EXPERIENCE REPORT

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SEXUAL EDUCATION WITH SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS: AN EXPERIENCE REPORT

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ABSTRACT

Sexually Transmitted Infections are the major causes of medical consultation and implications in reproductive systems. This article aims to report experiences of sex education with school adolescents. This is a product of the extension of the Pastoral Group of Aids of the university center in the countryside of Ceará. The activity was performed in three meetings, in August 2016, with 24 adolescents aged 16 and 19 years, at a public school in the state of Ceará. At the first meeting, the researchers sought to establish the commitment and participation of schoolchildren. In the second meeting, they requested the construction of panels about sexuality, getting the main ideas tied to the body. Subsequently, the adolescents were urged to expose knowledge on infections; however, participants showed little knowledge on the issue. In the third stage, the focus was discussing the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Aids. Health education provided information to adolescents with clarification of doubts. The school environment allowed the youth protagonism and reflections on the vulnerabilities in health and adoption of safe practices.

Keywords: Health education. Adolescents.Sexually transmitted diseases.

INTRODUCTION

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) are caused by more than 30 etiologic agents, being transmitted mainly by means of sexual relations without the use of preventive mechanisms and, possibly, by blood[1].They are the main cause of medical consultation and implications in reproductive systems of both sexes, resulting in negative psychological impacts on people's sexuality and self-esteem[2], as well as abortion, premature births, physical and mental disabilities in fetuses and some types of cancer[3].

The factors for the increased incidence of STIs are diverse, such as: frequent change of partners, precarious social and economic conditions, difficult access to health services, inadequate sexual education and, above all, non-adherence to the use of condoms in sexual relations[4].

In Brazil, from 2007 to 2015, theSistema de Informação de Agravos de Notificação (SINAN, Notification Grievance Information System in English) reported 93,260 cases of HIV infection in the general population, and 64.6% of the cases occurred in the age range of 15 through 39 years, configuring an important public health problem in the country[5].

Inserted in this epidemiological context, adolescents stand out as vulnerable to contamination and transmission of infections. In this way, their monitoring during the development process will support the prevention of future problems[6], the decision-making process and the incorporation of safe behaviors.In this context, health education reveals itself as a critical and tansformingsocial practice to be widely used in sexual health promotion and STIs prevention, which,focusing on adolescents, aims at developing their autonomy and responsibility with the own health[7].

When founded in Paulo Freire's Culture Circle, health education is a dynamic space for learning and mutual exchange of knowledge, adding to the teaching-learning process through the involvement of adolescents as young protagonists. These, when reviewing their concerns, difficulties and limitations, perceive them as challenges they can overcome from a mobilization and collective construction of a new knowledge(8). Thus, this article aims to report the experience in sexual education with school adolescents.

METHODOLOGY

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This is an experience report, product of an extension activity developed by the Pastoral Aids Research and Extension Group, inserted in the Nursing graduate course of the university center in the countryside of Ceará.

The group consists of 30 nursing students and carries out actions in health education with individuals who are vulnerable to STIs. In this experiment, 24 adolescents from the third year of secondary school participated in the meetings. The selection of the subjects used as inclusion criteria: age between 15 and 19 years, regularly enrolled and attending the educational institution and interest in participating in educational activities.

The intervention was implemented in three meetings, inside the school, lasting an average of one hour and a half, during the night, in the regular schedule of classes and with the participation of two academics, members of the aforementioned group, under the supervision of a professor.

The study used Paulo Freire's Culture Circle[9] as a methodology to provide a dialogic in the process to build a collective knowledge, directing the information as mediators and providing favorable conditions to the group dynamics.

The theoretical method consists of the following steps: discovery of the vocabulary universe and dynamics of relaxation and awareness; situations for the problematization through guiding questions; theoretical basis; critical reflection; collective elaboration of answers; synthesis of what was experienced and evaluation[8].

This study followed three phases, namely: **Reception,** which aimed at searching generating words/thematic research and interaction among participants through the woolball technique; **Development**, whose purpose was to encode and decode themes and a critical reflection of the group about reality, through the construction of educational panels and the sharing of knowledge and experience arising from the participants' life trajectory; and **Evaluation**, which sought to provide adolescents a self-evaluation about the meetings, through the registry of words or phrases in a blank sheet.

The development of the moments used the materials: wool ball, paper craft, colorful brushes, magazines, scissors without tip, cardboards, condoms for both genders, multimedia device, notebook and stereo.

The information analysis was structured by the description of the experience in each meeting and, in turn, the interpretation occurred in conversation with the literature relevant to the study topic, with theoretical basis considered important and enriching(10). The study received a favorable opinion from the Research Ethics Committee of the State University Vale do Acaraú, number 352.834, CAAE: 06017513.6.0000.5053.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The report highlights the discussions in the meetings that supported the group development and allowed reflections on behavioral change and incorporation of self-care practices.

Reception

At the first meeting of the educational process, the researchers presented themselves and explained which activities would be developed, trying to sensitize the voluntary participation and establish the commitment of adolescents, in addition to facilitating the establishment of a bond between the pairs.

Then, there was the reception with the use of a technique called "Ball of wool", in order to provide a moment of relaxation among the group of adolescents. As the ball of wool was thrown from one participant to another randomly, each adolescent who received it presented him/herself, revealing his/her name, the way he/she would like to be called, what he/she would like to learn/know and expectations about the meetings, thus forming an interlaced with the wool, symbolizing a spider's web.

In this activity, the adolescents exposed they would like to remind and obtain further information about sexuality and STIs, especially on HIV/Aids and preventive measures. New knowledge and the sharing of experiences among colleagues/friends were verbalized as expectation in relation to the workshop.

From the relationship among educator-learner-object of knowledge, the dialogical process of the Culture Circle finds support. The search for programmatic content is essential to establish an interaction between these three gnosiologiccategories, once the dialog between them starts before the pedagogical practice itself[11].

The stage of discovery of the adolescents' vocabulary universe comprised a moment started prior to completion of the Culture Circle, by means of previous contacts with participants regarding the

aspects that permeated their everyday life, thus removing the generating words to be worked in subsequent meetings[8].

Furthermore, the initial occasion was timely for the establishment of bond with the students, because they behaved frankly and spontaneously. However, some students were little collaborative initially, with parallel conversations and intimidating behavior directed to colleagues.

This shows that the themes involving sexual health are still controversial, once adolescents feel ashamed for discussion. These generally do not directly expose their doubts for fearing judgments of friends/colleagues[12].

Development

Unveiling the meaning of sexuality

The Culture Circle is configured as an environment of encounter and discovery of the other as an individual and with experience that need to be revealed through dialog with the group through participation in discussions and in the mutual exchange of knowledge and experiences[10].

Thus, in the second moment, eight groups with three members each were formed and there was the collective construction of panels with words, phrases, drawings and/or figures that expressed their ideas and perceptions about the word sexuality. After this time, the participants were invited to submit their productions for colleagues, with views to the appreciation of the popular knowledge, the sharing of experiences and the construction of collective knowledge.

The main ideas socialized by the groups about sexuality were tied to the body, focusing on biological issues such as sexual relations between couples, the pleasure during sex and sexual orientation of individuals. In this case, adolescents show limited knowledge regarding the conception of the term sexuality, understanding it from aspects relating to pleasure and events directly related to sex, with a limitation of a multidimensional view of the factors involving it[13].

However, sexuality is not synonymous nor is limited to sex, because it is a broader term, a fundamental dimension of all stages of the life of men and women that involves actions and wishes related to satisfaction, pleasure, feelings, exercise of freedom and health[14].

Human sexuality is a social, historical and cultural construction that changes according to social relations; however, in our society, it was culturally bounded in their possibilities of experiences, due to myths, taboos, power relations, prejudices and interdictions[14].

Given the limitation of schoolchildren in relation to this matter, at every opinion and practice of the human being, there is a particular belief about sexuality and its manifestations. Thus, each adolescent's concept of sexuality should be the basis to start the job that contributes with strategies and subsidies that favor the healthy sexuality and value the individuals themselves[15].

Knowing STIs: approachment to students' previous knowledge

In the Culture Circle, all participants are recognized as independent with potential, but never as inferior, unable and subordinates. The educator as a mediator is responsible for providing a space for listening and dialoguing with the spontaneous participation of every one, respecting their individualities and allowing the exchange of knowledge and experiences among the group[9].

For this second moment, the study sought to investigate the students' knowledge on STIs regarding types, symptoms, transmission and prevention and, subsequently, solve their main doubts. Thus, the groups were dissolved, a circle was opened up in the room with the students, prompting them to expose knowledge about the theme.

Regarding the types of STIs, students pointed out gonorrhea, syphilis and AIDS. However, there was an incipient knowledge about each infection. In relation to the symptoms, the group highlighted the possibility of occurrence of fever, lumps and sores in the genital organs, not highlighting the possibility of involvement without symptoms, which helps to ensure that they do not recognize themselves as subjects susceptible to these infections[16].

As regards the transmission, the students reported sexual relations, whether heterosexual or homosexual couples, which have vaginal, anal and oral relation without condom use with a contaminated person. Regarding the prevention of STIs, the speeches were emphatic about the indispensable use of condoms during sexual relations between the pairs.

After thisapproachmente, the approach directed to the educational nature, guided by the Culture Circle[9].

For this, a circle dialog was established, intersubjecting the moment with adolescents, and, from such situations, the dynamism of this creative subjectivity was criticallyassumed[9].

Keeping the dialogs incorporated by subjectivity to be unveiled by the participants of the circle and intending to educate and retrofeed with this education, there was a discussion on HIV/Aidswith the adolescents. In relation to their statements, there is a confusion about HIV and Aids, considering them the same pathology, or also highlighting HIV as a precursor of the Aids virus.

Subsequently, the students received information on concepts relating to the topic, lessening doubts and confusions present in their speeches. There were also explanations on the virus and its action, compromising the affected individual, in addition to the forms of transmission, detailing the possibility of occurrence for each one.

With regard to prevention, the importance of condom use in all sexual relations and the importance of dialog for concordance of condom use among peers were explained, as well as other ways to avoid contamination.

Thus, in the Culture Circle, there is no teaching, but a mutual learning of conscience; there is no teacher, but a facilitator, who is responsible for disseminating information and providing conditions adept to the collective dynamics, reducing as much as possible his/her direct intervention in the course of the dialog[9].

At the end of this moment, a documentary was presented, entitled, "Young People with HIV: dreaming is possible", which discusses statements from seropositive young people, revealing the discovery of infection, the feelings, difficulties, perceptions after the diagnosis, the positive effects of treatment and living with the disease[17].

The use of audiovisual resources with presentation of reality during the educational approachis believed to facilitate the decision-making process by providing adolescents an environment of criticism and reflection on the issue of HIV/Aids.

This strategy that promotes the participation of adolescents in matters relating to their health, especially in the area of sexuality and prevention of STI/HIV/Aids, is essential for producing less vulnerable behaviors, placing itself as a challenge in all countries[18].

As a key point for sex education, the prevention stood out, addressing condom use, advantages and disadvantages of the method. In the end, male and female condoms were distributed to students of both sexes.

Assessment

All Culture Circle presents in its final phase the evaluation, mediated not by a specific and qualifying model, but by a self-assessment regarding the experience during the teaching-learning process,focusing on the performance of the participants and the researcher-facilitator[8].

It is characterized as a collective assessment, between the participants and the mediator, as regards the experience and the changes perceived by them. It is a second moment of decoding, in which participants expose individually how they felt and understood the moments of the Culture Circle.

In this context, at the lastmeeting,the researchers sought to gather the adolescets' opinion about the developed approach. For this reason, the adolescents received blank sheets and brushes, on which they should write a word representing their evaluation of the moments of the Circle.

These, in their assessment, they explained it was "very good", "cool" and "great"; expressions characterizing being an adolescent, who, in words and/or short phrases, reveal their opinion, showing it was positive. The evaluation was characterized as a space for the recapitulation of experiments and experiences in the Culture Circle, as it revealed the participants' feelings about the meetings and allowed analyzing the educational strategies applied in group[19].

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The use of Paulo Freire's Culture Circle in a dialogical process promoted a mutual exchange of knowledge and experiences between facilitator and participants. The discussions on the themes generated doubts and reflections, which, consequently, were unveiled by the facilitator, as well as by the group itself.

Addressing these themes with school adolescents demanded a dynamic, compassionate and innovative posture of the researchers in the process (de)construction of knowledge and attitudes, and, in these moments, the Culture Circle was characterized as a tool for health education, enabling the active participation and critical reflection of reality.

The limitations of this experience relate to the peculiarities of the group and of the described scenario; however, they allow expressing a reality analogous to other environments routinely encountered by health professionals in the country.

EDUCAÇÃO SEXUAL COM ADOLESCENTES ESCOLARES: RELATO DE EXPERIÊNCIA

RESUMO

As Infecções Sexualmente Transmissíveis são as principais causas de consulta médica e de implicações nos sistemas reprodutores. Este artigo objetiva relatar experiência de educação sexual com adolescentes escolares. Trata-se de um produto da extensão do Grupo Pastoral da Aids de centro universitário no interior cearense. A atividade foi realizada em três encontros, em agosto de 2016, com 24 adolescentes com idade de 16 e 19 anos, em uma escola pública no estado do Ceará. No primeiro encontro, buscou-se estabelecer o compromisso e participação dos escolares. No segundo encontro, solicitou-se a construção de painéis sobre sexualidade, obtendo as principais ideias atreladas ao corpo. Posteriormente, instigou-se os adolescentes a exporem conhecimentos sobre as infecções, entretanto, verificou-se incipiência nas informações relatadas pelos participantes. No terceiro momento, o foco foi a discussão acerca do Vírus da Imunodeficiência Humana (HIV) e Aids. A educação em saúde propiciou informações aos adolescentes com esclarecimento de dúvidas. Estar no ambiente escolar, oportunizou o protagonismo juvenil e viabilizou reflexões sobre as vulnerabilidades em saúde e adoção de práticas seguras.

Palavras-chave: Educação em saúde. Adolescentes. Doenças sexualmente transmissíveis.

EDUCACIÓN SEXUAL CON ADOLESCENTES ESCOLARES: RELATO DE EXPERIENCIA

RESUMEN

Las Infecciones Sexualmente Transmisibles son las principales causas de consulta médica y de implicaciones en los sistemas reproductores. Este artículo tuvo el objetivo de relatar la experiencia de educación sexual con adolescentes escolares. Se trata de un producto de la extensión del Grupo Pastoral del Sida del centro universitario en el interior de Ceará-Brasil. La actividad fue realizada en tres encuentros, en agosto de 2016, con 24 adolescentes con edad de 16 y 19 años, en una escuela pública en el estado de Ceará. En el primer encuentro, se buscó establecer el compromiso y la participación de los escolares. En el segundo encuentro, se solicitó la construcción de carteles sobre sexualidad, obteniendo las principales ideas vinculadas al cuerpo. Posteriormente, se instigó que los adolescentes expusieran los conocimientos sobre las infecciones, pero se verificó insipiencia en las informaciones relatadas por los participantes. En el tercer momento, el enfoque fue la discusión acerca del Virus de la Inmunodeficiencia Humana (VIH) y Sida. La educación en salud propició informaciones a los adolescentes con aclaración de dudas. Estar en el ambiente escolar, ofreció el protagonismo juvenil y viabilizó reflexiones sobre las vulnerabilidades en salud y adopción de prácticas seguras.

Palabras clave: Educación en salud. Adolescentes. Enfermedades de transmisión sexual.

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