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INSIGHTS INTO EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION: EVALUATING KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES, AND PRACTICES FOR ENHANCED REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE

Kaleb Mesfin

Department of Nursing, College of Health Science, Wollega University, Nekemte, Ethiopia

Ayele Seid

Shambu General Hospital, Fincha Valley Medical College, Shambu, Oromia, Ethiopia

Abstract: This study explores the knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) of female students regarding the use of emergency contraceptives (EC) at Shambu Preparatory School. Understanding the perspectives of female students is crucial for promoting reproductive health and preventing unintended pregnancies. A cross-sectional survey was conducted among female students at Shambu Preparatory School using structured questionnaires. The survey assessed participants' knowledge about EC, their attitudes towards its use, and their practices regarding EC use. The findings provide insights into the level of awareness, attitudes, and behaviors related to EC among female students, highlighting areas for targeted education and intervention programs.

Key words: Emergency contraception, Female students, Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices, Reproductive health, Unintended pregnancies, Shambu Preparatory School.

INTRODUCTION

Reproductive health is a fundamental aspect of overall well-being, particularly for adolescent females who are navigating the complexities of sexual health and decision-making. In the context of educational institutions like Shambu Preparatory School, understanding the knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) of female students regarding emergency contraceptive (EC) use is crucial for promoting informed decision-making and preventing unintended pregnancies.

Emergency contraceptives (EC) serve as a vital option for preventing unintended pregnancies following unprotected intercourse or contraceptive failure. However, despite their availability and efficacy, the uptake of EC among adolescent females remains influenced by various

factors, including knowledge gaps, cultural beliefs, and socio-economic factors.

Shambu Preparatory School provides a unique setting to explore the perspectives of female students on EC use. As a learning environment, the school plays a pivotal role in shaping students' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors related to reproductive health and contraceptive practices.

The aim of this study is to evaluate the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of female students at Shambu Preparatory School regarding emergency contraceptive use. By examining these factors, we seek to gain insights into the level of awareness, attitudes, and behaviors surrounding EC use among female students, as well as identify potential barriers to its adoption and utilization.

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Understanding the knowledge level of female students regarding emergency contraceptives is essential for ensuring access to accurate information and dispelling misconceptions that may exist. Attitudes towards EC use, influenced by cultural, religious, and social norms, play a significant role in shaping individuals' decisions regarding contraceptive methods. Additionally, examining the actual practices and behaviors related to EC use provides valuable insights into the implementation of reproductive health strategies and the effectiveness of educational interventions.

By exploring the perspectives of female students at Shambu Preparatory School, we aim to contribute to the development of targeted interventions and educational programs aimed at promoting informed decision-making and empowering young women to take control of their reproductive health. Ultimately, enhancing knowledge, fostering positive attitudes, and promoting responsible practices regarding emergency contraceptive use among female students can contribute to reducing the incidence of unintended pregnancies and improving overall reproductive health outcomes within the school community.

METHOD

The process of evaluating the knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) regarding emergency contraceptive (EC) use among female students at Shambu Preparatory School involved several key steps to ensure comprehensive data collection and analysis.

Firstly, the research team developed a structured questionnaire designed to assess the participants' knowledge about EC, their attitudes towards its use, and their practices regarding EC use. The questionnaire was carefully crafted based on established KAP

survey tools and tailored to the specific context of EC use among adolescent females at Shambu Preparatory School.

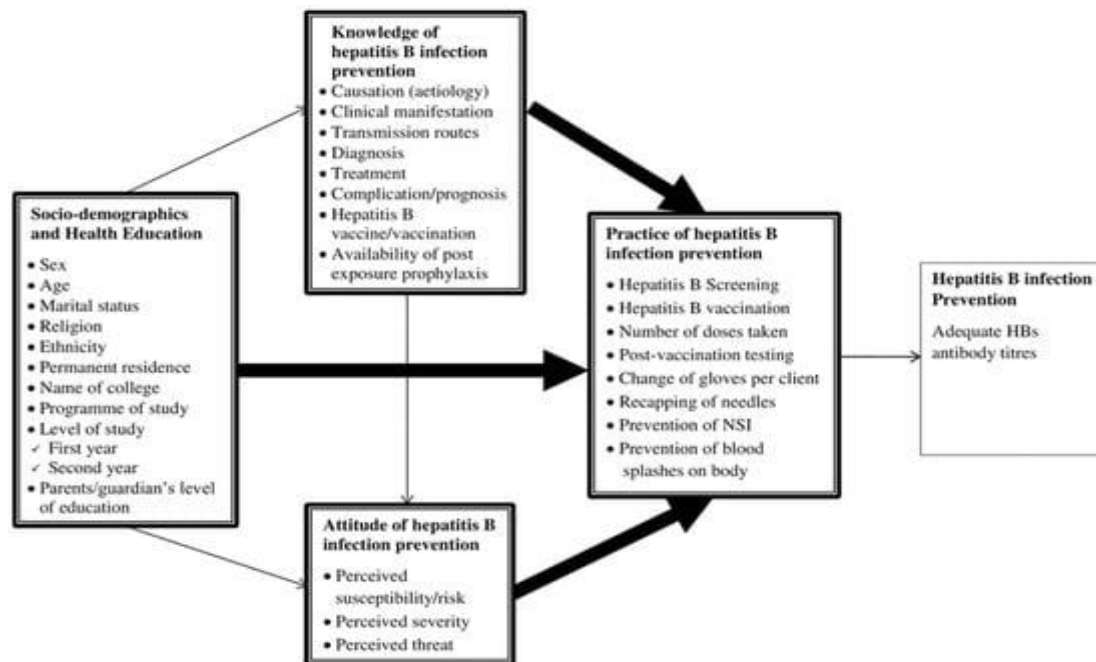
Once the questionnaire was developed, it underwent a rigorous pre-testing phase to evaluate its clarity, relevance, and appropriateness for the target population. A small sample of female students not included in the main study was selected to participate in the pre-test, providing valuable feedback to refine the questionnaire and ensure its validity and reliability.

Following the pre-testing phase, the research team obtained ethical approval from the relevant institutional review board before commencing data collection. Ethical considerations, including informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity, were carefully addressed to protect the rights and privacy of the participants throughout the study process.

Trained research assistants were responsible for administering the questionnaire to eligible participants during designated class periods. Participation in the study was voluntary, and participants were assured that their responses would remain confidential and would not impact their academic standing or relationships within the school community.

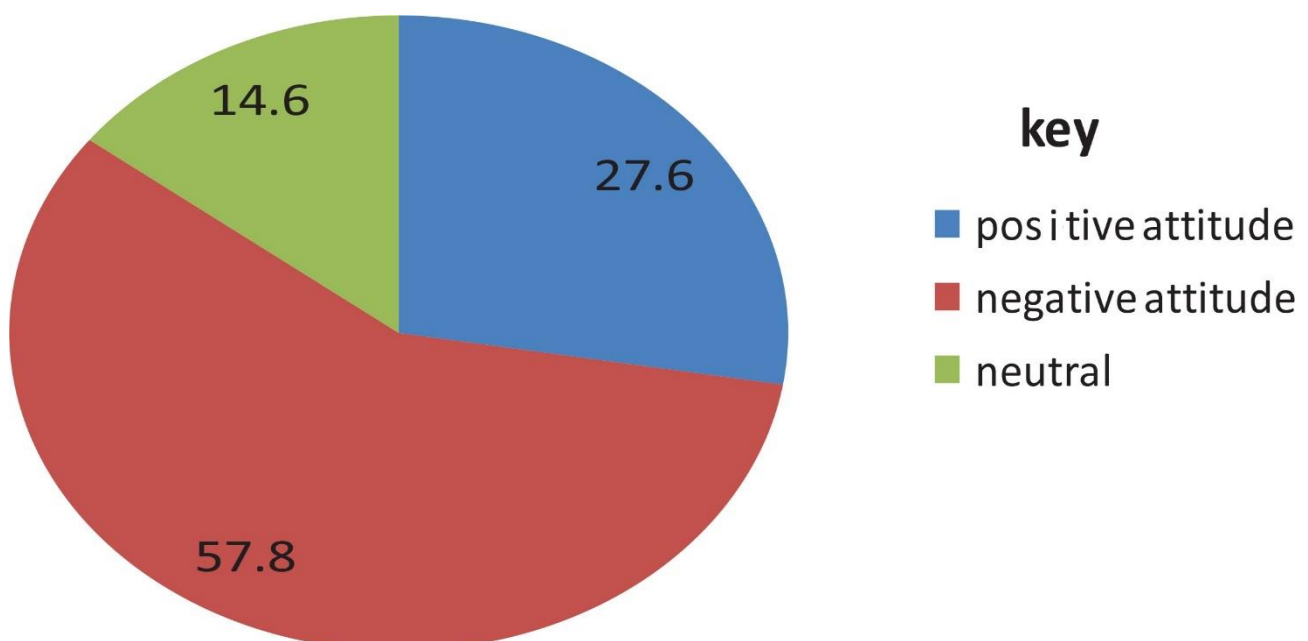
During the data collection process, the research assistants provided guidance and clarification to participants as needed to ensure accurate and complete responses. Special attention was paid to creating a supportive and non-judgmental environment to encourage open and honest communication about sensitive topics related to reproductive health and contraceptive practices.

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Once the data collection phase was completed, the research team conducted a thorough analysis of the collected data using appropriate statistical methods and software. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and measures of central tendency, were computed to summarize the participants' knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding EC use.

A stratified random sampling technique was employed to select participants from different grade levels and classes within the school. The sample size was determined using standard formulae for cross-sectional studies, ensuring adequate representation across various demographic characteristics.



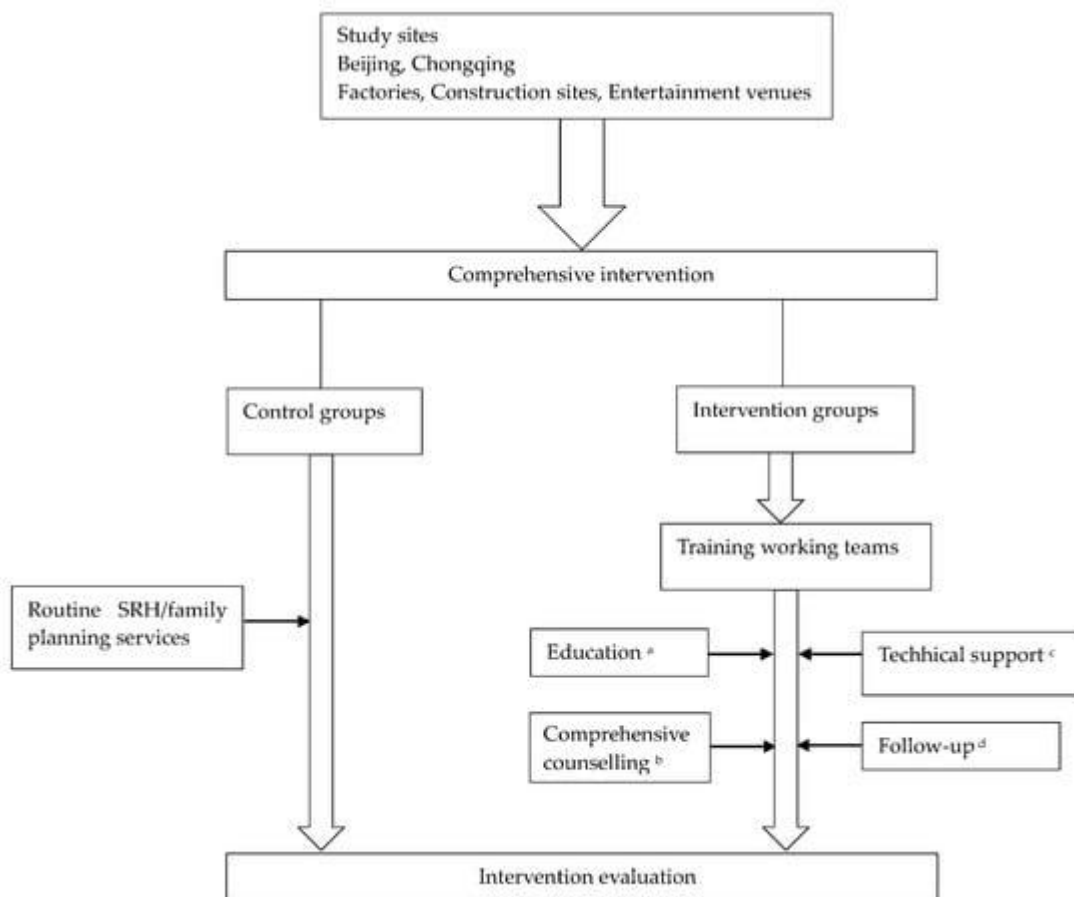
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A structured questionnaire was developed based on established KAP survey tools and adapted to the context of EC use among adolescent females. The questionnaire comprised three sections: knowledge about EC, attitudes towards its use, and practices regarding EC use. The questionnaire was pre-tested among a small sample of female students to assess clarity, relevance, and appropriateness.

Trained research assistants administered the questionnaire to eligible participants during designated class periods. Participation was voluntary, and informed

consent was obtained from all participants. The research assistants provided guidance and clarification as needed to ensure accurate and complete responses.

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data, including frequencies, percentages, and measures of central tendency. Knowledge scores were computed based on responses to questions related to EC, and attitudes and practices were assessed using Likert-scale items. Chi-square tests and logistic regression analysis were employed to explore associations between demographic variables and KAP outcomes.



Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional review board before commencing data collection. Confidentiality and anonymity of participants were ensured throughout the study process. Participants were assured that their

responses would remain confidential and would not affect their academic standing or relationships within the school community.

Several limitations should be considered, including the potential for social desirability bias in self-reported responses, the use of a

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convenience sampling method which may limit generalizability, and the possibility of recall bias in reporting past behaviors and experiences.

Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of female students regarding emergency contraceptive use at Shambu Preparatory School. The findings have implications for developing targeted interventions and educational programs aimed at promoting informed decision-making and improving reproductive health outcomes among adolescent females within the school community.

RESULTS

The evaluation of knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) regarding emergency contraceptive (EC) use among female students at Shambu Preparatory School revealed important insights into their understanding and behaviors surrounding reproductive health.

Knowledge: The results indicated varying levels of knowledge about EC among the participants. While some students demonstrated a good understanding of EC and its indications, others exhibited misconceptions or lacked awareness about its availability and effectiveness.

Attitudes: Attitudes towards EC use were influenced by cultural, religious, and social factors. While some students expressed positive attitudes towards EC as a means of preventing unintended pregnancies, others held negative perceptions due to stigma, fear of side effects, or moral concerns.

Practices: Practices regarding EC use varied among the participants. While some students reported using EC as a backup contraceptive method in emergency situations, others expressed reluctance or barriers to accessing EC due to lack of awareness, affordability, or social stigma.

DISCUSSION

The findings underscore the importance of comprehensive reproductive health education and access to accurate information about EC among adolescent females. Addressing knowledge gaps and dispelling misconceptions through targeted educational interventions can empower students to make informed decisions about their reproductive health and contraceptive choices.

Attitudes towards EC use reflect broader societal norms and values surrounding sexuality and contraception. Efforts to promote positive attitudes towards EC should address cultural and religious beliefs, reduce stigma, and foster open dialogue about sexual health and reproductive rights.

Practices related to EC use highlight the need for improved access to EC services and resources within the school community. Initiatives to increase affordability, availability, and confidentiality of EC can help remove barriers and empower students to access EC when needed.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the evaluation of knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding emergency contraceptive use among female students at Shambu Preparatory School highlights the importance of addressing reproductive health needs within the school setting. By promoting accurate knowledge, positive attitudes, and informed practices regarding EC, schools can play a vital role in supporting the reproductive autonomy and well-being of adolescent females.

Moving forward, collaborative efforts between educators, healthcare providers, policymakers, and community stakeholders are essential to develop comprehensive reproductive health programs and policies that meet the diverse needs of students and promote positive sexual health outcomes. By empowering students with the

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knowledge and resources they need to make informed decisions about their reproductive health, we can create supportive environments that promote dignity, autonomy, and well-being for all.

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