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Enhancing Reproductive Health and Sexually Transmitted Infection Prevention Awareness through Community Engagement

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Abstract

The Thousand Islands, a popular tourist destination in DKI Jakarta Province, is facing a new challenge, namely the increasing concern about the transmission of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) triggered by the increase in tourism visits. In response to this issue, a community service activity was carried out by the Faculty of Medicine at UHAMKA. The aim of this activity is to raise awareness and knowledge in the community, particularly among educators in the Thousand Islands, about the dangers of and prevention against STIs and the importance of Reproductive Health Education. The partners in this community service activity are teachers in the Thousand Islands. A total of 24 teachers were involved in this training. The methods used involve training and counseling that incorporate direct training and open discussions. Data were collected through observations and field notes. The results of this activity include an increase in understanding and skills of teachers concerning Reproductive Health Education and STI prevention, which they can apply in educating students. Additionally, it was found that community awareness about the dangers of STIs also increased as a direct result of this activity. The conclusion that can be derived from this activity is that appropriate education and training on reproductive health and the prevention of STIs for the community, specifically educators, can be an effective strategy in controlling STI transmission in tourist areas like the Thousand Islands. This activity also helps to strengthen the local health system in dealing with the challenge of STI transmission.

Keywords: *Thousand Islands, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), Reproductive Health Education, Community Service, Counseling*

Kepulauan Seribu sebagai destinasi wisata unggulan di Provinsi DKI Jakarta tengah menghadapi tantangan baru, yakni meningkatnya kekhawatiran penularan Infeksi Menular Seksual (IMS) yang dipicu oleh meningkatnya kunjungan wisata. Menanggapi hal tersebut, Fakultas Kedokteran UHAMKA menyelenggarakan kegiatan pengabdian kepada masyarakat. Tujuan dari kegiatan ini adalah untuk meningkatkan kesadaran dan pengetahuan masyarakat, khususnya para pendidik di Kepulauan Seribu, tentang bahaya dan pencegahan IMS serta pentingnya Pendidikan Kesehatan Reproduksi. Mitra dalam kegiatan pengabdian kepada masyarakat ini adalah guru-guru di Kepulauan Seribu. Sebanyak 24 guru terlibat dalam pelatihan ini. Metode yang digunakan adalah pelatihan dan penyuluhan yang menggabungkan pelatihan langsung dan diskusi terbuka. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi dan catatan lapangan. Hasil dari kegiatan ini adalah adanya peningkatan pemahaman dan keterampilan guru tentang Pendidikan Kesehatan Reproduksi dan pencegahan IMS yang dapat diterapkan dalam memberikan edukasi kepada siswa. Selain itu, ditemukan pula peningkatan kesadaran masyarakat tentang bahaya IMS sebagai dampak langsung dari kegiatan ini. Kesimpulan yang dapat diambil dari kegiatan ini adalah bahwa pendidikan dan pelatihan yang tepat mengenai kesehatan reproduksi dan pencegahan IMS bagi masyarakat, khususnya para pendidik, dapat menjadi strategi yang efektif dalam mengendalikan penularan IMS di daerah wisata seperti Kepulauan Seribu. Kegiatan ini juga membantu memperkuat sistem kesehatan setempat dalam menghadapi tantangan penularan IMS.

Kata Kunci: Kepulauan Seribu, Infeksi Menular Seksual (IMS), Pendidikan Kesehatan Reproduksi, Pengabdian Masyarakat, Konseling

Introduction

The Thousand Islands, an immensely popular tourist haven in the province of Jakarta, are currently grappling with a new challenge - the escalating concerns over the transmission of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). This beautiful island chain, well-known not just to locals but to tourists from around the world, has seen its fair share of tourist traffic increase significantly (Pramana et al., 2022). While tourism has brought numerous economic and social benefits to the local community, there's a flip side that needs to be attended to. One of the most striking negative impacts is the threat to public health, primarily with the spreading STIs (Milhausen & Graham et al., 2019). Tourism and health, two elements seemingly unrelated, have now become intertwined, influencing lives in the Thousand Islands. The influx of tourists is often associated with the spread of infectious diseases, including STIs. Most of these diseases are enabled by the increased social interactions driven by tourism. Therefore, understanding the relationship between tourism and the spread of STIs is key to formulating effective intervention ideas and strategies (Milhausen & Graham et al., 2019).

Alongside the mounting concerns, various efforts have been undertaken to address this critical situation. Organizations and health practitioners have employed different approaches and methods to curb the spreading of STIs (Balden et al., 2016; Dombrowski et al., 2017). Nevertheless, despite all the efforts, the STI spread persists as a glaring issue, indicating a dire need for a more community-oriented approach to tackle this problem (Dombrowski et al., 2017). Drawing inspiration from this condition, the community service activity by UHAMKA's Faculty of Medicine aims to provide an effective response to this significant concern (Obeagu & Scott et.al, 2022; Kawulich, 2015; WHO, 2018). The primary objective of this activity is to equip the local community, especially educators, with the knowledge and resources necessary to prevent the spread of STIs. By providing adequate reproductive health education, this initiative addresses the issue at its core and promotes a healthier lifestyle (Newton-Levinson et al., 2016).

However, addressing this challenge wisely requires a clear and detailed understanding of the dynamics, challenges, and intricacies surrounding this complex issue (Newton-Levinson et al., 2016). Therefore, the secondary purpose of this activity is to conduct a comprehensive study on the current state of STIs in the Thousand Islands, identify the underlying causes, and propose feasible solutions. The purpose of this work is to advance knowledge and understanding of this issue, rather than to discredit the people or the community of the Thousand Islands (Huschke, et.al., 2019) The spirit of this discussion is to find solutions to the challenges faced by the Thousand Islands community and contribute to their struggle for well-being and a better life.

Method

The community service activity initiated by the Faculty of Medicine at UHAMKA encompassed collaborative undertakings with a selection of educators from the Thousand Islands as partners instrumental to the mission's success (Scott, et.al., 2015). Embarking on this endeavour were 24 teacher-companions, emboldened through a set of methodologies that encapsulated interactive instruction and extensive dialogue. This immersive pedagogy was linked with meticulous data collection, carefully noting participant behaviour and other salient features of the proceedings, thus capturing the essence of the training course (Kawulich, 2015).

This harvested data then journeyed through a thorough qualitative scrutiny with thematic content analysis serving as the compass navigating the data assembly (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The identification of recurring motifs and patterns facilitated a better understanding of the effectiveness of the reproductive health education and gauged the level of comprehension and acceptance amongst the group of teachers (Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013). The setting behind these interventions was none other than the picturesque Thousand Islands, providing an apt backdrop for discussing a local issue (Halpenny, 2010). The chronology was laid out with due consideration to ensure minimal conflict with the professional responsibilities of the teachers, providing them with ample room for their regular teaching commitments while allowing for an intensive study of STIs and their prevention (Sönmez et al., 2006).

RESULT

Table 1 presents the frequency distribution for the study's subjects across various characteristics. As denoted in the table, the majority of the participants are over 40 years old, representing 58.33% of the sample size, while those under the age of 40 constitute the remaining 41.67%. Regarding gender distribution, the sample skews towards female participants, who make up 75% as opposed to males at 25%. When considering the duration of employment, subjects are evenly divided along the 10-year mark, with those who have been working for less than 10 years and those more than 10 years being 41.67% and 58.33% respectively. Finally, when it comes to smoking habits, a significant majority of subjects, 83.33%, are nonsmokers, leaving only a small fraction, 16.67%, as smokers.

Table 1. Frequency distribution for study subjects

Characteristic	Description	Percentage
Age		
< 40 years old	10	41.67%
> 40 years old	14	58.33%
Gender		
Male	6	25%
Female	18	75%
Work duration		
< 10 years	10	41.67%
> 10 years	14	58.33%
Smoking		
yes	4	16.67%
No	20	83.33%

The results represented in Figure 1 illustrate the compelling changes in participants' educational scores before and after participating in an educational program or intervention. This is visually captured using a line graph, where the x-axis represents the participants or groups of participants, and the y-axis denotes their educational scores. The contrasting lines representing pre-education and post education scores effectively highlight a notable trend towards improvement post-intervention.

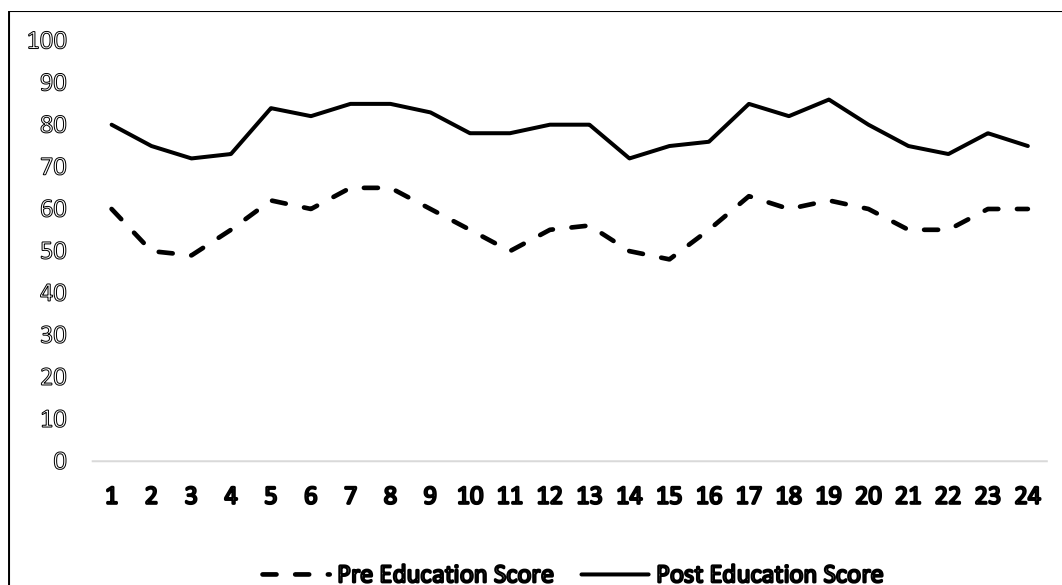


Figure 1. Comparison Pre and Post Education Scores

Table 2 shows comparative data for an educational intervention's pre and post scores. The 'Pre-Education Score' indicates an average score of 56.1 with a standard deviation of 7.86, prior to the program., while the 'Post Education Score' presents a higher average score of 77.5 with a slightly smaller standard deviation of 7.00 after the intervention. The reported p-value of 0.000 strongly suggests that the increase in scores—observed as a jump from the average pre-score to the post-score—is statistically significant, indicating that the intervention had a substantial effect on the education scores. While the decrease in standard deviation suggests less variability in scores post intervention, the p-value solely expresses the statistical rather than the practical significance; additional measures such as the effect size might be needed for a holistic understanding of the intervention's impact.

Table 2. Comparison Pre and Post Education Scores

Characteristic	Description	p-value
Education score		
Pre- Education Score	56.1 ± 7.86	0.000
Post Education Score	77.5 ± 7.00	

Discussion

Our understanding of the potential impact of our community project, which aims to foster reproductive health education among teachers, is underpinned by an in-depth appraisal of our study's participants' demographic distribution. As reflected in Table 1, a considerable 58.33% of the study subjects are over 40 years old. This mature demographic segment plays a pivotal role in the pedagogical sphere due to their abundant teaching experience, especially when addressing complex health education topics like STI prevention – a correlation also observed by Liang et al. (2019). In addition to age, our study revealed a pronounced preponderance of female participants, accounting for 75% of the total. Potential reasons for this gender disparity, as well as the necessity for it to be considered within flexible and gender-sensitive curriculum development, are outlined by King et al. (2021). These authors highlight societal trends towards occupational gender segregation.

A significant proportion of these educators possess more than a decade of teaching experience. Consequently, the training modules were designed to leverage this deep-rooted pedagogical knowledge. Fivush et al. (2013) posit that seasoned educators can effectively integrate

reproductive health content into their existing curricula. Complementing this pedagogical proficiency is a dominant health-conscious behaviour among the educators, most notably their non-smoking tendencies. As Conserve et al. (2017) argue, such alignment with health-conscious behaviour creates a conducive environment for health education initiatives Ary et al.(2019). Our initiative aimed to achieve transformational outcomes by improving foundational knowledge and deploying an interactive instructive model filled with hands-on workshops and visual aids. This approach aligns with Heeren et al.'s (2013) assertion that educators serve as credible community figures capable of inspiring change. Due to their adeptness at navigating and imparting health knowledge through such engaging methods of instruction, educators effectively translate complex information into practical and influential pedagogy, thus enhancing community health as highlighted by Ufomata et al. (2020).

Despite some challenges – such as a stringent focus on teacher engagement, limited outreach, and cultural barriers – our educational model's ability to adapt and accommodate these circumstances has been tested and verified. An analysis combining these findings confirms that our community service activity has significant potential. The enrichment of educator knowledge and skills to address STI prevention and reproductive health emphasises the critical importance of community-oriented educational programs. They not only bolster the fight against STIs but also signify a broad commitment to public health.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the community service activity that transpired exhibited substantial achievement toward the pre-established field targets, most notably in augmenting the educators' proficiency in reproductive health topics. The adopted methodology—which integrated instruction manuals, interactive discussions, and the use of visual aids—aptly responded to the complexity of STI issues and catered to the need for effective sexual education. The impact of this activity extends beyond merely enhancing teachers' skills—it holds the potential to reduce STI prevalence by empowering educators as change agents for instructing younger generations. Based on current results, recommendations for future Community Engagement Activities include broadening the scope of participants by involving vulnerable groups and parents in educational programs, as well as adapting interactive and visual methods to strengthen societal understanding and engagement with pressing reproductive health issues.

Acknowledgement

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