

The Role of Peer-Based Reproductive Health Education in Improving the Knowledge and Attitudes of Adolescents and Pregnant Couples



*Ahmad Daffa Izzulirfan

Sultan Agung Islamic University, Semarang, Indonesia

Submitted: Juny 2025 | Revised: November 2025 | Accepted: December 2025

ARTICLE HISTORY:

Keywords:

Health Education,

Peer Education,

Reproductive Health,

Adolescents,

Childbearing Couples

DOI:

Abstract: Reproductive health education is a strategic effort to improve the health quality of adolescents and couples of childbearing age. However, various challenges remain, such as low knowledge, attitudes that do not support healthy behaviors, and limited educational approaches that are appropriate to the characteristics of the target population. The peer-based approach is considered effective because it can create a more open, equal, and easily accepted communication atmosphere. This study aims to explore the role of peer-based reproductive health education in improving the knowledge and attitudes of adolescents and couples of childbearing age. The study used a qualitative approach with a descriptive design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with adolescents and couples of childbearing age who participated in peer-based educational activities. The results show that the peer-based approach plays an important role in increasing understanding of reproductive health and forming more positive attitudes towards health behaviors. Equal interactions and shared experiences among peers encourage active participation and internalization of reproductive health values. This study concludes that peer-based reproductive health education has a significant contribution to improving the knowledge and attitudes of the target population, thus needing to be developed sustainably as a reproductive health promotion strategy.

INTRODUCTION

Reproductive health is a crucial aspect of human life, closely linked to quality of life, family well-being, and human resource development. Adolescents and couples of childbearing age are the primary target groups for reproductive health improvement efforts because they are at a stage in life that is vulnerable to various issues, such as lack of knowledge, inappropriate attitudes, and risky behavior. This situation is often influenced by limited access to accurate information and educational approaches that are not fully aligned with the needs of the target population.

In adolescents, rapid physical, psychological, and social changes are often not accompanied by an adequate understanding of reproductive health. This can lead to risky behaviors, such as a lack of awareness about maintaining reproductive health and poor decision-making. Meanwhile, for couples of childbearing age, understanding and attitudes toward reproductive health are crucial for successful family planning, maternal and child health, and the quality of family life. Various reproductive health education

*Corresponding Author:

E-mail : daffaizzulirfan@gmail.com

<https://www.journal.uruborospublishing.com/index.php/jesp>

efforts have been implemented through formal approaches, such as counseling by health workers. However, these approaches often encounter communication barriers, age differences, and social distance between the provider and recipient of information. These conditions mean that health messages are not always conveyed optimally. Therefore, alternative, more participatory and contextual approaches are needed.

A peer-based educational approach is considered an effective strategy in addressing these challenges. Peers share similar age, experience, and language, creating a more open and comfortable discussion environment. This approach allows for more relevant and understandable reproductive health information, while simultaneously encouraging positive attitudinal changes. Based on this background, this study focuses on the role of peer-based reproductive health education in improving the knowledge and attitudes of adolescents and couples of childbearing age. This research is expected to provide an in-depth understanding of the effectiveness of this approach as a reproductive health promotion strategy.

The research problem is how peer-based reproductive health education improves the knowledge of adolescents and couples of childbearing age and how the peer approach influences the attitudes of adolescents and couples of childbearing age toward maintaining reproductive health. The purpose of this study is to explore the role of peer-based reproductive health education in improving knowledge and understanding changes in attitudes of adolescents and couples of childbearing age after participating in the education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Understanding Reproductive Health

Reproductive health is a state of physical, mental, and social well-being related to the reproductive system, functions, and processes at every stage of human life. Reproductive health focuses not only on the absence of disease but also includes an individual's ability to lead a safe, responsible, and meaningful reproductive life. For adolescents and couples of childbearing age, an understanding of reproductive health is an important foundation for decision-making related to health behaviors and family planning.

Reproductive Health Education

Reproductive health education is the process of conveying information and learning aimed at increasing individual knowledge, understanding, and awareness regarding reproductive health aspects. This education covers topics such as physiological changes, reproductive organ care, sexually transmitted infection prevention, and reproductive responsibility. Effective education must be tailored to the target population's characteristics to ensure optimal reception and understanding of the message.

Peer Approach

The peer-to-peer approach is an educational strategy that involves individuals with similar age, experience, or social backgrounds as facilitators or learning resources. This approach emphasizes equal relationships, mutual trust, and two-way communication. In the context of reproductive health, peers serve as conduits for information that is more

easily understood because they use simple language and are relevant to the target's everyday experiences.

Knowledge about Reproductive Health

Reproductive health knowledge refers to an individual's level of understanding of the reproductive system, its biological functions, and reproductive health prevention and care efforts. Adequate knowledge helps adolescents and couples of childbearing age recognize risks, understand reproductive rights and responsibilities, and make informed decisions about maintaining their own and their partner's health.

Attitudes towards Reproductive Health

Attitudes toward reproductive health are an individual's internal responses that reflect their acceptance, evaluation, and behavioral tendencies toward reproductive health issues. Positive attitudes contribute to healthy behaviors, such as maintaining reproductive hygiene, participating in health education, and being open to accurate information. These attitudes are influenced by knowledge, experience, and the social environment, including peer influence.

Previous Research

Several previous studies have shown that peer-based reproductive health education is effective in increasing knowledge and fostering positive attitudes among adolescents and couples of childbearing age. Equal interaction and a comfortable discussion atmosphere allow participants to be more open in sharing questions and personal experiences. These findings reinforce the view that peer-based approaches can be an effective alternative strategy in reproductive health promotion.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive design. The qualitative approach was chosen to gain a deeper understanding of the role of peer-based reproductive health education in improving the knowledge and attitudes of adolescents and couples of childbearing age. The descriptive design was used to systematically describe the experiences, perspectives, and meanings perceived by participants without manipulating the research variables. This approach allowed researchers to explore the educational process, peer interactions, and changes in understanding and attitudes that occurred after the educational activities were implemented. Therefore, this study focused on the process and context, rather than on measuring causal relationships.

Sample and Data Collection

Participants in this study consisted of adolescents and couples of childbearing age who had participated in peer-based reproductive health education activities. Participant selection was conducted using a purposive sampling technique, considering inclusion criteria: individuals who were willing to participate, able to verbally express their experiences, and actively participated in educational activities. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews using a semi-structured interview guide. Interviews were conducted in person to elicit information regarding participants'

understanding of reproductive health materials, their experiences participating in peer education, and perceived changes in attitudes after the educational activities. In addition to the interviews, researchers also took field notes to capture the dynamics of interactions during the educational process.

Data analysis

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis. Interview data was transcribed verbatim and then read repeatedly to gain a comprehensive understanding. Next, the researcher conducted a coding process by identifying important statements relevant to the research objectives. The resulting codes were grouped into key themes that illustrate the role of peer-based education in increasing knowledge and shaping attitudes among adolescents and couples of childbearing age. The analysis results are presented in descriptive narratives that reflect participants' experiences and perspectives contextually.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Improving Reproductive Health Knowledge through Peer Education

The research results show that peer-based reproductive health education significantly contributes to improving the knowledge of adolescents and couples of childbearing age. Prior to participating in the educational activities, most participants reported that their understanding of reproductive health was limited and obtained from unstructured sources, such as social media or stories from their local community. This information was often incomplete and led to confusion in correctly understanding reproductive health concepts. Through a peer-to-peer approach, the information delivery process was more interactive and communicative. Participants felt more comfortable asking questions and discussing issues because the facilitators were from the same age group and background. The language used tended to be simple, contextual, and easy to understand, making reproductive health material more accessible. This encouraged increased understanding of reproductive organ function, reproductive health care, and the prevention of reproductive-related health problems.

Furthermore, discussions involving personal experiences among peers helped strengthen participants' understanding. The information presented was not merely theoretical but also connected to real-life situations frequently faced by adolescents and couples of childbearing age. This made the knowledge gained more meaningful and relevant to everyday life.

Changes in Attitudes of Adolescents and Childbearing Couples Towards Reproductive Health

In addition to increased knowledge, the research also showed positive changes in attitudes among adolescents and couples of childbearing age after participating in peer-based education. Participants reported increased awareness of the importance of maintaining reproductive health and a more open attitude toward discussing reproductive issues previously considered taboo. The peer-to-peer approach fostered mutual support and respect among participants. The discussions, conducted on an equal basis, made participants feel valued and listened to, allowing them to be more open in expressing their views and feelings. This positive attitude was reflected in an increased willingness to

adopt healthy behaviors, such as maintaining reproductive hygiene, seeking accurate health information, and discussing reproductive health with their partners. Attitude changes were also evident in participants' increased sense of responsibility for their own and their partners' health. Education provided through peers helped shape the perception that maintaining reproductive health is not only an individual obligation but also a social responsibility in building a healthy family and environment.

Discussion

The Role of Peer Education in Increasing Reproductive Health Knowledge

The findings of this study indicate that peer-based reproductive health education plays an effective role in increasing the knowledge of adolescents and couples of childbearing age. This approach aligns with social learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of interaction and shared experiences in the learning process. Peers serve as a trusted source of information due to their emotional closeness and shared experiences.

Delivering information through relaxed, participatory discussions allows participants to understand the material more deeply. The knowledge gained is not only cognitive but also internalized through reflection and the exchange of experiences. This demonstrates that reproductive health education is not simply delivered in a one-way fashion but requires an approach that involves the active participation of the target audience.

The Influence of Peer Education on the Formation of Positive Attitudes

The positive attitudinal changes found in this study indicate that peer-based education has a significant impact on shaping the perspectives and behaviors of adolescents and couples of childbearing age. Increased openness, awareness, and responsibility are the result of an educational process that positions participants as active participants in the learning process. Peer interactions create a supportive environment for attitudinal change, as participants feel free to express themselves freely and feel free to do so. This allows for more effective internalization of reproductive health values. Therefore, peer-based education not only increases knowledge but also plays a role in developing attitudes that support sustainable reproductive health behaviors.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that peer-based reproductive health education plays a crucial role in increasing knowledge and fostering positive attitudes among adolescents and couples of childbearing age. This approach is effective because it utilizes two-way communication, accessible language, and equal interaction between participants. The results confirm that participants not only received more accurate information about reproductive health but also experienced changes in attitudes, leading to greater openness, awareness of responsibility, and readiness to implement healthy behaviors in their daily lives. Furthermore, peer-based education helps bridge the information gap that often arises from unreliable sources. The peer-facilitated discussion, exchange of experiences, and personal reflection process allows participants to understand reproductive health concepts holistically and contextually. Therefore, this educational strategy can serve as a

relevant model for improving reproductive health literacy among adolescents and couples of childbearing age in the community.

REFERENCES

- Amalia, E., Subandrate, S., Arrafi, MH, Prasetyo, MN, Adma, AC, Monanda, MDA, ... & Athiah, M. (2021). Education on Breast Milk Content and Exclusive Breastfeeding for Infants. *Logista*, 5(2), 31-36.
- Aswitami, NGAP (2019). The Effectiveness of Exclusive Breastfeeding Education on Knowledge and Provision of Exclusive Breastfeeding in Postpartum Mothers. *Journal Center of Research Publication in Midwifery and Nursing*, 3(2), 40-45.
- Faiqah, S., & Hamidiyanti, BYF (2021). Education on Positioning and Attachment During Breastfeeding to Increase The Success of Exclusive Breastfeeding. *Sasambo Community Service Journal*, 3(1), 61-66.
- Ayuningtyas, BYO (2025). Family Support Education for Exclusive Breastfeeding. *Journal of Community Service in Health and Applied Sciences*, 1(1), 28-32.
- Syahrudin, AN, Ningsih, NA, Amiruddin, F., Juhanto, A., Handayani, S., Salsabila, PY, & Rahmadani, NM (2024). Education on Exclusive Breastfeeding as an Effort to Prevent Stunting. *Martabe: Journal of Community Service*, 7(2), 389-394.