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“Adolescent Reproductive Health Education during COVID-19: Evaluation of a Model for Virtual Reproductive Health Intervention in New Orleans”

Introduction:

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, school-based reproductive health interventions served as a key component of adolescent reproductive healthcare (Lindberg, 2020). Many students received limited reproductive health education prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and even fewer are receiving reproductive health education now due to the constraints of virtual or hybrid learning environments (Lindberg, 2020). Comprehensive reproductive health education through a virtual instruction model could increase access to reproductive education for students in schools employing virtual or hybrid instruction due to COVID-19. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the efficacy of a model for virtual reproductive health educational intervention in New Orleans.

Methods:

The New Orleans Adolescent Reproductive Health Program (NOARHP) provided a virtual comprehensive reproductive health education intervention to 133 middle and high school students in New Orleans Charter Schools. Students completed eight virtual reproductive health lessons with a live reproductive health educator on zoom. Using a pre-experimental study design, participants completed pre- and post-test questionnaires composed of 47 multiple choice and true/false style questions. This reproductive health questionnaire is designed to evaluate understanding and proficiency in Healthy Behavior Outcomes (HBOs) as defined by the CDC Health Education Curriculum Analysis Tool (HECAT).

Results/Analysis:

A paired t-test comparing pre-test ($M = 24.81$, $SD = 118.64$) and post-test ($M = 37.55$, $SD = 59.47$) data showed a significant increase in reproductive health knowledge $t(132) = -10.0961$, $p < 0.00001$ following the receipt of the virtual reproductive health intervention.

Conclusion:

Virtual reproductive health education is an effective means of providing students with comprehensive reproductive health education in the setting of virtual or hybrid instruction models due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This model can serve as a suitable alternative to in-person school-based reproductive health interventions.