

Development and Evaluation of an Intervention to Meet the Reproductive Health Needs of Adolescents in India: A Randomized Controlled Trial

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ABSTRACT Addressing needs of adolescents is a huge challenge in India due to various cultural and social barriers. The family and educational institutions exercise greater control over the sexual behavior of unmarried youth in India than in the West. In order to provide acceptable services with adequate utilization, in-depth exploration of social and cultural barriers and understanding the needs and expectations of adolescents is a great necessity. Under this backdrop, the project was undertaken with following objectives. The overall aim of the study was to design an intervention package for the reduction of sexual and reproductive health problems of adolescents and to evaluate its impact. The specific objective of this study was to improve the knowledge on sexual and reproductive health issues among the adolescents and to strengthen their capacity to become an active player in advocating for open discussion on adolescent sexuality. The randomized controlled trial study was carried out among 200 rural adolescents at Cuddalore district of Tamil Nadu. The study period was from May 2007 to December 2009. The quantitative evaluation of programmes shows that intervention programs have changed the adolescent girls' perception, attitude and behaviour on puberty and menstrual issues. A significant positive shift was observed in all aspects with particular improvement in the areas of menstrual cleanliness. It increased their knowledge on reproductive health and understanding on HIV/AIDS. Further, it also improved their parental relations, self-confidence on various issues.