

HEALTH EDUCATION FOR ADOLESCENTS OF A MUNICIPAL SCHOOL: SEXUALITY IN QUESTION¹

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ABSTRACT

To describe and reflect on the actions of health education implemented by a group of professors and students of the Bachelor's Degree in Nursing, in a teaching unit of Elementary School II. The study is an experience report from an extension project. The activities took place from May to December 2011, targeted to 145 students of a municipal school from 6th to 9th grade, at night shift, aged between 16 and 20 years, in a city in the Paraíba State's hinterland. The actions were conducted during three educational workshops per grade, and they were guided according to the framework of the interactionist pedagogy. The use of the interactionist approach for the preparation of the workshops has enabled a spontaneous and committed participation of the target audience, besides providing them the opportunity to autonomously build their knowledge about sexuality. Accordingly, it was possible to see the extent of the challenge of promoting health through educational activities, especially those aimed to the change of thinking and positive influence in people's behavior and culture.

Keywords: Health Education; Adolescents; Sexuality.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescents and young people are subjects in developing who represent the highest hopes of the entire nation and, at the same time, bring to the surface the vulnerabilities and contradictions of every society. They are citizens whose rights to health, citizenship, social participation, education, leisure and culture need to be assured⁽¹⁾.

Nowadays, we have witnessed how the global media has been contributed to the transmission of messages alluding to sex and sexuality, having as its targets, mainly, teenagers and young subjects. Obviously, they need help to learn how to interpret such messages that, although are easily accessible, alone are not enough to bring the necessary clarification on the issue, nor perform the role of guiding and

educating about sexuality. Thus, it is up to parents, school and society to take on this responsibility⁽¹⁻³⁾.

Given this scenario, it becomes clear the need for intervention of the school with regard to Sexual Education. To that end, the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (Law nº 9.394, of December 20th, 1996), provides that sexual education is one of the cross-cutting themes to be included in the National Curriculum Parameters (NCPs), in all areas of knowledge, from Elementary School to High School. When addressing the issue of "sexual orientation", NCPs define sexuality as "something inherent to life and to health, which is expressed in humans since the early stages", and as a theme to be discussed and approached into the school's daily life⁽⁴⁻⁶⁾.

Nonetheless, the adoption and practice of this conception is not yet a reality, at least in most

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states of the Brazilian federation, including Northeastern cities. This fact becomes worrisome, since the first sexual intercourse among adolescents and young people is happening at ever earlier ages, combined with the habit of having multiple partners, bringing out Sexually Transmitted Diseases/AIDS to the context of youth, as well as unplanned pregnancy, thereby becoming a public health problem^(7,8).

Seen in these terms, it is understood that the attention directed to issues relevant to the sexuality of adolescents and young people must be worked based on health promotion and disease prevention, taking into account the social and cultural reality in which they are inserted, as well as the strategy of health education, which is pointed as an indispensable tool in raising awareness of the right to health⁽⁹⁻¹¹⁾.

Thus, adolescents and young people will be able to understand what their choices are and opt for them, then they will be able to deal with them in a positive and responsible way, experiencing prevention behaviors and self-care, being that schools are among the possible scenarios that allow the collective construction of such awareness^(9,12,13).

Under this context, the study aimed at describing and reflecting on the actions of health education implemented by professors and students of the Bachelor's Degree in Nursing, during the execution of the Extension Project: Health Education: a tool in promoting sexual and reproductive health of adolescents and young people.

METHODOLOGY

It is an experience report on the everyday lives of 05 professors and 10 students from the Bachelor's Degree in Nursing at the Federal University of Campina Grande (UFCG), during the three educational workshops on sexual and reproductive health for adolescents and young people of a municipal school of Elementary School II from the Paraíba State's hinterland. The target audience was comprised of students from the 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th grade of the Elementary School II, who were enrolled in the aforementioned school, totaling 145 students, 50 female and 95 male, aged between 16 and 20 years. The activities were conducted in 2011,

during the term of an extension project linked to the Extension Scholarships Program from the Federal University of Campina Grande (PROBEX / UFCG), at night shift, during the regular schedule of classes of the municipal school, for which it was used a dynamics with participatory nature.

The policy of university extension from the Federal University of Campina Grande (UFCG) is an educational, artistic, cultural, scientific and technological process, which is inextricably linked to research and teaching. Among its purposes, one could highlight the ability to contribute to the resolution of social problems and to improvement of quality of life of the population, by prioritizing actions, whose paradigmatic focus is based on guidelines of educational character, in order to make people able to use the knowledge in their own life situations, without, however, transforming these situations into activities that replace those that would be performed by other social agencies⁽¹⁴⁾.

The execution of this project was developed in two stages: 1) sensitization / qualification of extensionists, through study meetings, in order to provide a greater ownership of the theme and planning of actions, as well as preparation of educational workshops and 2) implementation of activities of Education and Health at the school environment. For this purpose, we have opted for the interactionist methodology, in which there is an emphasis on the interaction of the subject with the object; thus, knowledge is considered as a continuous construction and, to some extent, invention and discovery are relevant topics to every act of understanding⁽¹⁴⁾.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Context of experience

The study scenario is a public institution of Elementary School II, operating in day and night shifts, and the latter was chosen for the implementation of actions, thereby following a request from the direction, being that this fact was justified by the need to prioritize this public with actions of health education, because of its biopsychosocial reality.

Sensitization / qualification of graduating students participating of the project and approach to the target audience

In the first stage of development of the project, in the months of May and June 2011, there were weekly meetings, lasting two hours, in classrooms within the premises of the Centre for Education and Health (CES/UFCG), with the participation of all members (professors and students). These meetings have allowed us to make reflections on the importance of the themes “Health Education”, “Sexual Education”, “Adolescent and Sexuality”, with the conduction of readings, discussions of texts and papers, as well as exposure of analyses; moreover, we held the planning of actions of education health, elaboration of educational workshops and the definition of the methodology to be followed: interactionist, since it allows a mutual participation in the continuous construction of knowledge, facilitating the exchange of experiences relevant to every act of understanding, which are crucial to the learning process⁽¹⁴⁾.

Thus, we have established the conduction of three workshops in each grade of Elementary School II and defined the dynamics to be developed, besides the production of teaching materials made by each participant in the project according to their abilities.

Implementation of activities of Education and Health

The second stage corresponded to the development of the actions of health education in the school environment, following three stages: 1) meeting of the extensionists, before the beginning of activities at the school for final adjustments and the start of workshops, 2) presentation of the members of the project in the first day of activity in each grade and dynamics of presentation with the aim of easing interaction, 3) development of the theme.

Development of the first workshop

The first held workshop addressed the theme “The changes involving adolescents and young people”, in order to facilitate knowledge and understanding of the anatomical and physiological changes inherent to the pubertal period. The proposed dynamics was called “Little boxes of names”, during which the names of all participants were placed into a box; as each person removed a name, it was responsible for describing the characteristics of the selected person to others. Next, there was the

accomplishment of the “Dynamics of balloon”, through which the students received bladders containing questions and answers, and they had to check which colleague that had the corresponding answer to their questions and inversely. After this moment, groups were formed to discuss the themes developed, through a conversation circle about cartoons, pictures, phrases and short texts, with which the participants clarified questions regarding the approached themes.

This moment allowed a very positive interaction among participants; training in groups enabled a climate of trust, thereby providing freedom for that the students could place their knowledge and doubts relating to the discussed themes.

Development of the second workshop

The second workshop addressed the Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) and HIV/ AIDS, with the aim to provide means for achieving a better understanding of these diseases in relation to measures of health promotion and prevention. Through the dynamics “truth or myth”, we made a quick survey to assess the knowledge of the target audience related to theme. In this dynamics, the extensionists presented statements regarding STDs and HIV/AIDS. Based on the statements, participants exposed their knowledge, judging information as “true” or “myth”. In general, we found the existence of inconsistent information on the theme, as well as gaps in knowledge among adolescents and young people about some of the main diseases and their forms of transmission.

Following the aforementioned procedure, it was made an exposure of the major STDs through a media projector, and a dynamics of sensitization called “Who sees the face, does see STD/HIV/AIDS”, in which the students were guided by a leader (extensionist) to form a circle and each one took in its hands a ball of wool, held the tip of it on one of the fingers and threw the ball to someone else, who repeated the feat. At the end, everyone was involved in a “web”. The leader made a reflection on the personal and community responsibility that involves health promotion and disease prevention, showing how personal neglect can affect the human’s health and provoke consequences for the whole community.

Development of the third workshop

The third and final workshop emphasized the importance of family, school and society for the formation of adolescents and young people, seeking sensitize them on this issue, by using reflective activities as conversation circles and integrative dynamics as methodological resources. The chosen dynamics was "The irreversibility of a wrong choice," in which the leader handed a blank sheet to each participant, who had to draw a heart, as if it was the last drawing of its life, then, crumpled it, and, finally, try to leave it as before. The proposed reflection concerns the importance of the decisions, their consequences and how these actions could impact on life as a whole, encouraging them to reflect on the need to decide with awareness and responsibility in the face of the issues involving sexuality.

Still talking about the theme in question, it was made the display of a short film (reflective approach involving the importance of family and society in the formation of adolescents) and, finally, the accomplishment of the dynamics of the "Mirror", which was hidden inside a box; upon opening it, each member visualized its own face, in order to foster self-esteem so that each participant could recognize its role in the face of health promotion and enhancement of quality of life.

The assessment of the achievement of the workshops' objectives took place during the conduction of activities, as well as at the end of the project. It was conducted through direct observation and through feedback from participants during the workshops; in addition, we made use of a questionnaire in which we asked questions related to developed theme, being that it was applied at the end of the cycle of workshops. As a result, most participants answered the propositions in the right way.

We have realized that the use of the interactionist methodology has allowed students to show a good acceptance of the proposed activities, as well as to feel free to spontaneously participate in the discussions, dynamics, share

their experiences and present their doubts. To the authors that are supporters of this methodology, every educational activity must be based on techniques that contribute so that the subject develops the ability to perform meaningful learning by itself⁽¹⁵⁾. Thus, it was possible to understand the dimension of the challenge of promoting health through educational activities, especially those aimed to the change of thinking and positive influence in people's behavior and culture. Nevertheless, it is necessary to adopt a conception of "health education" that goes beyond isolated actions, given that it must be part of everyday lives of all stakeholders involved in the process of determining the health conditions⁽¹⁶⁾.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The health education has been a challenge as regards the possibility to ensure effective learning and transformer of attitudes and habits of life. The experiments reported here have shown that convey information about the functioning of the body and description of the characteristics of diseases, as well as a cast of hygiene habits, is not enough for that the adolescents and young people can develop attitudes of healthy life. It is necessary to educate in relation to health, taking into account all the aspects involved in the formation of habits and attitudes that happen in the daily life.

Accordingly, from the perspective of professors and students from the Bachelor's Degree in Nursing, one could understand that the reported project of university extension, through the relationship among school-teacher-student-society, has provided an opportunity to share the challenges and the complementarity of knowledge related to the issue of sexuality along the student community of adolescents and young people, thereby representing a vehicle of communication and space of health education, which is conducive to the completion of experiences that prepare adolescents and young people for the exercise of the citizenship.

EDUCAÇÃO EM SAÚDE PARA ADOLESCENTES DE UMA ESCOLA MUNICIPAL: A SEXUALIDADE EM QUESTÃO

RESUMO

Descrever e refletir sobre as ações de educação em saúde implementadas por um grupo de docentes e discentes do Curso de Bacharelado em Enfermagem, em uma escola do Ensino Fundamental II. O estudo

consiste em relato de experiência oriundo de um projeto de extensão. As atividades ocorreram de maio a dezembro de 2011, direcionadas a 145 estudantes de uma escola municipal do 6º ao 9º ano, turno noturno, com idade entre 16 e 20 anos, em um município no interior da Paraíba. As ações foram desenvolvidas através de três oficinas educativas por série, sendo norteadas segundo o referencial da pedagogia interacionista. O emprego da abordagem interacionista para a elaboração das oficinas permitiu uma participação espontânea e comprometida do público alvo, além da oportunidade destes construírem por si mesmos o seu conhecimento sobre sexualidade. Assim, percebeu-se a dimensão do desafio que é a promoção da saúde através de ações educativas, que visam principalmente à mudança de pensamento e influência positiva na cultura e comportamento de pessoas.

Palavras-chave: Educação em saúde; Adolescente; Sexualidade.

EDUCACIÓN EN SALUD PARA ADOLESCENTES DE UNA ESCUELA MUNICIPAL: LA SEXUALIDAD EN CUESTIÓN

RESUMEN

Describir y reflexionar sobre las acciones de educación en salud implementadas por un grupo de docentes y docentes del Curso de Licenciatura en Enfermería, en una escuela de enseñanza primaria. El estudio consiste en relato de experiencia oriundo de un proyecto de extensión. Las actividades ocurrieron de mayo a diciembre de 2011, dirigidas a 145 estudiantes de una escuela municipal del 6º al 9º año, período nocturno, con edades entre 16 y 20 años, en un municipio en el interior de Paraíba. Las acciones fueron desarrolladas a través de tres talleres educativos por serie, siendo basados según el referencial de la pedagogía interaccionista. El empleo del abordaje interaccionista para la elaboración de los talleres permitió una participación espontánea y comprometida del público objetivo, además de la oportunidad de que éstos construyan por sí mismos su conocimiento sobre sexualidad. Así, se notó la dimensión del desafío que es la promoción de la salud a través de acciones educativas, que pretenden principalmente el cambio de pensamiento e influencia positiva en la cultura y comportamiento de personas.

Palabras clave: Educación en salud; Adolescente; Sexualidad.

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