HEALTH EDUCATION FOR STD AND HIV PREVENTION IN SCHOOLS: 
EXPERIENCE REPORT

EDUCAÇÃO EM SAÚDE PARA PREVENÇÃO DE DST’S E HIV EM ESCOLAS: RELATO DE EXPERIÊNCIA

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ABSTRACT

Objective: to describe the extension group's experience related to health education strategy aimed at preventing HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections among adolescents and young people at school.

Method: a descriptive study, of experience report type. The project was approved by the Research Ethics Committee, Certificate of Presentation for Ethical Consideration No. 03618912.5.0000.5207. 

Results: it was observed that health education strategies allow the approximation of young people and adolescents to the theme of prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV.

Conclusion: the school environment, as the backdrop of the education strategy in health, allows the sharing of scientific knowledge, affecting the daily life of the population.

Descriptors: Nursing; HIV; Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome; Health Education.

RESUMO

Objetivo: descrever a experiência do grupo de extensão relacionada à estratégia de educação em saúde voltada à prevenção do HIV/Aids e outras infecções sexualmente transmissíveis entre adolescentes e jovens no ambiente escolar.

Método: estudo descritivo, do tipo relato de experiência. O projeto foi aprovado por Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa, CAAE nº 03618912.5.0000.5207. 

Resultados: observou-se que as estratégias de educação em saúde permitem a aproximação de jovens e adolescentes com a temática de prevenção de doenças sexualmente transmissíveis e HIV.

Conclusão: o ambiente escolar, como cenário da estratégia da educação em saúde, permite o compartilhamento do conhecimento científico, impactando o cotidiano da população.

Descritores: Enfermagem; HIV; Síndrome de Imunodeficiência Adquirida; Educação em Saúde.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: describir la experiencia del grupo de extensión relacionada a la estrategia de educación en salud dirigida a la prevención del VIH/Sida y otras infecciones sexualmente transmisibles entre adolescentes y jóvenes en el ambiente escolar.

Método: estudio descriptivo, del tipo relato de experiencia. El proyecto fue aprobado por el Comité de Ética en Investigación, CAAE nº 03618912.5.0000.5207. 

Resultados: se observó que las estrategias de educación en salud permiten la aproximación de jóvenes y adolescentes con la temática de prevención de enfermedades sexualmente transmisibles y VIH.

Conclusión: el ambiente escolar, como escenario de la estrategia de la educación en salud, permite compartir el conocimiento científico, impactando el cotidiano de la población.

Descritores: Enfermería; VIH; Síndrome de Inmunodeficiencia Adquirida; Educación en Salud.

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INTRODUCTION

Since the appearance of the first cases and the identification of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is one of the major public health issues on the world stage. The number of cases has grown rapidly among young people and adolescents, especially reaching the most impoverished population. Some authors point out some reasons for this progressive and experimental increase in this age group, which made young people and adolescents one of the vulnerable groups. Among them, there is highlight to the low age of first sexual intercourse, the diversity of partners, the lack of condom use and the use of illicit drugs are identified as risk factors for sexually transmitted infections.3-5

Adolescence is understood as a phase of biopsychosocial change, characterized by the search for identity, need to grow intelligently and by the emergence of conflicting attitudes in pursuit of personal interests. It is a critical period of development of the human being called by experts as ‘normal adolescence syndrome’. It is during this period that sexual interaction takes place and so the risk for HIV infection also increases.4,5

In Brazil, the prevalence rate of HIV infection in this population has been increasing. Considering research with Army conscripts, aged from 17 to 20 years old, the prevalence in this population rose from 0.09% in 2002 to 0.12% in 2007. Regarding the new cases of AIDS among young people from 15 to 24 years old, it is observed that in 2010 the country had an incidence rate of 9.5/100,000 inhabitants. This number has stabilized in the last 10 years, yet this fact is specific for each region of the country, but it is noteworthy that cases tend to increase among young people and adolescents, whereas in South and Southeast Brazil records tend to decrease, and there is stabilization in the Midwest region.6

The project << Health Education: an approach to prevent HIV/AIDS and other STD for school young people >> was implemented in public network schools of the city of Recife, Brazil, aimed at coordination between Health promotion and Health education for prevention of STD and especially HIV and AIDS, since there has been an increasing number of young people infected with HIV. The University Extension acts as a major form of communication between the University and the external environment; it is being understood in the community and society in the vicinity of the university campus, being grounded by a mutual exchange of knowledge that can contribute to change this reality.

The University Extension, in the context of the undergraduate program in nursing, still plays a major part in academic training, as the students included in this educational process build knowledge and experience unique situations, having the opportunity to experience everyday situations from the perspective of this issue to the construction of professional knowledge.

OBJECTIVE

- To describe the extension group’s experience related to health education strategy aimed at preventing HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections among adolescents and young people at school.

METHOD

Descriptive study, of experience report type, carried out by teachers and students of the Graduate and Undergraduate Nursing Course of a university extension program, linked to the Group of Studies and Research in Epistemology and Basics of Care in Health and Nursing, through which educational activities related to prevention of STDs and HIV/AIDS were conducted, using health education strategies as discussion groups, group dynamics, workshops and theatrical fun activities with young people and adolescents of primary and secondary education in the school environment.

For the extension work, five public state schools were selected. In the first contact, authors delivered to the principals the project to be analyzed in addition to the consent letter authorizing the participation of students in schools to be signed by them and then it scheduled the health education actions. One of the selected schools refused to participate effectively of the study; thus, four schools participated. Five undergraduate nursing students and a master’s degree participated in the activities, of which one had an extension scholarship.

In this study, in order to maintain confidentiality, schools were named: A, B, C and D, all located in the city of Recife, Pernambuco, Brazil. The study population was composed by students enrolled in primary and secondary education. Study participants were 236 primary and secondary school students, 26 in school A, 59 in B, 113 in C and at 38 in D.

Participants should be students enrolled in schools covered by the Project from the 7th year on of elementary school, who agreed to
participate after clarification of the objectives.

The activity performed by the extension group was originated from the data of the research project entitled: Social representations and knowledge of students about STD/HIV/AIDS in the city of Recife, Pernambuco: nursing contributions to health promotion, which showed the deficit in knowledge of primary and secondary school students in the age group from adolescence to youth, relating to HIV/AIDS prevention. For this purpose, ethical aspects were respected as recommended by CNS Resolution 466 of December 12, 2012. This project was submitted to the Ethics Research Committee and received favorable opinion under Certificate of Presentation for Ethical Consideration protocol No. 03618912.5.0000.5207.

The extension project was funded by the Academic Enhancement Program of the University of Pernambuco (PFAUPE), in the extent scholarship modality.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Activities with health education approach were carried out according to the availability of schools, in order to reach all classes of primary and secondary school from the 7th year on. Each activity was previously planned and discussed in the meetings of the research group. Initially, an activity with health education approach using group interaction was held, information was discussed with all participants in a way to value the exchange of knowledge.

As a tool used in health education strategies, the group performed activities based in the thought of Paulo Freire: circle and culture, theatrical presentation, conversation groups, discussions, reflections, using posters, songs and other audio-visual resources, transmitting, through these techniques, the scientific information in a more playful way, integrating participants with the extension group with a knowledge sharing, considering that the target group were teenagers and students.

Using the concept of emancipated education, actions were selected as approach technique of the health education strategy intended to bring participants to absorb some of the theoretical content reflectively. The cultural circle defined by Paulo Freire as a pedagogical concept which not only one individual dominates the knowledge, but there is a sharing of knowledge; it is an interdisciplinary method that values the group interaction based on the listening, dialogue, debate and reflection.

Finally, a script of a play was designed for educational activities to make sharing knowledge more pleasurable. The activities were held in the school environment, for it is believed that it makes the individual more vulnerable due to the behavior change during this transition phase. Activities are also justified on the fact that studies show that despite the increased risk for diseases related to sexual and reproductive life, teenagers and young people do not spontaneously seek health services for guidance on preventive care of health promotion and education. This deficit in the seek for health services is due to the difficulty in associating the risk of not protecting themselves to the consequences and health problems.

The realization of these actions proved to be effective, providing benefits and positive results for both these young people and adolescents in situations of vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, as well as to the members of the research and extension group, by sharing and expanding experiences and theoretical and practical tools necessary to professional development.

Each school presented a unique experience. In school “A”, the extension group was received by a teacher, who conducted the host and referred us to the classrooms. The school comprises EJA (Youth and Adult Education), which offers the high school in 18 months for individuals with a lag at the age-grade relationship. The first class, corresponding to the first year of high school, was made on the action day of eight students. The extension group clarified the objectives of the project and began the presentation by the guiding question: “For you, what is sexuality?”: Initially, students were timid and shy to answer, but in the course of the dialogue-activity other questions were made for students, such as: how can someone contract STD and HIV? They actively responded, citing what, in their opinion, corresponded and forms of contagion and transmission. At the end of the action, the main questions that emerged were clarified. Soon after, we proceeded to guidance on the use of condoms and the distribution thereof to students.

During the displacement of the extension group to another room, students still referred questions and doubts, which have all been cleared up. Usually these doubts were about the symptoms of HIV/AIDS. Soon after, the teacher of adult education, who teaches students with special needs of the institution,
A male student was eager to contribute to the construction of the theoretical content discussed during the presentation. Then, condoms and candies were given for each student, there were 59 participants in the activity.

At school “C”, the extension group held the action for two days. In the first day, the group was welcomed by the pedagogical coordinator, who sent the group to a classroom where the action had been previously scheduled. In the first class, there were 30 students and the teacher, who was teaching about the female and male reproductive system, demonstrating that prior contact and planning may offer greater interaction between the school and the university extension.

Before the group starts, the teacher spoke about the importance of the theme and during all the action he participated actively. The sexuality issue was addressed in the class through the Cultural Circle method, the central theme was the use of male condoms in order to prevent STD and unwanted pregnancies.

Symptoms and the main etiological agents of diseases were presented in slide show. At the end, students were informed on the place nearby the school where they could perform the rapid test for HIV and syphilis. It was also held the demonstration of male condom use in educational workshop modality. The whole group was encouraged to discuss the content covered using audiovisual resources. Students participated in a positive way.

The second class was composed of 28 students, who showed interest in the discussion on topic. Sexuality was initially discussed in the conversation group format and then we talked about contraceptive methods barriers, which were presented through visual resources. In this process, the HIV transmission modes have emerged in the
discussions through some statements: “it can be transmitted through kissing because of saliva”, “it is transmitted through blood,” etc. At the end of the presentation, the extension group was surprised with a tribute with acknowledgements held by students of the educational institution.

On the second day of the visit to the same school, the group was received by the school’s pedagogical coordinator, who referred them to the auditorium. Initially, the project objectives were presented through a lecture for students of the first year of high school, who were initially distracted and scattered, however, during the course of the activities, there was an increase in participation. Two teachers of the school were present. Students were asked to watch a video that addressed the proper use of male condoms; they were attentive to the video produced by the Ministry of Health. At the end of the presentation, male condoms were distributed.

At school “D”, the group was received by the deputy principal of the institution, who referred us to two classes of primary school, in which the theme of the safely exercise of sexuality was presented firstly in a class of the 7th grade of elementary school composed of 18 students. They actively participated in the conversation group, clarifying doubts. The teacher who was present in this class, besides teaching Portuguese language content, was also nurse (Bachelor of Nursing); she occupied a position in the infectious diseases area in a health institution, and because of that, assisted the group during the presentation, sharing relevant information on HIV/AIDS and the modes of transmission thereof.

The second class consisted of a group of the 8th grade of primary school. Students actively participated during the presentation and shared with the extension group experiences, knowledge and questions about sexuality and HIV/AIDS. The action was based on the pedagogical approach developed by Paulo Freire, called cultural circle.7-8

In the four schools there was active participation of students, in all classes doubts and questions emerged, however, students presented a previous knowledge about the subject. The development of a field diary by members of the research group, using the ethnographic technique of record of events, was of fundamental importance, making an effort to record all information.

**FINAL REMARKS**

The development of educational activities and the discussion of this experience were very important for all involved. It enabled us to observe a deficit of knowledge about HIV. By developing the actions taken by the group, it became clear that health education is a key strategy for sharing knowledge, as it provides opportunities for high school students from public schools to broaden their scientific knowledge in health and to share their knowledge, and for professionals and graduate students to develop health education, since it is a fundamental tool in preventing many diseases that interact in the health-disease process.

It is also highlighted that discussing aspects related to HIV/AIDS focusing on school young people must be constant due to the vulnerability risks presented by this group and the deficit of information, which will represent effective behavior change. Thus, health education proves to be an essential tool for the sharing of scientific knowledge, affecting the daily life of the population.

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Health education for std and hiv prevention...


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