

Abstract

Purpose. The purpose of this study was to explore responses for questionnaire after the reproductive health awareness program, which had been conducted a year earlier among adolescents in rural Tanzania. Based on the findings, revision of the reproductive health educational program is discussed. Additionally, the study suggests ways to bridge the gaps between the program contents and the adolescents' understanding.

Methods. The research design is qualitative descriptive study, using a cognitive interview method with think-aloud technique to explore responses of adolescents toward the questionnaire that was used in the reproductive health program. A convenience sample of five girls and five boys in the 7th grade in rural Bagamoyo, who participated in the previous reproductive health awareness program, participated in the interviews.

Result. Most participants described their rationale for answering the questionnaires with correct knowledge and intended attitude and behavior, stated that students should concentrate on study to build up for their future, and understood the risk behaviors of adolescent pregnancy. The following program and questionnaire weaknesses were found that should be corrected: confusing words, reversed items, non-subject nouns, and vague expression that led children to read too much into the word. Items with visible contents obtained a better understanding than items with invisible contents. All of the participants provided positive evaluation for the educational materials of the program.

Conclusion. This cognitive interview revealed that the reproductive health awareness program among the adolescent in rural Tanzania was effective in terms of use of visual materials and story. Using more visual aids, such as posters, pamphlets, and flipcharts may increase the effects. The next research may use combinations of interventions, such as peer educators, visual aids, and experience-based activities for negotiation and assertive communication.