

## The Relationship Between Adolescents' Knowledge of Reproductive Health and Premarital Sexual Behavior at the Adolescent Health Post

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** Adolescents are an age group vulnerable to environmental influences but often lack sufficient knowledge about reproductive health. This lack of understanding can trigger risky behaviors such as premarital sexual activity, which negatively impacts health and social aspects. **Objective:** The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between adolescents' knowledge level about reproductive health and premarital sexual behavior. **Methods:** This study employed an analytical observational design with a quantitative approach. The research used an analytical design with a cross-sectional approach. The study population consisted of all adolescents active, totaling 40 individuals, and all were included as samples using a total sampling technique. The research instrument consisted of a questionnaire on knowledge and premarital sexual behavior, with data analysis conducted using the Chi-Square test ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). **Results:** showed that most adolescents have good knowledge (75%), sufficient knowledge (22.5%), and low knowledge (2.5%). Meanwhile, the majority of adolescent behavior is non-deviant (95%) and only 5% are deviant. The Chi-Square test results showed a p-value of 0.004 ( $p < 0.05$ ). **Conclusion:** there is a significant relationship between the level of adolescent knowledge and premarital sexual behavior.

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### **Introduction**

In the rapid physical, psychological, and social changes, adolescents are highly vulnerable to risky activities, such as premarital sexual relations. WHO (2022) defines adolescents as individuals aged between 10 to 19 years who are in the transitional stage toward adulthood. High sexual urges and desires are often combined with a lack of information about reproductive health during this period.

According to various statistics, Indonesia is one of the countries with the highest rates of early marriage in the world. Indonesia now ranks second in ASEAN and eighth globally, according to UNICEF data up to the end of 2022. UNFPA, Litha Y. (2020) The Religious Court Institution of the Supreme Court of Indonesia reported that 50,673 cases involving early marriage were decided in 2022 out of 52,089 cases filed. Compared to 2021, which recorded 61,449 cases, this figure represents a decrease of 17.54%. However, according to UNICEF (2023), this figure contributes to the increased child marriage rate in Indonesia, which is among the top 8 in the world. East Java Province is the province in Indonesia with the highest number of marriage dispensation applications. In 2022, as many as 15,337 marriage dispensations were filed in East Java Province (Kabar Jombang, 2024).

In 2022, the ASFR (Age-Specific Fertility Rate) for adolescent girls aged 15-19 was 26.64 per 1,000 Women of Reproductive Age (WRA), according to the National Population and Family Planning Agency (BKKBN). Compared to 2021, when the rate was 20.49 per 1,000 WRA, this represents an increase. According to the 2017 Indonesian Adolescent Reproductive Health Survey (SKRRI), 12.5% of adolescents who supported abortion procedures knew nothing about reproductive health. The average age of first sexual intercourse for adolescent girls in rural areas was 20.8 years, but in urban areas it was 22.9 years, according to the 2017 Indonesian Health Data Survey (SDKI). In contrast, the average age for boys was 24.2 years. In 2023, there were 590 early marriages recorded among people under 20 years old in Jombang Regency. The 21 sub-districts in Jombang Regency were the sites of these 590 cases. Seventy or more cases of early marriage under the age of twenty were reported in three regions. The three regions are Wonosalam District (70 cases), Jombang City (71 cases), and Ngoro (79 cases) (Kabar Jombang, 2024). Pregnancy outside of marriage is the main cause of these early marriages. 41 respondents (51.2%) have strong knowledge, 39 respondents (48.8%) have weak knowledge, and 24 respondents (30%) exhibit poor behavior, according to another study that assessed respondents' knowledge levels (Samsuni, Sari M.N., Nugraha et al., 2023). According to another study by Wahyuni, Y. F., Fitriani, A., & Mawarni, S. (2023), knowledge has a P value of 0.002, which means that it is related to adolescent premarital sexual behavior.

Adolescents' views and actions regarding sexuality are greatly influenced by their understanding of reproductive health. Research conducted in Indonesia reveals a positive correlation between adolescents' level of knowledge and their ability to make healthy decisions regarding sexual behavior; those with greater knowledge tend to demonstrate better preventive actions and are less likely to engage in premarital sexual behavior (Kristianti and Widjayanti, 2021). Furthermore, because girls may not be aware of the dangers of pregnancy at a young age, a lack of education on family planning and reproductive health can also lead to child marriage (Pramitasari and Megatsari, 2022).

Many factors influence this, including the lack of communication from parents to children, the influence of boyfriends or girlfriends, peer influence, exposure to unrestricted content, and low knowledge. These are the factors that affect premarital sex.

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(Widhiyaningrum.T.,dkk,2023). A better understanding of reproductive health can lead to more responsible attitudes and actions in maintaining the health of oneself and one's partner (Hasanah et al., 2023). Because they had previously experienced premarital sexual relations, most of the informants married at a young age. The more adolescents are exposed to, educated about, and involved in sexual relationships (Sari L.Y., et al., 2020).

Adolescents who lack access to information about reproductive health are more likely to have insufficient knowledge and engage in unsafe sexual practices, including sexual intercourse outside of marriage or before marriage. The study by Ariska A, Yuliana N., 2021 showed  $p = 0.000$ , which means  $p < 0.05$ , indicating a significant relationship between the level of reproductive health knowledge and attitudes toward adolescent sexual behavior.

Teenagers have access to a wider range of information sources in the era of social media and digital technology; therefore, the quality of that information is very important. According to local research, adolescents' knowledge and attitudes regarding reproductive health can be improved through interactive educational interventions and enhanced digital literacy (Masita, Dewi Haris, & Yuliani, 2023; Purba & Rahayu, 2024). In addition, systematic national-level evaluations highlight how interactive modules and peer-led educational strategies can increase adolescent engagement and promote a better understanding of the risks of premarital sexual activity (Syahrifah & Erwandi, 2023). Because of this, learning programs at adolescent health posts must include digital literacy, a participatory approach, and factual information. Behavioral theory states that an individual's knowledge and attitudes affect their actions. The high rates of premarital sex and teenage pregnancy have prompted academics to study adolescents' reproductive health knowledge in relation to premarital sexual behavior, despite various efforts already being made. Adolescents' attitudes and behaviors are greatly influenced by their knowledge of reproductive health. While adolescents with low knowledge are more vulnerable to engaging in deviant behavior, those with high knowledge tend to be able to avoid harmful behaviors. Therefore, as a basis for intervention, it is important to understand the relationship between behavior and knowledge.

### **Method**

This research is quantitative in nature, has a cross-sectional design, and uses observational analysis methods. All 40 adolescents involved in the Pulo Lor Youth Posyandu were the population in this study, and all were selected as samples using total sampling. The original research and its findings were conducted between January and December 2024. Premarital sexual behavior is the independent variable in this study, while knowledge is the dependent variable. A questionnaire was used as the research instrument to collect data. There were sixteen questions on the behavior questionnaire and eleven statements on the knowledge questionnaire. Respondents were given the questionnaires. Closed-ended questionnaires were used. The options for knowledge were true or false, while the options for behavior were ever or never. The Chi-Square test with a significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$  was used to analyze the data. The weakness of this study is the potential for social desirability bias because the self-report questionnaire used to collect data allows respondents to provide answers that are considered 'ethically good' rather than what actually happens. In addition, other factors, including peer pressure, parental roles, and access to digital information that may influence premarital sexual behavior, were not measured in this study.

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## Result and Discussion

### 1. Result

**Table 1**

Frequency Distribution of Adolescent Characteristics

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
1. Age		
15-16 years old	10	25%
17-18 years old	30	75%
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>
2. Gender		
Male	12	30%
Female	28	70%
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>
3. Class		
X	12	30%
XI	20	50%
XII	8	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>
4. Sources of Information		
Social Media	20	50%
School	12	30%
Healthcare Workers	8	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>
5. Knowledge		
Good	30	75%
Sufficient	9	22,5%
Poor	1	2,5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>
6. Sexual Behavior		
Positive	38	95%
Negative	2	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Primary Data 2023

Table 1 shows that out of 40 respondents, 30 respondents (75%) were aged 17-18 years, 28 respondents (70%) were female, 20 respondents (50%) were in grade XI, 20 respondents (50%) obtained information from social media, 30 respondents (75%) had good knowledge, and 38 respondents (95%) exhibited positive sexual behavior.

**Table 2**

Relationship Between Adolescents' Knowledge About Reproductive Health and Premarital Sexual Behavior at the Pulo Lor Youth Health Post

Knowledge	Sexual Behavior				Total	%	Chi-Square
	Positive n	Positive %	Negative n	Negative %			
Good	30	75	0	0	30	75	P=0.004 Value $\chi^2$ : 10.923
Sufficient	8	20	1	2.5	9	22.5	
Poor	0	0	1	2.5	1	2.5	
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>95.0</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>	

Source: Primary Data 2023

With a chi-square correlation value  $<0.05$  and a significance value of  $p=0.004$  obtained from the analysis results above in Table 2, the null hypothesis  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted, indicating a significant relationship.

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### **2. Discussion**

According to the research findings, out of 40 respondents, the majority of adolescents (75%) have a good understanding of reproductive health, while the remaining one-quarter (22.5%) and 2.5 percent have moderate and low knowledge. Ninety-five percent of adolescents exhibit good behavior, while only five percent display poor behavior. The Chi-Square test results showed a p-value of 0.004 ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), indicating a strong correlation between premarital sexual behavior and the level of knowledge. This suggests that adolescents are less likely to engage in premarital sexual behavior if they have greater awareness of reproductive health. These results are in line with the study by Kristianti and Widjayanti (2021), which found that making appropriate decisions in maintaining reproductive health is influenced by knowledge.

A person's level of knowledge is part of the information elements that shape their beliefs, which in turn shape their behavior, thus encouraging them to act based on their knowledge (Asmin et al., 2021). Adolescents with high curiosity and inquisitiveness, without being matched by sufficient knowledge about reproductive health, can place themselves in dangerous and deviant situations. If adolescents have good knowledge related to reproductive health, they are likely to behave in accordance with what they have learned (Syafitriani D, et al., 2022).

Peer education models have been proven effective in increasing adolescents' awareness and knowledge about reproductive health. Because of similar communication styles and nearly the same age, lessons from peers are more easily absorbed and understood. According to Harianti's research (2021), the peer education approach can help adolescents better understand the dangers of having sex before marriage and encourage more responsible attitudes toward reproductive health.

Teenagers in the digital era receive a lot of information about reproductive health from social media. However, not all of these sources are reliable. Teenagers need to be digitally literate in order to recognize accurate and scientific information. Teenagers can learn more about the risks of premarital sex and develop a positive attitude towards healthy behaviors through interactive education based on digital media (Masita, et al., 2023).

Social norms, religion, and family responsibilities all influence adolescent behavior in addition to knowledge. In religious societies in Indonesia, moral values and adolescents' attitudes toward sexuality are greatly influenced by the family. Deviant sexual behavior in adolescents can be prevented through parental supervision and open discussions within the family (Widiyono and Indriyati, 2021).

The GenRe program created by BKKBN has significantly improved adolescents' knowledge and life skills, enabling them to plan their future without taking risks. This program educates adolescents aged 10 to 24 about family life planning, reproductive health, and the risks of premarital sex. Adolescents involved in GenRe activities gain a much better understanding of reproductive health (Fitriani and Rahmawati, 2020).

Furthermore, the findings of this study are consistent with the research by Mareti and Nurasa (2022), which shows that among high school students in Pangkalpinang, adolescent premarital sexual behavior is highly correlated with their knowledge of reproductive health, where those with higher levels of knowledge are better able to regulate their behavior in response to environmental pressures and sexual urges. This supports the idea that having knowledge can help someone avoid harmful actions. Knowledge or cognitive domain is a very important domain in shaping a person's actions (overall behavior). From experience and research, it has been proven that behavior based

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on knowledge will be more lasting than behavior not based on knowledge (Yani, F., et al., 2022). Therefore, promoting positive adolescent behavior towards reproductive health requires increasing adolescent awareness through educational media, youth health post activities, and the active involvement of healthcare workers. (Mareti & Nurasa, 2022)

Based on research findings and other conclusions mentioned above, it can be said that adolescent sexual behavior is largely influenced by their level of understanding. To increase the effectiveness of the information received by adolescents, programs such as GenRe and Posyandu Remaja in Pulo Lor must continue to be strengthened through cadre training, peer education integration, and digital literacy. According to researchers, the participation of the community, schools, and families is crucial for the success of initiatives aimed at preventing premarital sex among adolescents.

### **Conclusion**

According to research findings, premarital sexual behavior and the level of adolescents' knowledge about reproductive health are significantly correlated. The fact that most adolescents have good knowledge and do not engage in deviant behavior indicates that having adequate understanding of reproductive health is very important for avoiding risky sexual behavior. Formal education, activities at Adolescent Integrated Health Posts (Posyandu Remaja), and government initiatives such as the Planned Generation (GenRe) program can serve as good sources of information. To enable adolescents to maintain healthy and responsible behavior and focus on a bright future, efforts to improve their knowledge and awareness through comprehensive reproductive health education involving family, schools, and digital media should continue to be strengthened.

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