Effects of Life Skills-based Sexuality Education on Early Adolescents in Korea

Gyu Young Lee*, Da Ye Lee*
*Red Cross College of Nursing, Chung-Ang University
e-mail: queyoung@cau.ac.kr

초등학생을 위한 라이프스킬 기반 성교육 프로그램 효과성 연구

이규영*, 이다예*
*중앙대학교 적십자간호대학 간호학과

During puberty, perceptions about sex are formed and the motivation for learning is strong. Although sexuality education is expected to have temporal efficiency and greater long-term effects on the youth, in Korea, it has mainly comprised sex-related information delivered via a teacher-centered instruction. The purpose of this study was to verify the effectiveness of a life skills-based sexuality education program applying learner-centered principles among upper elementary grade students. A program comprising 16 sessions was developed to improve sexuality knowledge and the sexual behaviors of adolescents by developing practical life skills applicable to daily life. This study with a one-group pretest–posttest design recruited 68 students from a school located in Seoul. The difference between averages of pre- and post-intervention examinations was analyzed using a single sample t test to determine the effectiveness of the proposed intervention program. The results showed that the proposed program increased the sexuality knowledge of the youth (t = -4.296, p < 0.001); however, the improvement in sexual attitude was not statistically significant (t = -1.56, p = 0.125). A significant improvement was observed in learners' interpersonal skills (t = -5.088, p < 0.001). This study is significant as it is the first life skills-based sexuality education program developed for elementary level students in Korea. The program is expected to be used in developing a learner-centered sexuality education program applicable to real life and as an exemplary reference for classroom application.

1. Introduction

Puberty is a turning point in life when children transition from school age to adolescence and experience dramatic physical, mental, and emotional changes[1]. During this period, perceptions about sex are formed and the motivation for learning is strong; so, sexuality education is expected to have temporal efficiency and greater long-term effects on them compared to that on learners who have already graduated high school[2]. Providing appropriate sex education for elementary school students is, therefore, essential in maintaining their sexual health as members of society. Nevertheless, the reality of sexuality education in Korean elementary schools has failed to reflect the developmental stage of young adolescents and changes in their social environment. The main problem commonly cited by studies on the status of sexuality education in elementary and middle schools in Korea is that it is not systematic or professional, and fails in fulfilling the needs of the learner[3, 4].

As a solution to these problems, a learner-centered sexuality education program based on life skills was proposed. UNESCO, which has developed worldwide sexuality education guidelines, highlighted that the lifestyle-based approach to sexuality education is effective in addressing adolescent smoking, drinking, drugs-related, and sexual health problems[5]. This study sought to confirm whether the life skills-based sexuality education program can positively change the knowledge and attitudes about sex in upper elementary grade students. To achieve this goal, we developed a life skills-based sexuality education program applying learner-centered teaching methods for upper elementary grade students and verified the effect through program
implementation.

2. Methods

2.1 Procedures

All youth in this study participated in the pre-education questionnaire survey and took an 8-week life skills-based sexuality education program. After program completion, they participated in the post-education questionnaire survey, including the satisfaction survey.

2.2 Sample

The research participants were 72 students from four different 6th grade classes in one elementary school located in Seoul. The teacher had completed training for the life skills education program.

2.3 Measures

Measurement instrument for life skills - 10 items from the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (1965); 20 items from Communications Scale from the Youth Life Skills Evaluation developed by Barkman and Machtmes (2002); 20 items from the Solving Problems Survey developed by Barkman and Machtmes (2002); 18 items from the Critical Thinking in Everyday Life Scale (CTEL) developed by Perkins and Mincemoyer (2002).

Measurement instrument for sexuality knowledge - 25 items developed by the authors.

Measurement instrument for sexual attitude - 24 items developed by the authors based on the Korean Gender Awareness Scale (KGAS) (2008) developed by the Korean Institute for Gender Equality Promotion and Education and a measurement instrument for adolescent sexual culture used by Seoul Aha Sexuality Education and Counseling Center for Youth.

Measurement instrument for satisfaction with program - 9 items, including an open-ended item, developed by the authors.

2.4 Analysis

Analysis was carried out using the SPSS 250 statistical program and two-sided tests were performed with a statistical significance level of 0.25. Descriptive statistics, the Wilcoxon signed-rank test, McNemar’s test, were used.

3. Results

Effectiveness of life skills-based sexuality education program. Students’ life skill level scores increased from 3.04±0.28 before education to 3.06±0.33 after education, but did not reach statistical significance (t = -0.504, p = 0.616). However, interpersonal relationship/communication skill scores increased statistically significantly from 2.92±0.25 before education to 3.09±0.36 after education (t = -5.088, p < 0.001). Students’ sexuality knowledge scores increased statistically significantly from 15.20±5.02 before education to 18.23±5.92 after education (t = -4.266, p < 0.001), and sexual attitude increased slightly from 3.06±0.29 before education to 3.12±0.29 after education; however, these decreases did not reach statistical significance (t = -1.956, p = 0.055). Satisfaction with life skills-based sexuality education was 3.60±0.78, indicating general satisfaction.

4. Discussion

The life skills-based sexuality education program developed and used in this study proved to be effective for learners in acquiring life skills and sexuality knowledge. The results showed an improvement in learners’ sexuality knowledge from 15.20 to 18.23. The results of this study are consistent with the results of previous studies that found sexuality education should be able to prevent learners’ risky sexual behaviors through teaching accurate knowledge.[2, 3].

Given the short study period, the students’ interpersonal/communication skills showed the immediate effect of the information learned. The results indicated that the level of interpersonal/communication skills increased statistically significantly from 2.92 to 3.09. In addition, the life skills-based sexuality education program has fulfilled the learner’s needs for a sexuality education program which applies themes closely related to everyday life and implements learner-centered teaching and learning methods.

The ultimate purpose of sexuality education is to develop the ability in adolescents to carefully deal with sex and to teach them accurate sexual information, thus allowing them to engage in healthy and responsible sexual behaviors.[6, 7]. To teach elementary school students healthy sexual values and responsibility for their own sexual behaviors, sexuality education should have specific goals, such as contraceptive
education, sexual health, and value education. To achieve these goals, the life skills-based sexuality education program should be applied in the classroom setting.

참고문헌


