

Association of Sociocultural and Demographic Factors on Attitudes of Teaching Sexual and Reproductive Health in Science and Health Science Teachers in Dehiowita Educational Zone in Kegalle District, Sri Lanka

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School based reproductive health education depends on teachers, students and other factors related to schools. Factors related to teachers can be assessed through knowledge, attitudes and practice of them. A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out among grade six to eleven science and health science teachers in secondary schools to assess their attitudes related to teaching reproductive health. Data were collected through self-administered questionnaire among science teachers (n=270) in Dehiowita educational zone in Kegalle district, Sri Lanka during January 2022 to March 2022. Attitudes were described as positive or negative related to positive or negative statements towards good attitude. 51.7% of teachers had a positive attitude towards the statement, "Reproductive health education is appropriate for your students", 24.6% of teachers had negative attitudes. 54% disagreed on the potential impact on our value system by teaching sexuality related topics. Interestingly, 25% did not show a positive or negative attitude regarding the statement. Study findings concluded that 49.7% (majority) of the teachers believed that the biggest barrier to reproductive health education is culture and 28% of them thought that parents are the biggest barrier. 16.7% of them thought school policy is responsible and only 5.6% of them said it is due to lack of training. Study results revealed that the socio demographic factors such as age, marital status and type of school were significantly associated with the attitudes related to teaching reproductive health. The association between religion being a barrier to sex education was not statistically significant ($P=0.318$, $\chi^2=9.29$, $df=8$) and the association between residence and statement "Society does not accept teaching reproductive health" was not statistically significant ($P=0.058$, $\chi^2=5.688$, $df=2$). Further, 50.4% of Buddhist and 43% of Hindu teachers suggested that culture was the major limitation on teaching reproductive health. Negative attitudes have appeared among teachers on teaching reproductive health and positive attitudes were not fully expressed. Therefore, attitudes towards teaching reproductive health have to be improved among school teachers.

Keywords: *attitude, health, reproductive, sociocultural*