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Increasing the Level of Awareness on Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) of Grade 12 Students through #I am un(safe) Campaign

Samboy D. Niala

Tagkawayan National High School

samboy.niala@deped.gov.ph

Abstract: Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) stands out as a crucial health concern, particularly for young adults. Achieving healthy lives and promoting well-being across all age groups aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals, which also emphasize a commitment to ending the AIDS epidemic. The researcher conducted this study at Tagkawayan National High School to elevate Grade 12 students' awareness of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) through the #Iam(un)safe Campaign. Utilizing a quasi-experimental design, the researcher employed pre-tests and post-tests to gauge students' awareness levels. Seventy-five students were purposively selected as respondents, and the pre-test revealed a low awareness level, especially regarding the causes of STIs. To address this, the #Iamunsafe campaign was implemented, including virtual conferences with invited health professionals. Post-tests showed a significant increase in awareness levels, indicating the campaign's effectiveness. Consequently, Tagkawayan National High School should integrate an action plan for all enrolled students and incorporate the campaign into the school's Continuous Improvement Plan. Additionally, endorsing the program to Local Government Units would facilitate assistance from the Rural Health Unit of Tagkawayan in enhancing community awareness, even amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: AIDS; awareness; health; online campaign; Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

People have experienced job losses and loss of life due to the Coronavirus Infectious Diseases. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted businesses, finances, and, especially, our physical and mental health. Sexual activities are prevalent during this pandemic, but unplanned actions may lead to diseases. Raising awareness about these causes can contribute to overcoming this problem. According to the World Health Organization (2020), over one million STIs are acquired daily, with 2020 seeing an estimated 374 million new infections, including chlamydia (129 million), gonorrhea (82 million), syphilis (7.1 million), and trichomoniasis (156 million). More than 490 million people

were estimated to have genital HSV (herpes) infection in 2016, and approximately 300 million women have an HPV infection, the primary cause of cervical cancer. An estimated 296 million people are living with chronic hepatitis B globally, both of which are preventable with vaccination.

Sexually Transmitted Infections in the Philippines remain a public health problem, affecting both men and women. Regular screening for STI prevention and detection is crucial for sexually active individuals (Makati Medical Center, 2021). According to the Department of Health (2020), Region IV-A CALABARZON ranks second in the Philippines for the highest cases of Human Immunodeficiency Virus, one of the most sexually transmitted diseases. With youth being curious and eager to explore life, a lack of moral and education may worsen their lives. Republic Act No. 8504 mandates the integration of instruction on the causes,



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transmission modes, and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases in schools at various levels. Education programs about STDs, including types, transmission modes, prevention methods, and the religious role of STDs, should be prioritized in secondary schools to encourage premarital screenings (Malki, 2014).

The researcher, having previously focused on HIV and AIDS awareness, undertook this study to increase awareness of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) among Grade 12 students, employing the "I am (un)safe campaign." Increasing awareness aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals' purpose, aiming to prevent needless suffering from preventable diseases by enhancing the overall health of a country's population.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

The study would like to increase the awareness on Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) of Grade 12 Students through the use of I am (un)safe campaign. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of awareness on Sexually Transmitted Infections STIs of Grade 12 students before and after the use of #Iam(un)safe campaign?
2. Is there a significant difference on the level of awareness on Sexually Transmitted Infections STIs of Grade 12 Students before and after the use I am (un)safe campaign?
3. What implications can be gained to increase the level of awareness on Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) of Grade 12 Students before and after the use I am (un)safe online campaign?

2. METHODOLOGY

A quantitative approach employing descriptive research was utilized in this study, using pre-test and post-test assessments to determine the level of awareness of Sexually Transmitted Diseases among Grade 12 students. The study was conducted at Tagkawayan National High School, situated in Barangay Munting Parang Tagkawayan, Quezon. Grade 12 students were chosen due to their age appropriateness for

addressing the topic. Cluster sampling was employed, resulting in a sample of sixty (60) students, distributed equally among HUMSS, ABM, and STEM strands.

The researcher meticulously collected information on the specific topic, summarizing related studies based on findings, conclusions, and recommendations from electronic references. The instrument used was adopted from Turley, Raymond, PA-C, Watson, Renee, MSN, RN, and Zingman, Barry S, MD, and further developed by the researcher. Both pre-test and post-test assessments were administered through an online platform using Google Forms.

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the school head, and approval from both parents and students was secured before administering the questionnaire and allowing students to attend virtual conferences.

Scaling on the level of Awareness was used to determine the level of awareness of Grade 12 students.

RANGE	DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS
81-100	High Level of awareness
61-80	Moderate Level of awareness
41-60	Somewhat Aware
21-40	Low Level of Awareness
1-20	Not at all Aware

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1

Pre-test and Post-test results on the level of awareness on Sexually Transmitted Diseases of Grade 12 Students before and after the implementation of I am (un)safe online campaign.

Grade level	No. of Items	No. of Students	Pretest MPS	Posttest MPS	Difference
12	10	75	26.50	92	65.5

Table 1 displays the pre-test and post-test results of the 10-item test conducted by the researcher for Grade 12 students before and after the implementation of the "I am (un)safe" online campaign. The pre-test revealed a Mean Percentage Score of 26.50, categorized as Low Level of Awareness, while the post-test showed a Mean Percentage



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Score of 92, categorized as High Level of Awareness, resulting in a significant difference of 65.5. This indicates that the implementation of the Educational Pamphlet and Online Campaign effectively increased students' awareness of STDs.

Therefore, the recommendation provided by Caslangan et al. (2018) in their study on the Level of Awareness of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) offers a viable solution, especially through the implementation of a project with the support of school administrations.

Table 2

Results on the computation of z-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means

	Variable 1	Variable 2
Mean	2.65	9.2
Known Variance	1.5	0.8
Observations	75	75
Hypothesized Mean Difference	6.55	
z	-74.7872	
z Critical two-tail	1.96	

Table 2 shows the results on the computation of z-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means. The mean percentage of pre-test is 2.65 and the post-test resulted to 9.2 with a difference result of 6.55. The critical value at 0.05 level of significance for a two-tailed test is 1.96. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected because the resulting z-test is higher than the critical value. There is significant difference in the mean of Grade 12 respondents before and after the implementation of I am (un)safe campaign. The recommendation of Shinde et al. (2016) proved that information, education and communication are effective tools that should be disseminated as campaign at school for preventing and protecting adolescents from the STIs.

The implementation of online conferences have significant effect to increase the level of awareness on Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) of Grade 12 students. It proved that students needed a more detailed understanding of the disease with appropriate health education and awareness programs (Alhasawi et al. 2019).

4. CONCLUSIONS

The pre-assessment indicated a low level of awareness among the students. However, after the implementation of the online campaign, the students demonstrated a high level of awareness in their post-assessment. Therefore, online conferences played a crucial role in increasing students' awareness of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STDs).

The online campaign/conference significantly influenced the awareness of Grade 12 students regarding Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs). Hence, effective communication and education are valuable tools for preventing STDs.

The support of school administrators and health professionals is essential to enhance students' awareness, not only of STDs but also of other specific issues. Furthermore, collaboration between educational and medical institutions can potentially reduce stigma. Students should be encouraged to consult health professionals without hesitation for their protection.

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