



Comparison of Knowledge, Attitude and Sexual Behavior between High School Students who did and did not Participated in Friend Corner Project

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Abstract

Background: Adolescence is a period that has problem in both biological, psychological and social adaptation. Abnormal adolescent behavior is still a major problem in Thai society. Department of Mental Health organized Friend Corner Project (FCP) since 2004 and has helped alleviate the adolescent problems, especially in sexual behavior.

Objective: To compare knowledge, attitudes and sexual behavior between high school students who did and did not participate in FCP (Friend Corner Project).

Methods: This study recruited three hundred and eighty students from high schools in Nakhonratchasima province school by multiple stage stratified random sampling. One hundred seventy-three students participated in FCP activities and two-hundred sero-seven did not. Data was collected using self-administrated questionnaires during June 1st and June 30th, 2011. Statistical analysis included descriptive, Chi-square, t-test and Pearson's Correlation Coefficient. Hypothesis testing was set at α level = 0.05.

Result: Adolescents who participated in FCP had significantly better knowledge about sex than those who did not ($p < 0.001$). Most of both groups knew little about signs and symptoms of sexual transmitted infections. Regarding attitudes toward sex, both groups had moderate levels of attitude which was not statically significant different. Both groups agreed that having sexual intercourse with their boyfriends or girlfriends had less risk of contracting AIDS than with sex workers. Regarding sexual behavior, both group were of low risk which was not statically significant different. Significant factors associated with participation in FCP were occupation, education, parental marital status, residence of parents, getting sexual information from television, and spending leisure time in playing sport.

Conclusion: Participating in FCP activities was associated with better knowledge about sex among high school students in Nakhonratchasima province. Attitude and sexual behavior had no significant association with participating in FCP. Although, the explanation of the association was not clearly demonstrated, this kind of activities could help adolescents know better about sex and live more appropriately in the society.

Keywords: Adolescent, friend corner project, knowledge, sexual behavior, attitude

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Introduction

Adolescence is a transitional period of physical and psychological human development generally occurring between puberty and legal adulthood. A thorough understanding of adolescence in society depends on information from various perspectives, most importantly from the areas of psychology, biology, history, sociology, education, and anthropology. Within all of these perspectives, adolescence is viewed as a transitional period between childhood and adulthood whose cultural purpose is the preparation of children for adult roles.⁽¹⁻³⁾

Surveys in Thailand found that a significant minority of unmarried adolescents were sexually active. Although premarital sex is considered normal behavior for males, it is not always regarded as such for females. Most Thai youth reported that their first sexual experience, whether within or outside of marriage, was without contraception. The adolescent pregnancy rate in Thailand is relatively high at 60 per 1,000. Twenty five percent of women admitted to hospitals in Thailand because of for complications of induced abortion are students. Thai government had measures to inform the youth about the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and unplanned pregnancy.^(4,5)

According to statistics of the province of Nakhonratchasima, pregnancy rate among adolescents younger than 19 year old increased from 9.25% to 15.98% in the year 2009-2010. The Office of Epidemiology reported that number of STDs patients aged 15-24 year old increased from 247 to 337 per case in the year 2009-2010. The Regional Health Promotion Center in Nakhonratchasima reported that rate of pregnancy of women under 20 year old were 12.40% and 16.13% in the year 2009-2010 respectively.⁽⁶⁾

Friend Corner Project (FCP) was started founded in 2004 by Department of Mental Health to help pre-

vent the adolescent behavior problems especially sexual behavior. But not all adolescents visited or joined FCP centers which were located in a shopping malls. Adolescent can join and be a member of FCP and receive counseling service about sexual health.⁽⁶⁾

The authors were interested in the success of FCP by comparing knowledge, attitude and sexual behavior among high school students who did or did not participate in Friend Corner Project (FCP) in Nakhonratchasima province and to explore factors involved in their sexual behavior especially their general characteristic, family, school, knowledge, attitude as well as their spending of leisure time.

Methods

This survey was carried out during 1st June and 30th June 2011. Approval for the study was obtained from the Committee on Human Rights Related to Research Involving Human Subjects Faculty of Medicine Ramathibodi Hospital, Mahidol University (MURA/ 2011/240). Adolescents who participated in this study signed written informed consent. Three hundred and eighty high school students in Nakhornratchasima province were recruited, 173 participated and 207 did not participate in the FCP activities.

The SPSS software package version 18 licensed to Mahidol University was used for data analysis. Chi-square, t-test and Pearson's Correlation Coefficient were used for hypothesis testing at α level = 0.05.

Results

Factors significantly associated with participation FCP activities

Significant factors associated with participation in FCP were occupation and education of both mothers and fathers and parental marital status. Adolescents who participated in FCP activities stayed with friends

significantly more than adolescents who did not ($p < 0.01$). (Table 1) Adolescents who participated in FCP activities spent leisure time in playing sports and talking with friend by phone more than adolescents who did not ($p < 0.05$). Adolescents who participated in FCP activities get information about sex from TV significantly less than adolescents who did not.

Level of knowledge was significantly higher among adolescents who participated in FCP than adolescents who did not ($p < 0.05$). Levels of attitude and having high risk sexual behaviors were not significant different between both group. (Table 2)

Adolescents who participated in FCP activities knew more about physiologic changes of adolescents, hormonal function, fertilization, abortion and, use of

Table 1. Association between personal characteristics and FCP participation.

Personal characteristics	FCP participation		χ^2	df	p
	yes n=173 No(%)	no n= 207 No (%)			
Gender					
male	65(37.6)	63(30.4)			
female	108(62.4)	144(69.6)	2.149	1	0.143
Age(years)					
- 16	13(7.5)	13(6.3)			
- 17	145(83.8)	165(79.7)			
- ≥ 18	15(8.7)	29(14.0)	2.725	2	0.256
Mean (SD)	17.02(0.42)	17.09(0.47)			
Academic performance (Grade point average)					
- low <2.50	55(31.8)	57(27.5)			
- moderate 2.50-3.00	50(28.9)	70(33.8)			
- high>3.00	68(39.3)	80(38.6)	1.310	2	0.519
Mean (SD)	2.85(0.58)	2.86(0.55)			
Order of siblings					
- 1	90(52.0)	116(56.0)			
- 2	62(35.8)	70(33.8)			
- ≥ 3	21(19.2)	21(10.2)	0.730	2	0.694

**Table 1.** Association between personal characteristics and FCP participation. (Cont.)

Personal characteristics	FCP participation		χ^2	df	p
	yes	no			
	n=173 No (%)	n= 207 No (%)			
Monthly allowance (bath/month)					
- < 1,000	15(8.7)	19(9.2)			
-1,000-2,000	55(31.8)	78(37.7)			
-2,001-3,000	60(34.7)	76(36.7)			
- \geq 3,000	43(24.9)	34(16.4)	4.375	3	0.224
Source of monthly allowance					
-parent	165(95.4)	191(92.3)			
- relatives/oneself	8(4.6)	16(7.7)	2.264	2	0.322
Father's occupation					
-government or state enterprise employee	76(43.9)	68(32.9)			
- private employee	28(22.2)	46(22.2)			
-merchant	58(33.5)	69(33.3)			
-farmer	12(6.4)	16(11.6)	10.222	3	0.017*
Mother's occupation					
-government or state enterprise employee	66(38.2)	61(29.5)			
- private employee	32(18.5)	55(26.6)			
-merchant	63(36.4)	68(32.9)			
-farmer	12(6.9)	23(11.0)	8.453	3	0.038*
Father's education					
-elementary school	21(12.2)	62(30.0)			
-secondary school	46(26.6)	63(30.4)			
-bachelor degree	77(44.5)	60(29.0)			
-master degree and higher	29(16.8)	22(10.6)	23.111	2	<0.001**

Table 1. Association between personal characteristics and FCP participation. (Cont.)

Personal characteristics	FCP participation		χ^2	df	p
	yes n=173 No (%)	no n= 207 No (%)			
Mother's education					
-elementary school	16(9.2)	64(30.9)			
-secondary school	46(26.6)	57(27.5)			
-bachelor degree	103(59.5)	73(35.3)			
-master degree and higher	8(4.6)	13(6.3)	30.348	2	<0.001**
Parental marital status					
-living together	156(90.2)	153(73.9)			
-separated (divorced/widowed)	17(9.8)	54(26.1)	6.667	1	0.010*
Relationship between adolescents and parents					
-good relationship	138(79.8)	148(71.5)			
-seldom argument	34(19.7)	55(26.6)			
-frequent quarrels	1(0.6)	4(1.9)	3.463	1	0.063
Residence					
-staying with parents	127(73.4)	165(79.7)			
-staying with relatives	6(3.4)	19(9.2)			
-staying with friends	40(23.2)	23(11.1)	13.357	2	<0.001**
Spending leisure time					
-reading	109(63.0)	138(66.7)	0.555	1	0.456
-listen radio	152(87.9)	185(89.5)	0.214	1	0.643
-playing sport	86(49.7)	76(36.7)	6.508	1	0.011*
-searching internet	142(82.1)	154(74.4)	1.387	1	0.239
-talking with friends by phone	69(39.9)	95(45.9)	3.956	1	0.047
Source of sexual information					
- TV	37(21.4)	55(26.6)			
- others	136(78.6)	152(73.4)	10.804	1	0.001*

**Table 2.** Level of knowledge, attitude towards sex and risk sexual behavior among adolescents.

Characteristics	FCP participation		χ^2	df	p
	yes n=173 No(%)	no n= 207 No (%)			
Level of knowledge (%)					
-High ($\geq 80\%$)	128(74.0)	87(42.0)	40.259	2	<0.001**
-Moderate (60%-79.9%)	39(22.5)	111(53.6)			
-Low (< 60%)	6 (3.5)	9(4.3)			
Attitude towards sex(scores)					
- High (3.67-5.00)	26(15.0)	33(15.9)	0.357	2	0.837
- Moderate (2.34-3.66)	112(64.7)	137(66.2)			
- Low (1.00-2.33)	35(20.2)	37(17.9)			
Risk sexual behavior(scores)					
-High risk (9-12)	7(4.0)	6(2.9)	4.699	2	0.095
-Moderate risk (5-8)	17(9.8)	36 (17.4)			
-Low risk (0-4)	149(86.1)	165(75.7)			

emergency contraception and condom. They also knew more about STI. (Table 3).

Both groups of adolescents had lowest scores of attitude towards sex in the items “having sex with boyfriends or girlfriends had less risk of contract AIDS than with prostitute” and “sexual intercourse is normal during adolescent or which studying ages”. (Table 4)

Only thirteen percents of adolescents who participated in FCP had been persuaded to have sexual intercourse compared to 21.7% of adolescents who did not. ($p < 0.05$) (Table 5).

Discussion

Most adolescents who participated in FCP had significantly better knowledge than those who did not. This finding was comparable with the study of Ingkathawornwong, et al.⁽⁷⁾ which studied risky sexual behavior among females adolescents in vocational school in Songkla and Phatthalung province in 2006 and found that females adolescents had good knowledge about sex, such as prevention of sexually transmitted infection and pregnancy. This was also in accordance with Densirieuksorn.⁽⁸⁾ who studied knowledge, attitude and sexual behavior among students

Table 3. Percentage of correct answers of knowledge about sex among adolescents.

Items	FCP participation		χ^2	p
	yes n=173 %	no n= 207 %		
1. Physical changes during adolescence.	83.2	72.0	6.764	0.009*
2. Endocrine glands' function on physical development.	89.0	74.4	13.118	0.000*
3. Knowledge of abortion.	61.3	48.8	5.918	0.015*
4. The meaning of fertilization.	94.8	86.0	8.122	0.004*
5. The age that is appropriate in engaging in sexual intercourse.	96.0	94.2	0.608	0.435
6. Prevention of sexually transmitted infection and contraception.	97.7	95.7	1.182	0.277
7. The meaning of sexual masturbation.	94.8	87.9	5.467	0.019*
8. The correct use of emergency pills.	85.5	55.1	40.884	0.000*
9. The less effective methods of contraception.	93.6	86.5	5.253	0.022*
10. Diseases of STI.				
11. Small, painful bumps or blisters on the genitals are symptoms of STI.	78.0 3.5	44.9 13.5	43.039 11.703	0.000* 0.001*
12. Abnormal vagina discharge.	86.7	64.7	24.094	0.000*
13. The correct use of condom.	90.8	79.7	8.883	0.003*
14. Situations lead to sexual intercourse.	65.3	76.3	5.585	0.018*
15. Preparation before marriage.	80.3	79.5	0.073	0.787

df = 1 * statistically significant p < 0.05

**Table 4.** Attitude toward sex among adolescents.

Items of attitude	FCP participation		t-test	p
	yes n=173 x (SD)	no n= 207 x(SD)		
1. Parno books or magazines is a source of sexual arousal lead to sexual intercourse.	4.29(0.82)	4.26(0.84)	-0.452	0.651
2. Having sex with your boyfriends or girlfriends had less risk of contract AIDS than with prostitute.	1.61(0.85)	1.58(0.96)	-0.288	0.772
3. Sexual intercourse while studying is to be avoid.	4.47(0.88)	4.35(0.89)	-1.258	0.209
4. Induced abortion should be allowed in the case of unplanned pregnancy.	3.76(1.23)	3.96(1.10)	1.608	0.109
5. Homosexuality is normal Homosexuality is not abnormal.	3.39(1.04)	3.25(0.99)	-1.344	0.180
6. Sexual intercourse is a natural course of life.	2.29(1.00)	2.31(0.99)	0.187	0.851
7. The meaning of sexual masturbation.	3.61(1.12)	3.79(1.09)	1.531	0.127
8. Drinking liquor lead to sexual intercourse.	4.02(0.73)	4.08(0.75)	0.708	0.479
9. Learning about contraception is necessary for students.	4.47(0.72)	4.46(0.58)	-0.226	0.822
10. Sexual intercourse in the studying ages may lead to trouble in life.	3.87(1.16)	3.88(1.17)	0.141	0.888

df = 378

Table 5. Risk sexual behaviors among adolescents.

Risk sexual behaviors.	FCP participation		χ^2	p
	yes n=173 No (%)	no n=207 No (%)		
Exposure to alcoholic drinking	113(65.3)	122(58.9)	1.626	0.202
Exposure to sexually arousing media	94(54.3)	118(57.0)	0.272	0.602
Chat with friends via internet	27(15.6)	30(14.5)	0.092	0.762
Touching boyfriend/ girlfriend	31(17.9)	51(24.6)	2.514	0.113
Stay in a private with boyfriend/girlfriend	48(27.7)	63(30.4)	0.330	0.566
Take addictive drugs or substance	16(9.2)	16(7.7)	0.282	0.595
Had been persuaded to have sexual intercourse	22(12.7)	45(21.7)	7.230	0.027*

df = 1 * statistically significant $p < 0.05$

in high school in Nongkhai province. On the contrary, Thongkeaw⁽⁹⁾ evaluated knowledge, attitude and behavior of secondary school students in Chumphon province according to Ministry of Education's guidelines on sexual education and found that most of students (75.3%) had poor knowledge about sex.

In the details of knowledge about sex, most of adolescents had good knowledge about the meaning of fertilization, the appropriate age in engaging in sexual intercourse, prevention of sexually transmitted infection, contraception and the meaning of masturbation. Most of adolescents had poor knowledge about sign and symptom of sexually transmitted infection and venereal diseases. These indicated that sexual education in Thai society should focus more on prevention of unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection.

Most adolescents had fair level of attitude toward sex, whether they participated in FCP or not. Most adolescents had inappropriate attitude in some categories such as that, having sex with their girlfriends had lower risk of contract AIDS than with prostitute and that sexual intercourse is normal while studying ages. These finding were comparable with the study of Thongkeaw.⁽⁹⁾

Both groups of adolescents had low risk of sexual behavior. One plausible explanation was that the students were inaccessible to high risk sexual service. Sex education may also play an important role. Fengxue Y⁽¹⁰⁾ found that adolescents who received accurate information were more likely to delay sexual activity and had fewer sexual partners. They were also less likely to engage in risky sexual behavior.



Female adolescents living in broken family were more likely to have sexual intercourse.⁽¹¹⁻¹³⁾ But the study of Krisawekwisai N⁽¹⁴⁾ found that the parental marital status was not statistically significantly associated with experience in coitus among adolescents. This can be explained that adolescents in good relationship family will have more appropriate knowledge, attitude and sexual behavior through better communication. Adolescents can also learn from various source of information especially through the mass media e.g. television and radio. Under the guidance of parents, they can understand more and behave more appropriately to maintain good living about sex.

Conclusion

Participating in FCP activities was associated with better knowledge about sex among high school students in Nakhonratchasima province. Attitude and sexual behavior had no significant association with participating in FCP. Although, the explanation of the association was not clearly demonstrated, this kind of activities could help adolescents know better about sex and live more appropriately in the society.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there were no conflict of interest in the study competing interests.

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เปรียบเทียบความรู้ เจตคติ และพฤติกรรมทางเพศ ระหว่างนักเรียนมัธยมศึกษาตอนปลายในโรงเรียนที่ร่วม และ ไม่ร่วมกิจกรรมศูนย์เพื่อนใจวัยรุ่น

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บทคัดย่อ

วัตถุประสงค์: การศึกษาในครั้งนี้เป็นการวิจัยเชิงสำรวจ เพื่อศึกษาเปรียบเทียบ ความรู้ เจตคติ และพฤติกรรมทางเพศ ระหว่างนักเรียนที่เข้าร่วมและไม่เข้าร่วมกิจกรรมศูนย์เพื่อนใจวัยรุ่น กลุ่มตัวอย่างเป็นนักเรียนมัธยมศึกษาชั้นปีที่ 6 อำเภอเมือง จังหวัดนครราชสีมา จำนวน 380 คน แบ่งเป็นนักเรียนที่เข้าร่วมกิจกรรม 173 คน ไม่เข้าร่วมกิจกรรม 207 คนเก็บข้อมูลโดยใช้แบบสอบถาม ระหว่างวันที่ 1 มิถุนายน 2554 ถึง 30 มิถุนายน 2554 วิเคราะห์ข้อมูลโดยใช้สถิติเชิงพรรณนา ไคร้สแควร์ ทีเทส สัมประสิทธิ์สหสัมพันธ์แบบเพียร์สัน ที่ค่าความเชื่อมั่นที่ $p = 0.05$

ผลการศึกษา: พบว่านักเรียนที่เข้าร่วมกิจกรรมศูนย์เพื่อนใจวัยรุ่นมีความรู้เกี่ยวกับเพศศึกษาดีกว่านักเรียนที่ไม่เข้าร่วม อย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ ($p < 0.001$) พบว่าทั้งสองกลุ่มมีความรู้เกี่ยวกับอาการของโรคติดต่อทางเพศสัมพันธ์น้อยมาก ด้านทัศนคติเรื่องเพศนักเรียนทั้งสองกลุ่มมีทัศนคติในระดับปานกลาง ทั้งสองกลุ่มมีทัศนคติว่า การมีเพศสัมพันธ์กับเพื่อนสาวมีโอกาสติดเชื้อเอชไอวีได้น้อยกว่าการมีเพศสัมพันธ์กับผู้หญิงขายบริการทางเพศ สำหรับพฤติกรรมทางเพศพบว่านักเรียนทั้งสองกลุ่มมีพฤติกรรมเสี่ยงต่ำ ปัจจัยที่มีความสัมพันธ์อย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติต่อการเข้าร่วมกิจกรรมศูนย์เพื่อนใจวัยรุ่น ได้แก่ อาชีพ การศึกษา สถานภาพสมรส การอยู่ด้วยกันของพ่อแม่ รายได้ของครอบครัว การรับข้อมูลข่าวสารทางโทรทัศน์และการใช้เวลาว่างในการเล่นกีฬา

สรุป: กิจกรรมศูนย์เพื่อนใจวัยรุ่น มีความสัมพันธ์กับ ความรู้ทางเพศของนักเรียนมัธยมศึกษาตอนปลาย จังหวัดนครราชสีมา แต่ทัศนคติและพฤติกรรมทางเพศไม่แตกต่างกัน ถึงแม้ว่าจะไม่สามารถอธิบายเหตุและผลให้ชัดเจน แต่การมีกิจกรรมเช่นนี้น่าจะเป็นประโยชน์และช่วยวัยรุ่นในการดำเนินชีวิตในสังคมได้ถูกต้องและเหมาะสมยิ่งขึ้น

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