

Intervention to Improve Knowledge as an Effort to Prevent Sexual Violence among Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

Sexual violence among adolescents persists as a significant public health concern, particularly in rural areas with limited access to information. Insufficient adolescent knowledge regarding the definition, forms, and prevention of sexual violence increases the risk of victimization or perpetration. This community service program sought to enhance adolescents' knowledge of sexual violence prevention through a structured health education intervention. Forty adolescent members of a *karang taruna* youth organization in Wonorejo Village participated in the program, which incorporated lectures, group discussions, and simulations. Knowledge acquisition was evaluated using pre-test and post-test questionnaires. Initial assessments indicated that most participants possessed low knowledge, with only 12.5% achieving a high level. Following the intervention, 62.5% of adolescents attained the high-knowledge category, and none remained in the low-knowledge category. These results indicate the effectiveness of community-based educational strategies in addressing information deficits at the village level. The findings align with existing literature that underscores the value of comprehensive sexual education in preventing sexual violence among adolescents. The intervention also fostered greater openness among adolescents in discussing sensitive topics and increased their willingness to report experiences or observations of violence. Sustainable implementation of this program is recommended, involving parents, teachers, and community leaders as agents of change. The outcomes of this initiative may serve as a pilot model for sexual violence prevention education in adolescent communities within similar contexts.

Keywords: *sexual violence, adolescents, knowledge*

INTRODUCTION

Sexual violence among adolescents is a serious problem and remains a major challenge in many countries, including Indonesia (Bagenda et al., 2024; Intan Fadilah Nasution et al., 2024a). Data indicate that one in three adolescents has experienced some form of sexual violence, either within the family environment or at school. This situation is exacerbated by adolescents' limited knowledge of appropriate sexual education (UNICEF, 2021). Adolescents often find it difficult to recognize signs of sexual violence and to understand how to protect themselves due to minimal education on this topic (Intan Fadilah Nasution et al., 2024b; Larasati et al., 2024). Educational interventions are therefore crucial to increase adolescents' knowledge and awareness of sexual violence prevention.

Age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education has been shown to reduce the incidence of sexual violence among adolescents (Goldfarb & Lieberman, 2021; Maranatha, 2024). Schools, as formal educational institutions, have a strategic role in providing accurate information and shaping students'

attitudes toward this issue (Rafif Attala & Dwi Astuti Nurhaeni, 2024). Previous studies have found that most schools in Indonesia do not yet have a structured sexuality education curriculum (Putri & Simeon, 2022; Shibuya et al., 2023a). As a result, teachers and parents often struggle to provide appropriate explanations. Community service programs through educational interventions can serve as a practical solution that may be implemented with support from multiple stakeholders.

This community service activity was designed to enhance adolescents' knowledge using interactive educational methods and contextually relevant materials. The educational content was developed based on basic informational needs related to the definition, forms, impacts, and prevention strategies of sexual violence (Berenguer-Simon et al., 2024; Shibuya et al., 2023b). Participatory learning methods were chosen to ensure that adolescents could actively engage and understand the material more deeply (Christodoulakis et al., 2024). In addition, the involvement of teachers and parents was considered an important component to reinforce the outcomes of the intervention (Stone & Smith, 2025). This approach was expected to increase adolescents' knowledge and awareness, thereby reducing the risk of sexual violence.

The program was expected not only to improve adolescents' knowledge but also to foster a safe school culture that is sensitive and responsive to sexual violence issues. The results of this community service activity can serve as a reference for the development of child-protection-oriented school curricula and policies. Similar educational programs may be replicated in other schools with appropriate adaptation to local contexts. Active participation from all students, teachers, parents, and the wider community is essential to ensure program sustainability. Through such synergy, cases of sexual violence among adolescents can be effectively prevented.

METHOD

Implementation Method

This activity was carried out using a collaborative learning approach. The material was delivered through face-to-face (offline) lectures by the speakers. After the presentation, participants were given the opportunity to ask questions, followed by a group discussion between the speakers and participants.

Educational Materials

The speakers delivered material on the prevention of sexual violence among adolescents in both school and community settings. The material covered: the definition of sexual violence; internal and external risk factors; various forms of sexual violence; management of sexual violence; and prevention strategies. The prevention strategies included practical steps that adolescents can directly implement in their environment. Health professionals and educators, such as teachers, are encouraged to help build

adolescents' understanding and awareness of sexual violence. Adolescents can also form peer support and awareness groups to strengthen prevention efforts.

Moreover, adolescents should be encouraged and empowered to report inappropriate or disturbing behaviors. Educational programs related to healthy relationships, refusal skills, and basic psychological first aid were also emphasized. Participants were engaged in discussions and question-and-answer sessions after the material was delivered to deepen their understanding.

Target Participants and Facilitators

The target participants of this activity were 40 middle- and late-adolescent members of a *karang taruna* youth organization in Wonorejo Village, Gondangrejo, Karanganyar, Central Java. The facilitators were nursing lecturers from Universitas Kusuma Husada Surakarta with expertise in mental health nursing. The activity aimed to ensure that participants gained a comprehensive understanding—both cognitively and behaviorally—so that they are better prepared to undertake efforts to prevent sexual violence.

Evaluation

The activity was evaluated by the facilitators to assess participants' understanding of the material delivered. Evaluation was conducted in written form using pre-test and post-test questionnaires. Participants were considered to have adequate understanding if there was an increase in knowledge scores between the pre-test and post-test. The facilitators distributed the post-test forms, ensured that all were completed, and collected them. Subsequently, the pre-test and post-test data were tabulated and analyzed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Health education on efforts to improve knowledge and prevent sexual violence was delivered to 40 adolescents in Wonorejo Village who were members of the *karang taruna*. Pre-test results showed that 15 adolescents (37.5%) had low knowledge; they did not understand the definition, benefits, and preventive efforts related to sexual violence. Ten adolescents (25%) had moderate knowledge, and 5 adolescents (12.5%) had high knowledge of sexual violence prevention.

Post-test results indicated an increase in adolescents' knowledge regarding sexual violence prevention. After the intervention, no participants remained in the low-knowledge category. Instead, 25 adolescents (62.5%) reached the high-knowledge category, and 15 adolescents (37.5%) were in the moderate category. The following figure (Figure 1) illustrates the pre-test and post-test results.

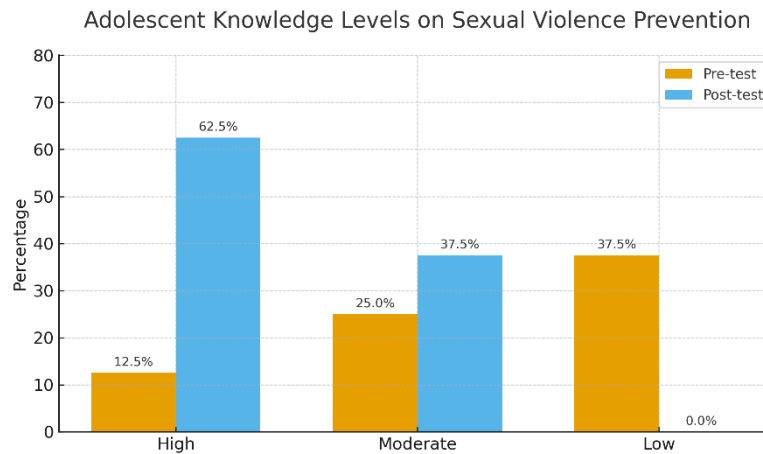


Figure 1. Pre-test and Post-test Knowledge Scores

The results of this program show an increase in adolescents' knowledge regarding sexual violence prevention after receiving health education. Prior to the intervention, most adolescents had limited knowledge about the definition, impacts, and prevention of sexual violence. This reflects the restricted access to accurate information at the community level (Cagney et al., 2025; Sardinha et al., 2024). Formal sexual education is often unavailable or poorly integrated into school curricula (Barriuso-Ortega et al., 2024). Therefore, educational interventions conducted outside the school setting through community service activities represent an effective alternative to bridge this information gap (Lou et al., 2004; Mulubwa et al., 2020).

Low levels of knowledge place adolescents at greater risk of experiencing sexual violence. Evidence suggests that poor sexual literacy contributes to higher rates of harassment and violence among adolescents. Without sufficient knowledge, adolescents struggle to recognize risky behaviors and tend to be reluctant to report when they become victims (Berenguer-Simon et al., 2024; CDC, 2023). This situation is often worsened by limited guidance from parents and the surrounding environment. Early education is therefore an important protective measure for adolescents (Farantika et al., 2024; Rahayu et al., 2022).

Following the intervention, there was a significant increase in adolescent knowledge levels. Post-test data showed that no participant remained in the low-knowledge category, and most adolescents achieved high knowledge levels. These findings are consistent with international studies showing that

community-based health education effectively improves knowledge and promotes behavior change (Li et al., 2023; Lim et al., 2024). Interactive educational methods and group discussions also help facilitate deeper understanding. The participatory design of the educational program can serve as a model for implementation in similar contexts.

Active participation in discussions made a substantial contribution to the learning outcomes. Adolescents felt more comfortable asking questions and sharing experiences related to sensitive issues such as sexual violence (Hegde et al., 2022). This is important because sexual violence remains a taboo topic in many Indonesian communities. Adolescent-friendly educational approaches can create an open and supportive learning environment (Abdul Hamid Alhassan et al., 2025; Haruna et al., 2021). In the future, such strategies can be expanded to other communities to strengthen sexual violence prevention efforts.

Improved knowledge is also expected to translate into long-term changes in attitudes and behaviors (Adjie et al., 2022; Guzzo & Hayford, 2021). Adequate sexual literacy enables adolescents to understand bodily autonomy and ways to protect themselves from potential violence. With sufficient knowledge, adolescents are more likely to report incidents of violence they experience. Educational interventions therefore have the potential to disrupt the cycle of sexual violence that often remains hidden.

The results of this program further highlight the importance of family and community support in accompanying adolescents. Families serve as the primary source of information for adolescents in understanding sexual violence issues (Veldiana & Isnaini, 2022). However, many parents feel uncomfortable or lack the knowledge needed to discuss this topic (Prima Mulya et al., 2021; Veldiana & Isnaini, 2022). Hence, socialization activities on sexual violence prevention should also involve parents and community leaders. Cross-sector collaboration will strengthen prevention and early detection efforts in the community (Piolanti et al., 2022; Porat et al., 2024).

The literature also indicates that without ongoing monitoring and reinforcement, knowledge gained from a single intervention may decline over time (Melzer & Herwix, 2024; Scheibel et al., 2024). Therefore, educational programs should be designed as periodic activities with materials tailored to evolving social and cultural dynamics. Integrating sexual violence prevention topics into youth organization work plans or *karang taruna* programs represents a strategic step to sustain the impact.

The significant improvement in post-test results demonstrates that community-based educational methods can effectively address information limitations at the village level. The success of this program is expected to serve as a reference model for implementing similar interventions in other regions. Through synergy between adolescents, families, schools, and the broader community, sexual

violence among adolescents can be reduced. Educational interventions should continue to be promoted and integrated into child protection programs at the national level.

CONCLUSION

This community service activity, conducted in the form of an educational intervention, proved effective in improving adolescents' knowledge of sexual violence prevention. Before the intervention, most adolescents demonstrated low understanding of the definition, forms, impacts, and prevention strategies related to sexual violence. After receiving participatory and interactive education, there was a significant increase in knowledge, with the majority of participants reaching the high-knowledge category. These findings indicate that community-based educational approaches can serve as an effective solution to overcome information gaps among adolescents, particularly in rural areas.

The activity also underscores the importance of active adolescent participation and the involvement of parents, teachers, and community leaders in creating a safe and supportive environment regarding sexual violence issues. Similar programs should be designed as continuous activities, integrated into youth organization programs, and adapted to local cultural contexts to ensure optimal long-term impact. The success of this program can serve as a reference model for developing child protection policies at both school and national levels. Cross-sector educational interventions may become a strategic preventive measure to reduce the incidence of sexual violence among adolescents on a broader scale.

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