# THE INFLUENCE OF REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH EDUCATION ON ADOLESCENTS KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE DANGERS OF PREMARITAL SEX AND EARLY MARRIAGE AT SMPN 2 GUDO

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## ABSTRACT

Introduction: The high rate of premarital sexual relationships among adolescents contributes to the increasing number of marriage dispensation applications in Indonesia. Data from BKKBN East Java in 2022 revealed 15,212 marriage dispensation applications, 80% of which were due to pregnancies out of wedlock. Adolescents have limited knowledge about the dangers of premarital sexual relationships and early marriage. One effort to address this issue is through reproductive health education, aimed at increasing adolescents knowledge about the risks of premarital sexual activity and early marriage. Objectives: Analyze the impact of reproductive health counseling on adolescents knowledge regarding the dangers of premarital sex and early marriage. Methods: This study employed a quantitative approach using a pre-experimental research method. The research design was a one-group pretest-posttest design. The sample consisted of 43 respondents, selected through cluster accidental sampling. The independent variable was reproductive health education, while the dependent variable was adolescents' knowledge about the dangers of premarital sexual activity and early marriage. The instrument used was a questionnaire, and data analysis was conducted using the McNemar test. Results: There was an increase in the respondents knowledge categorized as good after receiving counseling on the dangers of premarital sex (90.7%) and early marriage (67.4%). The results of the McNemar test showed a p-value of 0.004 (<0.05) for knowledge about premarital sex and a p-value of 0.008 (<0.05) for knowledge about early marriage. Conclusions: The influence of reproductive health education on adolescents knowledge about the dangers of premarital sex and early marriage at SMPN 2 Gudo.

**Keywords :** *Reproductive Health Education, Adolescent Knowledge, Premarital Sexual Activity Dangers, Early Marriage Dangers*

## INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a transitional phase from childhood to adulthood, characterized by physical, psychological, and social changes. During this stage, adolescents often experience complex mental turmoil (Yuliana, 2019). One of the challenges faced by adolescents is the lack of knowledge about reproductive health and the consequences of premarital sexual relations. In this era of modernization, the ease of access to information about promiscuity can influence adolescents' mindset and behavior (Munjiat, 2018). Many adolescents obtain information that is either unverified or lacks educational value, thereby increasing the risk of engaging in premarital sexual behavior (Sitorus, 2020). Therefore, issues related to sexuality and reproductive health have become major concerns for adolescents today (Afritayeni et al, 2018).

In Indonesia, the number of adolescents aged 10–24 years reaches approximately 65 million people, accounting for around 30% of the total population. Research indicates that 15–20% of school-age adolescents have engaged in premarital sexual relations (Andriani et al., 2022). A study conducted in four major cities (Surabaya, Jakarta, Bandung, and Medan) found that 44% of the 450 surveyed adolescents admitted to having sexual experiences at the ages of 16–18, while 16% had such experiences between the ages of 13–15 (Shanty et al., 2021). Data from the 2017 Indonesian Adolescent Reproductive Health Survey (SKRRI) also revealed that the percentage of unmarried adolescents who had engaged in premarital sexual activity was 0.9% among females aged 15–19, 2.6% among females aged 20–24, 3.6% among males aged 15–19, and 14.0% among males aged 20–24 (Warta et al, 2022).

The high rate of premarital sexual activity among adolescents contributes to the increasing prevalence of early marriage in Indonesia. According to data from the National Population and Family Planning Agency (BKKBN) in 2022, more than 60,000 requests for marriage dispensation were submitted by adolescents, with the majority of cases driven by unintended pregnancies. Data from BKKBN East Java indicate that in 2022, there were 15,212 marriage dispensation applications, 80% of which were due to pregnancy outside of marriage, while the remaining 20% were influenced by economic factors or arranged marriages. Law No. 1 of 2019 on Marriage stipulates that the minimum legal age for marriage is 19 years, except in cases where a marriage dispensation is granted (Cakraningtyas & Alfirdaus, 2023).

Jombang Regency is one of the regions in East Java with a significant number of marriage dispensation cases. The number of applications for marriage dispensation has remained high, with 472 cases recorded in 2021, 394 cases in 2022, and 360 cases in 2023. A total of 256 cases involved adolescents aged 15–19 (Radar Jombang, 2024). Child marriage has widespread negative consequences, ranging from health issues and unsafe pregnancies to social consequences such as school dropouts and poverty (Ramdani, 2023). The lack of adolescent awareness regarding the dangers of premarital sex and early marriage is a major contributing factor to the high incidence of such cases. Adolescents who lack education on reproductive health are at a higher risk of engaging in risky behaviors that could impact their future. Given that Jombang Regency is one of the areas with a high early marriage rate, serious efforts are needed to provide reproductive health education to adolescents. Proper education on the dangers of premarital sex and early marriage can serve as an effective strategy to address this issue. By increasing awareness through reproductive health education, the rates of early marriage and premarital sexual activity can be reduced, helping adolescents make more informed decisions about their sexual and marital lives.

One of the schools located in Jombang Regency is SMP Negeri 2 Gudo. Situated in Gudo District, Jombang Regency, the school has a total of 474 students, the majority of whom are aged 11–15 years. During early adolescence, students are in the process of self-discovery and are vulnerable to various forms of juvenile delinquency. Based on an interview with the principal of SMP Negeri 2 Gudo in July 2024, several issues frequently occurring between 2021 and 2023 included two cases of unintended pregnancy, unsafe premarital sexual relations due to dating, school dropouts caused by shame, early marriage after graduating from junior high school, reckless behavior on the streets, and incidents of student brawls. Although most of these incidents took place outside the school environment, their impact could tarnish the school's reputation and negatively affect the adolescents' future.

These findings highlight the need for effective preventive measures to address these issues, one of which is reproductive health education for students at SMP Negeri 2 Gudo. The target audience for this educational program is ninth-grade students, as they are in a transitional phase toward late adolescence, during which curiosity and exploration of social and sexual relationships begin to develop. This education is essential to provide students with accurate knowledge of the negative consequences of premarital sex and early marriage, enabling them to make informed decisions (Yuliawati & Astuti, 2021). The primary objective of this educational program is to enhance students' understanding of the dangers of premarital sex and early marriage. The educational materials cover reproductive health, the adverse effects of premarital sexual activity, and the risks associated with early marriage. The teaching method involves lectures supported by visual media, such as PowerPoint presentations and educational videos, to ensure that the information is easily comprehensible for adolescents. With a proper understanding of reproductive health, adolescents are expected to avoid risky behaviors and secure a better future.

A prior interview conducted with 28 adolescents in Jombang in 2021 revealed that 70% of them were unaware of the risks of sexual activity, while 30% had some knowledge of sexuality but did not fully understand the consequences of premarital sex (Purniasari, 2022). Therefore, reproductive health education plays a crucial role in increasing adolescents' awareness of the dangers of premarital sex and early marriage. With a systematic and continuous educational program, the rates of early marriage and premarital sexual activity among adolescents are expected to decline significantly.

## METHOD

The type of research conducted is quantitative research, which examines the analysis of the influence of variables, followed by data interpretation in numerical form using a pre-experimental research method. The research design employed is a one-group pretest-posttest design. The population in this study consists of ninth-grade students of SMPN 2 Gudo, comprising five classes in the 2024/2025 academic year, with a total of 156 students. The sample in this study consists of ninth-grade students of SMP Negeri 2 Gudo who meet the inclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria include parental or guardian consent for the student to participate as a respondent, as well as attendance during the pretest, reproductive health education session, and posttest. The exclusion criterion for this study is respondents who do not complete both the pretest and posttest. The sample size is calculated using the compare two proportions formula (paired/before-after). Based on the calculations, the minimum required sample for this study is 43 students at SMPN 2 Gudo who meet the criteria.

The sampling technique used in this study is cluster accidental sampling. This research involves two variables: an independent variable and a dependent variable. The independent variable is reproductive health education, while the dependent variable is teenagers' knowledge of the dangers of premarital sex and early marriage. The data collection technique in this study utilizes questionnaires, which are filled out directly by respondents at the research location under the supervision of the researcher. The questionnaires are divided into two types: one assessing knowledge of the dangers of premarital sex and the other assessing knowledge of the dangers of early marriage. The questionnaire is administered twice: first, respondents complete the pretest questionnaire, followed by an intervention in the form of reproductive health education. After the intervention, respondents complete the posttest questionnaire. The knowledge level criteria are categorized into three levels: good, sufficient, and poor.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

**Table 1. Frequency Distribution Of Data Based On Age, Gender, And Class.**

| Characteristic | | Frequency | Persentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Age** | 14 | 13 | 30,2% |
| | 15 | 27 | 62,8% |
| | 16 | 3 | 7% |
| **Gender** | Perempuan | 27 | 62,8% |
| | Laki-laki | 16 | 37,2% |
| **Class** | 9A | 18 | 41,9% |
| | 9C | 25 | 58,1% |
| **Total** | | 34 | 100% |

Based on Table 1, the majority of respondents are 15 years old, with a total of 27 respondents (62.8%). The respondent characteristics based on gender indicate that the number of female respondents is higher than that of male respondents, with 27 female respondents (62.8%). Meanwhile, the respondent characteristics based on class show that most respondents come from class 9C, with a total of 25 respondents (58.1%).

**Table 2 Frequency Distribution of Data Based on Dating Behavior, Watching Pornographic Videos, and Desire for Early Marriage**.

| Characteristic | | Frequency | Persentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Dating Behavior** | Never been in a relationship | 11 | 25,6% |
| | Have been in a relationship | 32 | 74,4% |
| **Watching Pornographic Videos** | Never watched | 22 | 51,2% |
| | Have watched | 21 | 48,8% |
| **Early Marriage Culture** | Exist | 8 | 18,6% |
| | Does not exist | 35 | 81,4% |
| **Desire for Early Marriage** | Yes | 0 | 0% |
| | No | 43 | 100% |
| **Total** | | 43 | 100% |

Based on Table 2, it shows that the majority of respondents in this study have had experience dating, with 32 respondents (74.4%). The experience of watching pornographic videos shows almost equal percentages 22 respondents have never watched pornographic videos (51.2%), while 21 respondents have watched them (48.8%). All respondents do not have the desire to marry at an early age (100%).

**Table 3 Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Knowledge Before and After Counseling on the Dangers of Premarital Sex and Early Marriage.**

| | **The Dangers of Premarital Sex** | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Knowledge** | **Frequency** | **Persentage** |
| **Pre Test** | Good | 30 | 69,8% |
| | Sufficient | 13 | 30,2% |
| **Post Test** | Good | 39 | 90,7% |
| | Sufficient | 4 | 9,3% |
| | **The Dangers of Early Marriage** | | |
| **Pre Test** | Good | 21 | 48,8% |
| | Sufficient | 22 | 51,2% |
| **Pre Test** | Good | 29 | 67,4% |
| | Sufficient | 14 | 32,6% |
| **Total** | | 43 | 100% |

Based on Table 3, it can be observed that out of 43 respondents, the majority had good knowledge regarding the dangers of premarital sex before receiving reproductive health counseling, with 30 respondents (69.8%). After the counseling, the majority of respondents had good knowledge, with 39 respondents (90.7%). No respondents had poor knowledge. Regarding the dangers of early marriage, the majority of respondents had good knowledge before receiving reproductive health counseling, with 21 respondents (48.8%). After the counseling, the majority of respondents had good knowledge, with 29 respondents (67.4%). No respondents had poor knowledge.

**Table 4 Analysis of the Effect Before and After Reproductive Health Counseling on Teenagers' Knowledge of the Dangers of Premarital Sex and Early Marriage.**

| | | **Post Test** | | | ***P-Value*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **The Dangers of Premarital Sex** | | | |
| | | **Sufficient** | **Good** | **Total** | |
| **Pre Test** | **Sufficient** | 4 (30,8%) | 9 (69,2%) | 13 (100%) | 0,004 |
| | | 9,3% | 20,9% | 30,2% | |
| | **Good** | 0 (0%) | 30 (100%) | 30 (100%) | |
| | | 0% | 69,8% | 69,8% | |
| | **Total** | 4 | 39 | 43 | |
| | | 9,3% | 90,7% | 100% | |
| | | **The Dangers of Early Marriage** | | | |
| | | **Sufficient** | **Good** | **Total** | 0,008 |
| | **Sufficient** | 14 (63,6%) | 8 (36,4%) | 22 (100%) | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 32,6% | 18,6% | 51,2% |
| **Good** | 0 (0%) | 21 (100%) | 21 (100%) |
| | 0% | 48,8% | 48,8% |
| **Total** | 14 | 29 | 43 |
| | 32,6% | 67,4% | 100% |
| **Signifikan (*p-value* <0,05)** | | | |

Based on Table 4, before the counseling on the dangers of premarital sex, a total of 30 respondents had good knowledge (69.8%). After the counseling, there was an increase, with 39 respondents having good knowledge (90.7%). Before the counseling on the dangers of early marriage, a total of 21 respondents had good knowledge (48.8%). After the counseling, there was an increase, with 29 respondents having good knowledge (67.4%). The p-value for teenagers' knowledge before and after receiving reproductive health counseling on the dangers of premarital sex is 0.004, which is less than 0.05. The p-value for teenagers' knowledge before and after receiving reproductive health counseling on the dangers of early marriage is 0.008, which is also less than 0.05.

**Characteristics of Adolescents Based on Demographic and Socio-Cultural Factors**

The age of the respondents in the study at SMP Negeri 2 Gudo ranged from 14 to 16 years. More than half of the respondents in this study were 15 years old (62.8%). This age group falls into the middle adolescence phase, which includes individuals aged 14-16, during which individuals begin to show interest in interpersonal relationships, including romantic relationships. During this phase, adolescents often face social pressure and peer influence, making the risk of engaging in risky sexual behaviors higher (Mayangsari et al., 2021). Previous research by Rahmawati et al. (2020) showed that adolescents in the middle adolescence phase have a higher risk of exposure to unhealthy sexual information, especially if not accompanied by adequate education. In the context of this study, reproductive health education is highly relevant to provide accurate information to this age group.

Most of the respondents in this study were female, with 27 females (62.8%), while there were only 16 male respondents (37.2%). The dominance of female respondents has a significant impact on the study's results, as females are often more vulnerable to the direct consequences of premarital sex and early marriage, such as unwanted pregnancies, reproductive health problems, and social stigma. According to Rahayu et al. (2021), female adolescents tend to be more responsive to reproductive health education programs compared to males. This is because females are more aware of the risks and health impacts they might experience.

The respondents in this study came from two classes, namely class 9A (41.9%) and 9C (58.1%). These two groups are junior high school students at the final stage of their education. According to research by Nurdiana (2019), students at the final stage of junior high school tend to be more open to discussions about reproductive health because they begin to face greater challenges and social pressures related to interpersonal relationships. Research by Astuti (2017) indicates that students in grade 9 need more intensive education, as they are more likely to face peer pressure to try new things, including sexual relationships. Grade 9 students, as the final group at the junior high school level, tend to be more vulnerable to peer influence as they are in a transitional period towards higher education levels.

The majority of respondents at SMP Negeri 2 Gudo had dating experience, 74.4%, while 25.6% had never dated. Before receiving reproductive health education, the respondents with good

knowledge of the dangers of premarital sex were 48.8% in the category of those who had dated, and 20.9% in the category of those who had never dated. This indicates that romantic interactions among adolescents are quite common and should be an important aspect to consider in reproductive health education efforts. This percentage is in line with research by Febriana et al. (2019), which showed that 72% of adolescents in urban areas of Indonesia have dating experience. The study also mentioned that dating experience often influences adolescents' decisions regarding premarital sexual behavior. Research by Haryanto and Lestari (2018) indicated that there is a close relationship between dating behavior and premarital sexual behavior in adolescents. It was found that 68% of adolescents who are actively dating are more likely to engage in sexual activity before marriage.

The data from this study shows that 51.2% of respondents had never watched pornographic videos, while 48.8% had done so. This nearly equal percentage indicates that exposure to pornography is a significant challenge in managing adolescent behavior. A study by Dwita et al. (2021) found that about 50% of adolescents in Indonesia had been exposed to pornographic content. The research showed that such exposure can affect adolescents' perceptions of sexual relationships, increasing the risk of premarital sexual behavior. This is also consistent with research by Wijaya and Kusuma (2018), which revealed that 47% of adolescents frequently exposed to pornography are more likely to engage in sexual activity before marriage. In this study, it was found that before receiving reproductive health education, respondents with good knowledge of the dangers of premarital sex were 32.6% in the category of those who had watched pornographic videos and 37.2% in the category of those who had never dated. Individuals who had never watched pornographic videos actually had better knowledge levels (37.2%). According to Notoatmodjo (2014), this could be because respondents who obtained information from health education and promotion programs tend to have more effective understanding than those who are exposed to uncontrolled information from digital media. The reproductive health education conducted at SMP Negeri 2 Gudo aimed to provide comprehensive information and raise awareness among adolescents about the importance of protecting themselves from negative content.

The culture of early marriage that still exists in some areas of Jombang, especially in the villages around Gudo District, was found in this study, with 18.6% of respondents still living in environments that support early marriage culture, while 81.4% did not. This data indicates that although the culture of early marriage is not dominant, some adolescents still face social pressure to marry early. Setiawan et al. (2020) mentioned that around 20% of adolescents in Indonesia are still exposed to the culture of early marriage, especially in rural areas. Economic and educational factors are often the main drivers of this phenomenon.

The pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) culture in Jombang Regency also plays a significant role in shaping views and practices related to early marriage. As a traditional Islamic educational institution, pesantren instills strong religious values and social norms in its students. Some cases indicate that the impact of religious teachings and social pressure can encourage early marriage. Research by Prasetio et al. (2021) highlighted that some pesantren have a cultural practice that supports early marriage. This is often based on the belief that early marriage can prevent individuals from engaging in behavior considered religiously deviant, such as adultery.

Data on the desire for early marriage in this study shows that none of the respondents had a desire to marry early (0%). This is a positive indicator showing good knowledge among adolescents about the importance of postponing marriage until the right time.

**Teenagers Knowledge Before and After Being Given Counseling on the Dangers of Premarital Sex**

Based on the research findings on respondents' knowledge before and after receiving reproductive health counseling on the dangers of premarital sex, a significant increase in knowledge was observed among teenagers at SMP Negeri 2 Gudo. Before the counseling, 69.8% of respondents had good knowledge. After the counseling, the percentage of respondents with good knowledge increased to 90.7%. This increase indicates that reproductive health counseling has a positive impact on enhancing teenagers' understanding of the dangers of premarital sex.

These findings align with a previous study conducted by Bachrudin et al. (2017), which also reported an increase in knowledge about the dangers of premarital sex among students at SMA Negeri Binsus 9 Manado. Before the counseling, only 5.4% of respondents had good knowledge, whereas after the counseling, this figure increased to 91.9%. The improvement in knowledge observed in that study is comparable to the results of this research, where 90.7% of respondents had good knowledge following counseling on the dangers of premarital sex.

Preventing premarital sex can be achieved by enhancing the dissemination of information through counseling, education, and accurate understanding of sexuality. Knowledge should be acquired and understood from credible sources rather than through personal experience or trial and error. Misinformation can lead teenagers to engage in premarital sexual behavior out of curiosity, potentially encouraging them to experiment with unfamiliar activities (Ahiyanasari & Nurmala, 2017).

**Teenagers Knowledge Before and After Being Given Counseling on the Dangers of Early Marriage**

The data obtained in this study indicate that before the counseling session, the majority of respondents had a moderate level of knowledge, which improved to a good level at a rate of 36.4%. Meanwhile, 100% of respondents who already had good knowledge before the counseling maintained their level of knowledge after the session. After the counseling, the total number of respondents with good knowledge increased to 29 respondents (67.4%). These findings align with a study conducted by Amelia et al. (2017), which reported a significant increase in teenagers' knowledge after counseling, reaching 65.2%.

Teenagers at SMPN 4 Banjarmasin already had a sufficient level of knowledge before the study, as indicated by their pre-test results, where more than 50% of students demonstrated moderate knowledge. Similarly, in this study, 51.2% of respondents initially had moderate knowledge, which increased to 67.4% having good knowledge after the counseling session.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), early marriage refers to marriages where one or both partners are still categorized as children or teenagers under the age of 19. Indonesian law, as stated in Law No. 16 of 2019, clearly stipulates that marriage is only permitted if both men and women have reached the age of 19. Any deviations from this regulation require a special exemption from the religious court or an authorized official, requested by the parents of the bride or groom.

Marriage requires maturity in various aspects, including age, mental readiness, and other supporting factors. Therefore, understanding the dangers of early marriage is essential to ensure that individuals are well-prepared for marriage in all aspects. According to Novita et al. (2023), the ideal minimum age for marriage is 25 years for men and 21 years for women. At this age, individuals are expected to have attained a good level of education, enabling them to earn an

independent income to support their family's economic well-being. Additionally, they are considered more mature in terms of psychological, emotional, and social readiness.

**The Influence of Reproductive Health Counseling on Teenagers' Knowledge**

The findings of this study indicate a significant increase in teenagers' knowledge regarding the dangers of premarital sex after receiving reproductive health counseling. This is evident from the p-value of 0.004, demonstrating that reproductive health counseling had an impact on teenagers' knowledge about the dangers of premarital sex at SMP Negeri 2 Gudo ($p < 0.05$). In addition to the increase in knowledge about premarital sex, this study also showed a significant improvement in knowledge about the dangers of early marriage. The p-value of 0.008 confirms the influence of reproductive health counseling on teenagers' awareness of early marriage risks ($p < 0.05$).

A similar study by Syurinda et al. (2021) found that reproductive health counseling significantly influenced teenagers' knowledge about premarital sex among eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Lingsar, West Lombok Regency. Another study by Kurniawati and Lestari (2023) revealed a significant relationship between counseling and the knowledge of tenth-grade students regarding early marriage at SMA Negeri 01 Kelapa, as indicated by statistical testing using the paired sample t-test, which yielded a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$).

This study confirms that reproductive health counseling is effective and plays a crucial role in increasing teenagers' awareness of the dangers of premarital sex and early marriage at SMP Negeri 2 Gudo. Prior to the counseling, respondents already had a moderate level of knowledge about the risks of early marriage. However, the improvement in knowledge after the counseling session was lower compared to the increase in knowledge about the dangers of premarital sex. Several factors contribute to teenagers' awareness of these issues. According to Amelia et al. (2017), schools located near community health centers (Puskesmas) benefit from well-implemented adolescent programs. Additionally, teachers actively facilitate external experts, such as researchers, to conduct counseling sessions that enhance students' knowledge. Parents also play a role in providing their children with foundational knowledge.

Several factors influence a person’s knowledge, including education, media exposure, socio-cultural and economic background, environment, experiences, and age. Among these factors, access to information is crucial, as frequent exposure to educational content enhances an individual's knowledge and awareness. Conversely, limited exposure to information may hinder knowledge acquisition. According to Nurmala et al. (2018), knowledge is the result of an individual's perception of an object and plays a vital role in shaping personality. Providing health counseling is one of the most effective ways to improve knowledge. Purnamasari and Raharyani (2020) further emphasized that curiosity drives knowledge acquisition, which can be obtained from various sources, including media, family members, teachers, and structured health counseling programs.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. The respondents in this study fall into the middle adolescence category, with the majority having dating experience and half of them having been exposed to pornographic content. While early marriage culture is still present among some respondents, none expressed a desire to marry early.

2. There was a notable increase in teenagers knowledge at SMP Negeri 2 Gudo regarding the dangers of premarital sex and early marriage after receiving counseling.
3. Reproductive health counseling had a significant impact on teenagers knowledge about the dangers of premarital sex and early marriage at SMP Negeri 2 Gudo.

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