

Attitudes of parents, school teachers and school nurses towards school-based comprehensive sexuality education programs in Oman

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Background: School-based comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) programs play an important role in reducing adolescents' sexual risk behaviour and promoting health and well-being. There is limited evidence regarding the attitudes of parents, school teachers and school nurses toward the implementation of school-based CSE programs in Islamic cultural settings, including Middle Eastern countries.

Aim: Examine the attitudes of Omani parents, school teachers and school nurses regarding school-based CSE programs.

Methods: A mixed-method was applied in this study.

Phase one: Parents, school teachers and school nurses were invited from 15 urban public pre-secondary schools to participate in seven focus group discussions and six face-to-face in-depth individual interviews.



Phase two: A convenience sample of 250 parents of children aged 12–14 years (grades 7–9) at two urban public pre-secondary schools, completed a paper-based self-administered questionnaire.



Reference:

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Tabatabaie, A. (2015). Constructing the ideal Muslim sexual subject: problematics of school-based sex education in Iran. *Sex Education*, 15(2), 204-216. doi:10.1080/14681811.2014.992066

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2018). *International technical guidance on sexuality education: An evidence-informed approach*. Retrieved from. http://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/ITGSE_en.pdf

Most parents, school teachers and school nurses supported a comprehensive age-appropriate CSE curriculum that addresses various CSE topics.

They believed that the provision of school-based CSE programs can help to improve adolescent sexual health knowledge and promote adolescent sexual and reproductive health and well-being (prevention of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and child sexual abuse).

Results

They recommended that CSE programs should be aligned with Islamic beliefs and delivered by qualified educators.

They reported that there is a current lack of scientific knowledge to conduct CSE programs in Omani schools and therefore, there is a need for CSE training.

Conclusion: The study findings provide implications for future efforts to change policy and foster implementing school-based CSE programs for adolescents. The strong support for CSE programs can facilitate education policy, CSE curriculum decision-makers and school healthcare-providers in Oman, other Middle Eastern countries, and countries with Muslim immigrant populations.