



SEXUAL EDUCATION AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS AND STUDENTS IN THE DISTRICT OF MATUTUÍNE - MAPUTO, MOZAMBIQUE, 2020

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ABSTRACT

Comprehensive sexuality education is a curriculum – based process on how to approach sex education at school and beyond. It aims to equip children and teenagers with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, which allow them to develop a holistic view of sexuality (UNFPA, 2015), of which is not the case everywhere.

The study has aimed to analyze the approach of Sexual Education among students and teachers within the Secondary Schools of the District of Matutuine.

The thematic contents taught, activities being developed, the training of teachers, the importance of teaching sex education and the forms of prevention were accurately analyzed. In 2020, the data was collected, through interviews with (10) teachers and (26) students. The semi-structured interview guide was used for this purpose. Participants were included in using non-probabilistic sampling for convenience. As a result, (06) teachers and (13) students have reported for having heard about sexual education for the first time at school; (08) teacher and (21) students referred that as an important topic looking at the preventive aspects; (10) teachers and (25) students had spoken about the use of condoms, contraceptive methods and abstinence; about activities (06) teachers mentioned lectures and the other (14) have said that they were unaware of the activities developed and lastly, (09) teachers have said that they were not trained to teach these kind of topics.

Discussion: Ribeiro (2004) as cited in Rodrigues, (2017), refers that one of the problems to implement sexual education programs in schools is the teachers' lack of preparation. However, in addition to being unprepared, they have preconceived, thoughtless values and what can make the practice disastrous. The lack of preparation of teachers for carrying out activities related to sexual education is a factor that deserves reflection.

It is concluded that sex education at school is still far from what is desired, which contributes to inequality in access to information and perpetuates risk behaviors.

KEYWORDS : Sexual Education, Sexuality, Young People.

INTRODUCTION

The right to sexual and reproductive health is currently recognized and constitutes a historic achievement, for citizenship and human rights, as these include the exercise of experiencing sexuality without constraint, voluntary motherhood and self-decided contraception (Telo, 2018).

Sexual education is a constant and a high quality teaching process at different ages of adulthood, and it allows the individual to develop autonomy in issues related to the expression of sexuality. Finding in schools an appropriate place for acquiring knowledge on this topic.

Complications related to sexual health could be avoided through the spread of knowledge and appropriate guidance by educators and teachers in schools, which would allow the empowerment of adolescents with secure information that would lead them to knowledge development, age-appropriate attitudes and skills (UNAIDS, 2018).

According to UNFPA (2013), for about 7.3 million children under the age of 18 years give birth in most developing countries. In sub-Saharan Africa, the region which Mozambique belongs, an increase in child births for girls under the age of 15 years in the next 17 years is to be expected, with the number of mothers under the age of 15 years expected to double by 2030, matching to the south from Asia.

Sex education is certainly a great strategy to prevent problems related to the development of sexuality in adolescence, but in most places the school still has difficulties in fulfilling its role.

These questions guided the need to develop this study, which will allow a better understanding of how sexuality education topics are taught in Secondary Schools, the existence of programs which contribute to the empowerment of

adolescents and young people with information that allows them to make decisions and make informed choices in relation to sexuality.

The study intends to bring an awakening to the need of preparing the agents involved in these themes, create an interest in the perspective of rethinking this theme in a different way and bring a reflection in relation to the type of training provided to young people.

Methodology

The study carried out in Matutuine District, located geographically in Maputo Province. A descriptive cross-sectional study with a qualitative approach was conducted, with the aim of analyzing the sexual education approach among students and teachers of Matutuine Secondary Schools, in the last quarter of 2020.

The study population was intentionally defined, due to its geographical location, where most schools are distant from the health center, because they are a border region with a greater risk of vulnerability and early onset of sexual activity. Consisted of (10) teachers aged between 27 and 47 years and (25) students aged between 15 and 20 years, a defined sample observing the saturation criterion that, according to Minayo (2010), in qualitative studies discards the use of sample calculation, therefore, it is enough that the qualitative objectives are answered satisfactorily.

The non-probabilistic sampling technique for convenience and inclusion criteria was used to select the participants. Students under the age 18, presented parental consent to participate in the study.

Study variables: Knowledge of Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH), Prevention knowledge in sexual education, lessons learned about Sexual education, activities carried out at

school, existence of a counseling corner (training room), Sexual education training, Dialogue with parents.

The interview technique was used and 2 semi- structured interview guides were designed for teachers and students.

Data collection procedures

The interviews were conducted with the approval of the protocol by the Institutional Bioethics Committee for Health at ISCISA, authorization of the Provincial Directorate, and District of education and end of School Directors. 05 students from different classes and 2 teachers who were available, were to be interviewed per day, thus, 2 visits into schools were to be planned until saturation levels were reached. The responses were transcribed into a form prepared for this purpose, which was previously coded.

Data analysis and processing

The collected data was interpreted and analyzed through the use of descriptions and narratives, through content analysis according to Bardim (2009), which organizes the stages of the analysis in three phases:

1. The pre-analysis that consists of an exhaustive reading of the material collected;
2. The exploration of the material that consists in perceiving and organizing the speech and transform the data into information;
3. The inference or interpretation of the results.

Ethical considerations

The study was submitted to the institutional bioethics committee of ISCISA for consideration and approval.

The participants signed the informed consent form, which contained the title and objectives of the study and procedures. They were explained about the absence of risks and that there were no benefits as part of the study. Were guaranteed autonomy, privacy and confidentiality. The participants were given the opportunity to clarify doubts.

Limitation Study

The lack of funding for research was the main limitation, since due to the importance of the theme it was necessary to bring a reality that reflects the current situation of secondary schools, and allow to make inferences.

Participant Profile

Teachers aged between 27 and 48 years, whom (09) were graduates and (01) Middle level of education. (05) were married, (03) - live in marital union and (03) are single; being (09) male and (01) female.

The students were in the age group between 15 and 20 years of which: 2 - 20 years; 01 - 19 years; 09-18 years; 07 - 15 years; 06-17 years.

Most of the students interviewed were in the 10th and 12th Grade and all respondents (26) were single, 10 males and 16 females.

Regarding the place where they heard about sexual education

Of the (10) teachers interviewed, (06) reported having heard about sex education for the first time at school and (04) heard in the media.

However, among students, there were similar responses, where most (13) said they heard about at school, (03) they heard at the health unit; (02) listened with friends; (02) at home and (01) in the Biz generation.

These results are in agreement with those of Furlanetto et

al.,(2018), when he says that the school is understood as the place, which has the social function, responsible for the intellectual, physical, social and cultural development of individuals.

For, sexuality is expressed at all stages of student development, and its improvement depends on the characteristics of teachers and the different models of family and school learning. The complexity of relationships, perceptions, cultural and social patterns and the world view makes sex education a necessity.

In this context, it is necessary to understand the conditions and capacities of the main actors in the transmission of information related to this topic, as there is the possibility of using appropriate means and techniques, which allow the construction of knowledge for the adoption of safe behaviors.

According to Bryon (2017) as cited in Walling et al., (2019), the media offer a series of opportunities, but also risks in relation to sexual health for young people.

As it is a multidimensional and multifaceted theme, there is a need for these to be approached in a systematic way in the classroom, a favorable environment to expose and clarify doubts.

Importance of teaching sex education in schools.

Regarding the importance of teaching sex education, the teachers interviewed in the majority (08) mentioned that it is important to prevent early pregnancy, (02) said that it is important for children's self-knowledge:

"It helps to prevent premature pregnancy, because it can lead to dropping out of classes and preventing disease" E1;

Of the 26 students interviewed, 17 reported that sex education allows students to have tools to protect themselves, (09) mentioned the fact that this topic allows them to have knowledge to manage their lives in a better form.

"It is important, as it helps to prepare people on preventing premature pregnancies, premature marriages and so forth". A8

"Yes, it is important because it helps to prevent diseases and early pregnancy as well". A11

These results corroborate with Telo & Witt (2018) who state that sex education is important because it allows a space for dialogue of various health contents, observing issues related to gender, sexuality, autonomy and freedom, in addition to the biomedical model. And it allows the construction of non-discriminatory practices that guarantee the promotion, protection of the exercise of sexuality and reproduction as a right.

Thus, there is a work to be done, in order to raise the awareness of the main players in this topic, about the importance of it, since the fact that there are informal forms of learning, as they are not systematized and it does not guarantee the observance of the rights to knowledge.

Most students understand the importance of this theme for their lives, although many mention the preventive aspects related to STD's and early pregnancy, due to the knowledge to which they have been exposed until then.

However, according to UNESCO (2018), "Comprehensive Sexual Education (CSE) is a teaching and learning process based on the curriculum, on cognitive, emotional, physical and social aspects of sexuality. It aims to equip children and

young people with knowledge, skills, attitudes that lead them to take care of their health, well-being and dignity, to develop social and sexual respect, considering how their choices affect their well-being and that of others, giving perception and duty to defend their rights during their lifetime”.

Forms of prevention learned in the context of sex education

Regarding to the forms of prevention taught, the (10) teachers interviewed mentioned abstinence, use of contraceptive methods and condoms.

Of the 26 students interviewed, 25 reported that the forms of prevention in sexual education learned were the use of male contraceptive methods and condoms and only 02 mentioned abstinence and postponed the relationship until later.

"Use of contraceptive methods, abstinence". A1;

According to Vieira & Matsukura, (2017), refers that sex education nowadays goes beyond the biological character, allowing its understanding as a practice combined with physical and mental health, and it does not address sexuality as a social and historical construction, including discussions about roles and gender identity that are the contents proposed in the context of comprehensive sexual education.

This understanding leads us to question what is actually transmitted in schools, taking into consideration with the aspects related to the essence of sex education. It is important that preventive aspects are to be discussed also in relation to gender, gender-based violence among other topics related to sex education.

Activities developed at school in the context of Sexual education

Most of the teachers (06) said that activities such as lectures are developed, (02) said that they had not heard anything about it, (01) said that the only information about certain measures had been passed on and that they had only conversations with the students.

"I haven't heard of anything in that context, yet." E9

Among the (26) students, (14) said that they were unaware of the existence of these activities, (05) had said that they had received a lecture from the health personnel, (06) had reported that the biology teacher had spoken and (01) had just told us to prevent ourselves.

"There is no activity" A7

These responses corroborate with Furlanetto et al., (2018), who says that sexual and reproductive health activities, developed at the school are characterized by temporary interventions, carried out by professionals who do not belong to the school staff. These activities affect only a part of the school population.

The lack of consistent, clear and objective activities is a loss of opportunity for the formation of a society with men and women more aware of their actions and responsible for their own health.

According to Furlanetto et al., (2018), activities can be carried out, such as workshops for greater interaction between participants and collective construction of knowledge; conversations with students, reading children's books, writing plays; dynamics group and recreational activities.

There is no clarity in the type of activities carried out by schools. However, because the school is a formal institution, it is understood that there should be a clear orientation program for teachers and students.

Sex education topics addressed during classes

Among teachers, (07) mentioned that they address topics related to the prevention of diseases and early pregnancies, (01) said that they have spoken informally and (02) said that there were no topics.

"We speak informally, there is no specific plan, we just make comments, because we have pregnant teenagers that lead us to focus on the subject" E7;

(19) Students reported having learned about the prevention of diseases and early pregnancy, the rest (07) mentioned that they had learned about sex, sexual rape, HIV care and the menstrual cycle.

"Its prevention, condom use during sexual intercourse." 17.

The lack of knowledge in this area has negative implications for decision making and poorly informed, correct and safe source of choices. Although knowledge alone does not guarantee behavior modification, it is an important requirement for preventing risky behaviors. Young people with knowledge demonstrate the ability to ask for help and show more preventive behaviors (Vilar et al., 2017).

The difference in responses between teachers and students may be indicative by the lack of clarity about the different topics covered in this area. Since this subject is approached as a cross-cutting theme, each teacher mentions it according to their experience, learning, in the remaining time of the class, there are among other aspects that may contribute to this theme not being taught, thus perpetuating the factor's risk in this context.

Preparation of teachers to teach classes on Sexual Education

Of the 09 interviewees said that they did not have any training to deal with content related to sex education and 01 said that he had had.

E5: I had no training, just personal experiences in different classes.

According to Ribeiro (2002) as cited in Rodrigues, (2017) teacher training is a barrier that needs to be urgently reviewed. Because, the teacher is faced with material difficulties that reduce his possibilities of action, inadequate working conditions, deficient material resources and lack of didactic material, among others.

The lack of preparation, can lead them to situations of discrimination, aggravating the evolution of pedagogical proposals that are based on religions, hygienic and heteronormative beliefs. The lack of sexuality training can lead to the use of pedagogical strategies that can increase the risk of reprehensible, punitive and discriminatory behaviors (Furlanetto et al., 2018).

The lack of preparation of teachers, contributes to the existence of immense difficulties in approaching these contents, some teachers may simply not talk about the theme, because the fact of being a cross-cutting theme, some may not feel the responsibility of addresses them.

Role of parents and guardians in sex education

The majority (12) students reported that they have discussed the matter to their parents about issues related to prevention and (06) of the students communicate with friends and colleagues whereas others have not discussed about it with anyone.

"I talk to my mother. She tells me to avoid certain diseases and not have children early". A21:

"I don't talk to anyone." A24

The initial responsibility for talking about sexuality rests with the family because it is a closer relationship with the children, being able to deal with matters related informally, and the later school would be the complement to systematize all the acquired knowledge (Rodrigues, 2017).

It is important for parents to talk to their children, which indicates that there is this concern in their midst, this preoccupation should transcend the biological, so that the few moments of conversation, could be transformed into true sex education classes. But this is hardly because parents are often unprepared as well.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion reflected in this research is that the sexual education approach in the schools visited is precarious, if not non-existent. Teachers are not prepared with these topics, which is why they are unlikely to address it. More information passed on to students is linked to biological, preventive issues, and is addressed by professionals who are not from the school. The students did not present solid knowledge on these themes despite their age group.

Schools do not have clear programs or plans for cross-cutting themes. Appropriate services or spaces are not offered for students to develop knowledge, positive attitudes in order to eliminate risky behaviors among young people. Schools are therefore recommended by UNESCO for what is proposed to be comprehensive in sexuality education.

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