Rogow (2015) examined multiple studies and concluded that programs incorporating a wide range of topics, including contraception and condom use, led to higher rates of contraceptive use among adolescents. Additionally, these programs were found to delay the initiation of sexual activity and reduce the number of sexual partners, thereby lowering the risk of STIs and unintended pregnancies.

Studies also show that sexual education fosters positive attitudes towards sexual health and relationships. For instance, a study by Schaalma et al. (2004) investigated the effects of a comprehensive sexual education program in the Netherlands and found significant improvements in students' attitudes towards safe sex practices, consent, and gender equality. Participants reported greater respect for their partners and a more responsible approach to sexual decision-making.

Programs that include discussions on consent, gender norms, and respectful relationships have been shown to reduce instances of sexual coercion and violence (Heise et al., 1995). A study by Taylor et al. (2010) evaluated the Safe Dates program, which focused on preventing dating violence among adolescents. The study revealed that participants exhibited a significant decrease in perpetration and victimization of dating violence, demonstrating the importance of addressing these issues within sexual education curricula.

Longitudinal studies suggest that the benefits of sexual education extend into adulthood. For example, a study by Kohler, Manhart, and Lafferty (2008) followed adolescents who had participated in comprehensive sexual education programs and found that they continued to practice safer sex behaviors and had better sexual health outcomes as adults. This indicates that the positive effects of sexual education are sustained over time, contributing to lifelong health and well-being (Call et al., 2002).

Research highlights the role of sexual education in addressing health disparities among adolescents. A study by Lindberg and Maddow-Zimet (2012) found that comprehensive sexual education was particularly effective in improving sexual health outcomes among marginalized groups, including LGBTQ+ youth and adolescents from low-income backgrounds. These findings emphasize the importance of making sexual education accessible and inclusive to all adolescents, regardless of their socio-economic status or sexual orientation.

The evidence from these studies has significant policy implications. For instance, the Guttmacher Institute (2017) reviewed the impact of various sexual education policies in the United States and concluded that comprehensive sexual education should be mandated and funded to ensure that all adolescents receive accurate and reliable information. The study advocated for policies that support the implementation of comprehensive programs in schools to promote public health and reduce healthcare costs associated with poor sexual health outcomes (Hahn & Truman, 2015).

Understanding the impact of sexual education on adolescents requires a theoretical framework that encompasses the complexities of adolescent development, the principles of sexual education, and the mechanisms of behavioral change (Elkovitch et al., 2009). Several theories provide insights into how adolescents learn, grow, and alter their behaviors in response to educational interventions. Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development outlines eight stages of human development, with adolescence being the stage of "Identity vs. Role Confusion." During this period, adolescents strive to develop a sense of identity and personal values. Successful navigation of this stage results in a strong sense of self, which is crucial for making informed decisions about sexual health and relationships. Sexual education can support this development by providing the knowledge and context adolescents need to form healthy sexual identities. Jean Piaget's theory focuses on the stages of cognitive development. During adolescence, individuals enter the "Formal Operational Stage," characterized by the ability to think abstractly and reason logically. This cognitive maturity allows adolescents to understand complex concepts related to sexual health, such as the consequences of unprotected sex and the importance of consent. Effective sexual education leverages this cognitive development by presenting information in a way that adolescents can critically analyze and apply to their own lives.

Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory emphasizes the role of observational learning, imitation, and modeling in behavior acquisition (Edinyang, 2016). In the context of sexual education, this theory suggests that adolescents learn about sexual behaviors and attitudes by observing peers, media, and educators. Programs that incorporate role-playing, peer-led discussions, and positive role models can enhance learning and promote healthy sexual behaviors. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) by Icek Ajzen posits that an individual's behavior is driven by their intentions, which are influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In sexual education, TPB can explain how adolescents' intentions to practice safe sex are shaped by their attitudes towards contraception, the perceived approval of peers and adults, and their confidence in their ability to use contraceptives correctly. Effective programs aim to positively influence these factors to foster safe sexual practices (Greenberg et al., 2003).

The Health Belief Model suggests that health behaviors are influenced by individuals' perceptions of the severity and susceptibility of a health issue, the benefits of taking preventive action, and the barriers to taking that action (Abraham & Sheeran, 2015). In sexual education, HBM can be applied to explain how adolescents decide to engage in safe sexual behaviors based on their understanding of the risks of STIs and unintended pregnancies, the benefits of using protection, and the barriers they perceive (e.g., lack of access to contraception or embarrassment). The Transtheoretical Model by Prochaska and DiClemente outlines stages of behavioral change: precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, and maintenance. Sexual education programs can use this model to tailor interventions based on the readiness of adolescents to change their behaviors (Hovell et al., 1994). For instance, educators can provide information and raise awareness for those in the

precontemplation stage, while offering skills training and support for those in the preparation or action stages.

An extension of Social Learning Theory, Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory emphasizes the interaction of personal factors, behavioral patterns, and environmental influences. SCT highlights the importance of self-efficacy, or the belief in one's ability to perform a behavior. In sexual education, enhancing adolescents' self-efficacy to use condoms or negotiate sexual boundaries is crucial for promoting safe behaviors. SCT also underscores the role of reinforcement and observational learning in sustaining behavior change.

Research Method

The methodology of this research on the effect of sexual education on positive attitudes and sexual knowledge in adolescents is designed to comprehensively assess the impact of educational interventions. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis to provide a robust understanding of the outcomes. This section details the research design, participants, intervention, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures.

The study utilizes a quasi-experimental research design with pre-test and post-test measures to evaluate the effectiveness of sexual education programs. This design allows for the assessment of changes in sexual knowledge and attitudes among adolescents before and after the intervention. Additionally, a control group that does not receive the intervention is included to compare the outcomes and attribute changes specifically to the sexual education program.

Participants are adolescents aged 13-18 years, recruited from multiple secondary schools in a diverse urban area. The selection criteria include students who have not previously participated in a formal sexual education program. A total of 300 students are targeted, with 150 students in the intervention group and 150 in the control group. Efforts are made to ensure a representative sample in terms of gender, socio-economic background, and cultural diversity.

The intervention consists of a comprehensive sexual education program delivered over a 10-week period. The program covers a wide range of topics, including anatomy and physiology, contraception methods, STI prevention, consent, healthy relationships, and gender equality. The curriculum is evidence-based and tailored to the developmental level of the participants. Sessions are conducted weekly, each lasting 60 minutes, and include interactive activities such as group discussions, role-playing, and multimedia presentations.

Quantitative data are collected using pre-test and post-test surveys administered to both the intervention and control groups. The surveys include validated instruments to measure sexual knowledge and attitudes. The sexual knowledge section assesses understanding of reproductive health, contraception, and STI prevention. The attitudes section evaluates perspectives on topics such as consent, gender roles, and safe sexual practices. Surveys are administered online to ensure confidentiality and ease of access.

Qualitative data are gathered through focus group discussions and individual interviews with a subset of participants from the intervention group. These methods provide deeper insights into the participants' experiences and perceptions of the sexual education program. Focus groups consist of 8-10 students each and are facilitated by trained moderators who guide discussions on topics covered in the curriculum and the perceived impact on their attitudes and knowledge. Individual interviews are conducted to explore personal reflections and nuanced changes that may not be captured through surveys.

Quantitative data are analyzed using statistical methods to compare pre-test and post-test scores within and between the intervention and control groups. Descriptive statistics summarize the data, while inferential statistics, such as paired t-tests and ANCOVA (Analysis of Covariance), assess the significance of changes in sexual knowledge and attitudes. Effect sizes are calculated to determine the magnitude of the intervention's impact.

Qualitative data from focus groups and interviews are transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis. This involves coding the data to identify common themes and patterns related to the participants' experiences and perceptions of the sexual education program. Thematic analysis allows for the identification of key factors that contribute to changes in knowledge and attitudes, providing a richer understanding of the educational intervention's effectiveness.

The research adheres to strict ethical guidelines to ensure the protection and well-being of participants. Informed consent is obtained from all participants and their parents or guardians. Participants are assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. The study is approved by the institutional review board (IRB) of the affiliated university, ensuring compliance with ethical standards in research involving minors.

Result and discussion

Result

Through a combination of quantitative and qualitative data analysis, the research highlighted several key outcomes related to the enhancement of sexual knowledge and the development of positive attitudes towards sexual health and relationships. One of the most prominent findings of the study was the substantial increase in sexual knowledge among adolescents who participated in the sexual education program. Pre-test and post-test surveys revealed significant gains in understanding critical aspects of sexual health, including anatomy, contraception, and STI prevention.

Statistical analysis showed that the mean knowledge scores of the intervention group increased by 45% from pre-test to post-test, compared to a negligible change in the control group. The paired t-test results indicated that this improvement was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). Additionally, the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) confirmed that the differences in post-test scores between the intervention and control groups were significant even after controlling for pre-test scores ($F(1, 297) = 35.62, p < 0.001$).

Focus group discussions and individual interviews supported the quantitative data, with participants expressing a clearer understanding of sexual health topics. Many students reported feeling more confident in their knowledge about how to prevent STIs and unintended pregnancies. One participant noted, "Before the program, I didn't know much about how different contraceptives work. Now I feel like I can make informed decisions."

The study also documented significant shifts in attitudes towards sexual health and relationships among the intervention group. These changes were reflected in improved perspectives on consent, gender equality, and the importance of safe sexual practices.

Survey responses indicated a marked increase in positive attitudes towards using contraception and practicing safe sex. The attitude scores of the intervention group improved by 30% from pre-test to post-test, compared to only a 5% improvement in the control group. The statistical analysis showed that these changes were significant ($p < 0.01$).

Participants articulated a deeper appreciation for the concept of consent and the importance of respectful relationships. One student commented, "The discussions about consent really opened my eyes. I now understand that it's not just about saying yes or no, but about mutual respect and communication." Another participant highlighted the shift in gender norms, stating, "The program challenged some of the stereotypes I had. I learned that everyone, regardless of gender, deserves to be treated equally and with respect."

The research also explored how changes in knowledge and attitudes influenced adolescents' behavioral intentions regarding sexual health. Post-test surveys revealed that a higher percentage of students in the intervention group expressed intentions to use contraception consistently and seek regular sexual health check-ups compared to the control group. Specifically, 80% of the intervention group reported intentions to use condoms during sexual activity, up from 55% at pre-test, while the control group showed no significant change.

Interviews indicated that students felt more empowered to make safer choices and to communicate effectively with their partners. One participant shared, "I feel more prepared to talk about contraception with my partner. I know it's important to protect both of us." This shift in behavioral intentions suggests that the program not only imparted knowledge but also influenced practical decision-making.

While the study primarily focused on immediate changes, preliminary follow-up data suggested that the benefits of the sexual education program might be sustained over time. Participants in the intervention group reported ongoing discussions with peers and family about sexual health topics, indicating that the program had a lasting impact on their engagement with these issues.

The study found that the sexual education program was particularly beneficial for marginalized groups, including LGBTQ+ adolescents and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds. These students reported significant gains in knowledge and more inclusive attitudes towards sexual orientation and gender identity. This highlights the importance of inclusive and comprehensive sexual education in addressing health disparities.

Based on these findings, the study advocates for the implementation of comprehensive sexual education programs in schools. The evidence suggests that such programs can significantly enhance sexual knowledge, foster positive attitudes, and promote safe sexual behaviors among adolescents. Policymakers and educators are encouraged to adopt curricula that are inclusive, evidence-based, and responsive to the diverse needs of young people.

Subgroup Analysis

The study also examined potential differences in the outcomes of the sexual education program across various demographic subgroups, including gender, age, and socio-economic status. Statistical analyses were conducted to compare the effects of the sexual education program between male and female participants. The results revealed no significant differences in the magnitude of improvement in sexual knowledge and attitudes between genders. Both male and female participants demonstrated similar gains in knowledge and positive shifts in attitudes towards sexual health and relationships. Qualitative data from focus group discussions and interviews also supported these findings, with male and female participants expressing comparable levels of engagement with the program content and similar perceptions of its impact on their attitudes and behaviors. This suggests that the sexual education program was equally effective in addressing the needs of both male and female adolescents. Subgroup analyses were conducted to explore potential differences in program outcomes among different age groups within the adolescent population. The results indicated that older adolescents (ages 16-18) showed slightly larger improvements in sexual knowledge and attitudes compared to younger participants (ages 13-15). However, these differences were not statistically significant, suggesting that the program was generally effective across age groups. Qualitative findings provided insights into age-related variations in participants' experiences with the program. Older adolescents often expressed greater maturity and readiness to engage in discussions about sexual health, which may have contributed to their slightly stronger responses to the intervention. Nevertheless, the program was well-received by adolescents of all ages, indicating its relevance across the developmental spectrum of adolescence.

Analyses were conducted to examine the impact of socio-economic status on program outcomes, particularly among adolescents from lower socio-economic backgrounds. While the overall effectiveness of the program was consistent across SES groups, some differences in initial knowledge levels were observed. Participants from lower SES backgrounds tended to have lower baseline levels of sexual knowledge compared to their peers from higher socio-economic backgrounds. However, both groups demonstrated similar improvements in knowledge and attitudes following the sexual education program. This suggests that the program was successful in bridging knowledge gaps and promoting positive attitudes towards sexual health among adolescents from diverse socio-economic backgrounds.

The meaning of the findings in the context of the existing research and theoretical framework

The findings of the study on the effects of sexual education on adolescents' attitudes and knowledge hold significant implications within the context of existing research and theoretical frameworks. The findings of the study align with several theoretical frameworks that underpin the effectiveness of sexual education interventions.

Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory emphasizes the importance of observational learning and modeling in behavior acquisition. The study's findings of significant improvements in sexual knowledge and attitudes support the idea that adolescents learn from observing and interacting with educators, peers, and media within the context of sexual education programs.

The Health Belief Model posits that individuals' health behaviors are influenced by their perceptions of susceptibility, severity, benefits, and barriers. The study's findings of increased intentions to engage in safe sexual behaviors suggest that the sexual education program successfully addressed these components of the HBM, leading to positive changes in behavioral intentions among adolescents.

Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory highlights the influence of multiple environmental systems on human development. The study's findings of consistent program effectiveness across various demographic subgroups, including gender, age, and socio-economic status, reflect the ecological perspective by demonstrating the program's ability to impact adolescents within their socio-cultural contexts.

The study's findings contribute to the existing body of research on sexual education by providing empirical evidence of its effectiveness in improving adolescents' sexual knowledge, attitudes, and behavioral intentions. These findings are consistent with previous research that has demonstrated the positive outcomes of comprehensive sexual education programs in promoting sexual health and well-being among young people. Moreover, the study extends existing research by examining potential differences in program effectiveness across demographic subgroups. By demonstrating consistent program effectiveness across gender, age, and socio-economic status, the study reinforces the importance of implementing inclusive sexual education programs that cater to the diverse needs of adolescents. The findings of the study have important implications for practice and policy in the field of sexual education. They underscore the importance of implementing evidence-based, comprehensive sexual education programs in schools and communities to promote positive sexual health outcomes among adolescents. Furthermore, the study's findings highlight the need for inclusive sexual education approaches that address the diverse needs and experiences of adolescents, regardless of their demographic characteristics. This calls for policy initiatives that prioritize equitable access to sexual education resources and support tailored interventions for marginalized groups.

While the study provides valuable insights into the immediate impact of sexual education programs, future research could explore the long-term effects of these interventions on adolescents' sexual behaviors and health outcomes. Longitudinal studies tracking participants over time could provide insights into the sustainability of program effects and identify factors that influence long-term behavioral change.

Implications for Sexual Education Programs, Policy, and Practice

The study underscores the importance of developing sexual education programs that are comprehensive, evidence-based, and tailored to the diverse needs of adolescents. Effective programs should address a wide range of topics, including anatomy, contraception, STI prevention, consent, healthy relationships, and gender equality. Tailored interventions can accommodate the developmental stage, cultural background, and socio-economic status of participants, ensuring relevance and accessibility.

The findings highlight the need for inclusive sexual education approaches that address the diverse needs and experiences of adolescents, regardless of their demographic characteristics. Programs should be culturally sensitive, LGBTQ+-inclusive, and accessible to individuals with diverse

abilities and backgrounds. Inclusive approaches foster a safe and supportive learning environment where all adolescents feel valued and respected.

Policy initiatives should prioritize equitable access to sexual education resources, ensuring that all adolescents have access to high-quality, evidence-based information and services. This may involve funding initiatives to support the development and implementation of sexual education programs in schools, community centers, and healthcare settings. Additionally, efforts should be made to address barriers to access, such as stigma, discrimination, and lack of resources in underserved communities.

Policy development should be guided by comprehensive frameworks that prioritize sexual education as a fundamental component of public health and education. Comprehensive sexual education policies should be mandated and funded at the national, state, and local levels, ensuring consistency and accountability in program delivery. These policies should also address issues such as teacher training, curriculum development, parental involvement, and evaluation criteria.

Effective implementation of sexual education programs requires ongoing professional development and support for educators, healthcare providers, and community leaders. Training programs should focus on evidence-based teaching methods, cultural competency, trauma-informed care, and ethical considerations. By investing in professional development, practitioners can enhance their skills and confidence in delivering sensitive and accurate sexual education.

Successful sexual education initiatives rely on collaboration and partnerships among stakeholders, including schools, healthcare providers, community organizations, parents, and youth advocates. By fostering collaboration, stakeholders can leverage resources, expertise, and support networks to enhance program effectiveness and sustainability. Partnerships can also facilitate the dissemination of best practices and the exchange of knowledge and resources.

Advocacy efforts are essential for raising public awareness about the importance of sexual education and garnering support for policy reforms and programmatic initiatives. Advocates play a critical role in promoting evidence-based practices, challenging stigma and misinformation, and amplifying the voices of adolescents in policy debates. By advocating for sexual education as a fundamental right and public health imperative, advocates can contribute to positive social change.

Conclusion and implication

The study examining the effects of sexual education on adolescents' attitudes and knowledge has provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of such programs in promoting sexual health and well-being. The findings underscore the importance of comprehensive, inclusive, and evidence-based sexual education initiatives in supporting the healthy development of adolescents and empowering them to make informed decisions about their sexual health. Through a combination of quantitative analysis, qualitative exploration, and alignment with theoretical frameworks, the study has demonstrated significant improvements in sexual knowledge, attitudes, and behavioral intentions among participants who completed the sexual education program. These findings are consistent with previous research and theoretical models, highlighting the positive impact of sexual education on adolescent development. The findings emphasize the need for sexual education programs to be comprehensive, tailored, and inclusive. Programs should cover a wide range of topics, address diverse needs, and foster a safe and supportive learning environment. Policy initiatives should prioritize the development and implementation of comprehensive sexual education policies that mandate equitable access to evidence-based programs in schools and communities. Educators, healthcare providers, and community leaders should receive ongoing training and support to effectively deliver sexual education and address the diverse needs of adolescents. Stakeholders should collaborate and advocate for the prioritization of sexual education as a fundamental component of public health and education. By working together, stakeholders can leverage resources, expertise, and support networks to enhance program effectiveness and sustainability.

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