



Knowledge of Reproductive Health to Assess Father's Role in Mijen Sub-District

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Background: The important role of fathers on children's growth and development process is the same as mother's role. This research aimed to describe the knowledge of fathers on reproductive health to support the education for early childhood. *Method:* The study has been done using quantitative method. Data were collected from 100 fathers of children that were chosen by stratified random sampling. Data were analyzed descriptively. *Results:* Most fathers had high school education level and had lack of knowledge on reproductive health. Results showed that 67% of them did not know about reproductive health definition even though they could differ between health reproductive organ of males (75%) and females (81%). Talking about reproductive health was taboo and embarrassing (88%). They believed that their children would be able to know about reproductive health at the right time and do not need those knowledge at their early age. The information of reproductive health was obtained mostly from television (50%), and only 1% respondents from internet. *Conclusion:* The knowledge among fathers should be increased by education and socialization to enhance father's role on supporting reproductive health education at the early childhood.

Keywords: Early Age, Reproductive Health, Father's Role.

1. INTRODUCTION

The problems of sexual abuse on children in Indonesia has attracted more government attention, which was shown by policy on woman and child in some provinces. Based on data of the commission for the victims protection of gender-based violence and child of Central Java, the incidence of sexual abuse on children in 2012 was 500 victims, in 2013 was 466 and increased in 2014 to 773 victims. Lewis' study showed that men frequently appear to interact to their children less sensitively than mothers.¹ McAdoo found that fathers also played role in the family process relating to child growth and development.^{2,3}

Father-child attachment is a second relevant dimension of fathering infancy and childhood. Fathers are capable of such sensitivity but do it less often. Father involvement and closeness to their children are as important as in many adolescent studies even more important than mother involvement for children's well-being.⁴ A father in home can be a strong protection factor for children. Mothers are more likely to abuse or neglect their children than fathers because they bear a larger share of parenting responsibilities in two-parent families and also large percentage of families today are headed by mothers.⁵ Father involvement in

parenting is very important part today, as the number of child sexual abuse gradually increases.

Regarding the important role of father's on child growth and development, this research aimed to describe the knowledge of fathers on reproductive health to support the education for early childhood.

2. METHOD

Cross-sectional data collection was used to understand the knowledge of fathers on early reproductive health education. In order to be eligible for this research, participants must be: (1) have at least a child with age less than 9 years old; (2) able to read and answer the questionnaire.

Population in this research was fathers in Mijen sub-district. Sample calculated with Lemeshow formula with precision expected $\pm 5\%$ was 100 fathers. Participants were recruited by stratified random sampling. Data has been analyzed to describe the role of participants.

Questionnaire validity and reliability had been tested on 30 fathers in Semarang city before data collection was conducted. Questionnaire contained an informed consent to check the agreement of respondents to fill the questionnaire. This study had no conflict of interest proved by ethical clearance of Faculty of Public Health Diponegoro University.

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Table I. Demographics (N = 100).

	%	N
Age, years		
21–26	26	26
37–47	48	48
48–62	26	26
Education		
Primary	28	28
Secondary	35	35
High	37	37
Occupation		
Unemployed	5	5
Farmer	48	48
Entrepreneur	47	47

3. RESULTS

The study had 100 participants. Forty eight participants (48%) were 37–47 years old. 37 (37%) were completed high school. Almost half of the participants (48%) were farmer. Table I presents the demographics of the participants.

Fifty percent respondents reported that they gained reproductive health information from television. Meanwhile, 8% respondents had no access information for reproductive health education. Table II presents the source of information of the study participants.

Reproductive health knowledge of fathers was in low category, that 67% never know the reproductive health definition. 77% of them agreed that reproductive health education should be socialized in mass media.

Despite 88% of participants realized that discussing reproductive health with children was taboo and embarrassing, 90% of respondent preferred to not discuss reproductive health in parenting. It should be discussed at school with the teacher. They believed that teacher had a better knowledge than fathers. They also perceived it as something related to home hygiene and physical health in general. However, they mentioned that reproductive health has something to do with genital organs, delivery, and mother and children' health.

They could not mention human reproductive organs. Most of them were failed to name both male reproductive organs, like testicles, penis and vas deferens, and female reproductive organs that cover breasts, vagina, womb, and fallopian tube. Instead, they used special local terms to refer to those organs, like "kacok" or "bayem (spinach)" for vagina, "burung (bird)" or "titi" for penis. Nevertheless, 94% respondents agreed that it was important to keep their children's reproductive organs healthy by cleansing the genitals with soap, replacing full diapers, changing underpants to avoid moisture and having healthy diet.

In connection to parents' roles, many fathers believe that they should take part in introducing their children to reproductive organs therefore they will understand the functions of those organs and they will be able to protect those organs. Children

Table II. Sources of information (N = 100).

	%	N
No sources	8	8
Radio	29	29
Television	50	50
Internet	13	13

Table III. Reproductive health questions (N = 100).

Questions	Answer	% (%)
Reproductive health definition	Something to do with genital organs, delivery, and mother and children's health.	67
Reproductive organs	Special local terms to refer to those organs, like "kacok" or "bayem (spinach)" for vagina, "burung (bird)" or "titi" for penis	95
Reproductive organs healthy	By cleansing the genitals with soap, replacing full diapers, changing underpants to avoid moisture and having healthy eating pattern	94
Talking about reproductive organs	Taboo and embarrassing in parenting,	88
Term of sex education	Negatively conotative, sound more like teaching children to have sexual relationship	70
Reproductive health education	They do not know the right time to teach the reproductive health	83
	They do not know what exactly the material of reproductive health to teach to their children	68
	They believe that by that age children are intellectually ready to grasp that knowledge	85
	Teachers at school and books are reliable source of information	90

should know that those reproductive organs are supposed to be out of people's touch, although that information is still handled by mothers.

Most of parents did not know the appropriate time to teach those knowledge to children (83%) and what information that they should deliver to their children (68%). They still believe that their children will know by themselves about it when they grow up.

4. DISCUSSION

Father plays as a protective factor to their children and take the same role like a mother on growing and developing their children. A child with a father, who nurture and take a significant responsibility for basic early childcare, are significantly less likely to get sexual abuse.⁵ Early reproductive health education is important for children growth and development. Magnani research showed that knowledge was a protection factor on youth to get sexual abuse related to HIV infection.⁶

Related to Jaffer research, it showed that only half of the adult population who understand that the changes at puberty of their own sex, in fact it is even fewer who know the changes in their opposite gender.⁷ It can be predicted that if father's knowledge and the role on educating children are low, the number of sexual abuse might increase. Ekasari's study showed that 51% adolescents have poor communication and information pattern with their father regarding reproductive health.⁸ It shows that the family role is very important to educate children about reproductive health in order to prevent sexual abuse that can happen outside family.

Wellings's research showed that education was also control factors on sexual abuse.⁹ By increasing this role toward their child at the early age, reproductive health education are expected to prevent themselves from any sexual abuse phase. The reproductive health education should offer an accurate and comprehensive information while the parents build skills for negotiating sexual behaviors.¹⁰

Research in Tanzania showed that the parents admitted that they have a strong influence on their children's health, but they failed in carrying out these responsibilities. Parents also realized the impact of risky sexual behavior. They required knowledge and skills related to parenting so they can overcome this effect through either family or community-based approach.¹¹ A results of the other study by Indanah confirmed that there was a significant relationship between parenting parents with the incidence of sexual abuse among school children, with p value 0,003.¹²

5. CONCLUSION

Father's role on their early age children regarding reproductive health education to their children is low. The knowledge of father on reproductive health is low. It needs father empowerment to make them capable for reproductive health education on their children.

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