

**Promotion of knowledge and
attitude towards premarital care.
An interventional study among
medical student in Fayoum
University**

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SUMMARY

Premarital care is a golden component in reproductive health and preventive medicine, because it is the safest way to have healthy mothers and children, which are the hope and dream of every country. It became compulsory by law in many Arab countries including Egypt.

This study aimed to assess and improve knowledge and attitude towards premarital care services among medical students of 1st, 2nd and 3rd years in faculty of medicine in Fayoum University .Similar studies didn't take place at this university before, so our study is considered as a pioneer one in this field.

The present study was an interventional educational prospective study. It was done on 200 students in the first three study years .The required sample size was calculated using the table constructed upon the formula, used by **Krejcie and Morgan (1970)**, Cluster sampling method was applied to choose the targeted students.

The involved students were interviewed first by using a pre-tested structured questionnaire, to asses their baseline knowledge and attitude towards premarital care. Then, at the same session the health education intervention – in the form of lecture -which took about one hour- explaining important components of premarital care, and brochures containing brief points about premarital care distributed to students at the end of session.

The same questionnaire was applied after 2 months from the lecture date on the same participated students to detect the degree of knowledge obtained and remained after health education ; to what extent it was sustained and if there any change in their attitude .

The collected data before and after the health education intervention were analyzed and interpreted by using SPSS version 15. It revealed that the participated students were mainly less than 20 years, and represented about 81% of the studied sample. Males represented (40%) of the students; while females occupied (60%) of it. Twenty nine percent of the students were from first year, second year occupied 29% also, while the rest of the students were

from third year which occupied 42 % from the sample. Eighty eight percent of the students had previous idea about establishment of PMC services and only 29.5% knew that application of that program became compulsory by law.

The main sources of knowledge about premarital care was the television (65.5%), while relatives came in the second rank (39.5%). The positive response of the students knowledge about the compulsory application of PMC increased to (88.5%) after application of the intervention program.

The knowledge about reproductive health components and PMC components was significantly improved from (8.72 ± 1.39) to $(9.43 \pm .877)$ and from (10.31 ± 1.31) to (11.01 ± 1.21) respectively.

The mean score knowledge about premarital counseling session and its content increased from $(9.84 \pm .776)$ to $(11.63 \pm .766)$. Concerning the role of premarital care in minimizing STDs marked improvement in knowledge regarding screening for hepatitis was observed (from 58% to 72%) that exceeded the improvement in knowledge for Gonorrhea and syphilis (from 92% to 95%) but concerning AIDS, ninety eight percent of the students already knew that AIDS is one of the most important STDs which should be screened and early detected by PMC.

The health education intervention succeeded in improving knowledge about the investigation done routinely for couples as (CBC), urine analysis, while information about testing ABO group, RH (rhesus) factor did not differ significantly.

Knowledge of the studied students about vaccination as a component of PMC was markedly improved after the intervention from 35.5% to 74%. In addition, the percent of students who know that vaccination is given to females were increased from 7.5 to 80%.

Vaccination has a great role in prevention of some diseases that may be lead to a list of congenital anomalies. Rubella is considered the golden star for

this group of infections. Such knowledge has increased among the students from 6.5% to 28%.

Total score knowledge before and after the application of health education program is calculated, revealed that there is significant improvement in the mean score from (62.44 ± 4.98) to (69.37 ± 3.43) , but no significant change was detected between males and females as regard total knowledge score .

Matching with the goal of the study to improve the attitude towards premarital care services, the health education intervention succeeded in improving it as whole, with mean total attitude score increased from 7.89 ± 1.1 to 13.1 ± 0.81 . Females exhibited better attitude towards premarital care services than males, but there is no statistical significant change in attitude between different study classes or between age group present in the study.

Sixty eight percent of students realized that premarital care is very important, while 30.5% of them convened that premarital care is important in certain cases .The health education program succeeded in decreasing the percent of the students who were not convened to receive premarital care services from 14.5% to 7.5%.

No change in attitude towards consanguineous marriage detected in the study, as well as attitude towards refusal of marriage person with uncontrolled chronic diseases (non- infectious) showed slight improvement from 31% to 38% of the students .On the other hand attitude towards refusal of marriage person with untreated infectious diseases improved markedly from 37% to 90% of the students.

The reader can conclude from the current study the importance of health education in improving knowledge and attitude towards different components of PMC. Also, it exhibited better improvement in attitude of the females than males towards PMC services.