

**A Study of Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice  
on Reproductive Health in Adolescents  
of the University Students in Songkla Province,  
Southern, Thailand**

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## **Introduction**

Adolescents is the first period in life course when variation from the conventional expectations of adults become explicitly supported, particularly by peers and the mass media. In some cases, adult find themselves nearly entirely separated from the important aspects of young people's lives by the grounding of the latter in youth culture, although more often, there continue to be important, although more attenuated, points of contact between parents or other adults and young people.

This transitional character of contemporary adolescence make it, unlike other periods in life course, more devoted to various forms of risk taking, including the sexual. This is in contrast to others, more stable, stages in life course when either status transitions or untoward events initial changes in relationships that thrust persons into new forms of conduct which may involve risks of various sorts. During adolescence, overt sexual experimentation by relatively untutored young people is common as experimentation with drug, alcohol, and driving. Overt sexual activity is usually insulated from adult notice so that only the negative consequences of such conduct are identified; pregnancy, sexually transmitted disease (STD), and socioemotional crisis are the events that mobilize adult concern.

Understanding the sexual conduct of adolescents is also important for an understanding of HIV transmission. Evidences for the studies of contraception and teenage pregnancy in western countries suggests that young people are not particular in managing their sexual lives and indicates two additional patterns: (1) a steadily increasing proportion of young people being heterosexual intercourse in their mid-teens and (2) an increasing proportion begins intercourse very early in their teenage years.

Changes in the sexual behavior of adolescents have two implications for the transmission of HIV. First, there is a large group of heterosexual active and relatively inexperienced young people with some tendency towards risky conduct. Second, there is little understanding of how to encourage changes in the risky sexual behaviors that many of them practice.[1]

This study was started after the meeting between the research team and representatives of the Deputy Presidents in student affairs and the teachers who took responsibility in advising the students. In Songkla province, there were four universities of Bachelor degree; Srinakharinwirot University (Songkla Campus), Rajamonkol-Institutes of Technology (Songkla Campus), United College of Tuksin (Songkla Teacher's college), and Prince of Songkla University (Hat-Yai campus). The seminar was conducted at the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Faculty of Medicine, Prince of Songkla University in June 1989.

The topics of discussion and brain-storming were those of the adolescent problems especially about the reproductive health, the adolescent education program and the strategies to decrease and prevent further problems. After the meeting, we took in an excellent response from every university to set up the coordination and cooperation in adolescent education program. The planned project comprised of 4 phases:

#### **Phase I**

- \* Recruitment of counselling teachers and volunteers from each university.
- \* Intensive course of "Family Health Education" for the teachers and volunteers.

This phase was completed in December, 1989. Forty teachers had been recruited.

#### **Phase II**

- \* Recruitment of the student volunteers from each university.
- \* Intensive course of "Adolescents Health Education and Counselling Technique" for the peer counsellor trainees.

Seventy students had been recruited and divided into two groups. This phase was completed in April, 1990.

#### **Phase III**

- \* Pilot study of KAP on reproductive health and related problems of the adolescents in the universities.
- \* Development of education materials.

After the end of the educational course for the peer counsellors in Phase III. They were advised and supported by the trained counselling teachers in Phase I to set up a working group among the peer counsellors in their university to provide the health informations and materials for their friends. The study investigators worked with the peer counsellors to develop a self-administered questionnaire to apply among the students enrolled in the four universities.

#### **Phase IV**

- \* Establishment of the adolescent clinic at Songklanagarind Hospital, Faculty of Medicine, Prince of Songkla University.

In this study, we describe the phase III, the pilot study of KAP survey on reproductive health and related problems among the students of four universities.