

Abstract for 2008 PAA meeting

Title: From Pilot to Scale-up: Implementing a Community-based STD/AIDS Education Program among Young Adults through Existing Family Planning Service Network in Kunshan County, Eastern China

Key words: Community, Young adult, STD/AIDS prevention

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Background: The STD/AIDS epidemic experienced a widespread increase among young adults in Eastern China. We implemented a community-based STD/AIDS educational program to reach both local and migrant young adults through existing family planning service network, and evaluated the effects of the program on their STD/AIDS related knowledge, attitudes and sexual behaviors.

Method: The program consisted of three phases. The first pilot education phase was conducted among 748 married local young adults recruited in two townships, one experiment and one control, with a comprehensive 12-month STD/AIDS educational intervention carried by community family planning workers in the experimental community. The second pilot education phase was conducted among 1845 unmarried migrant young adults recruited in six township factories, three experiments and three controls, with another 12-month STD/AIDS educational intervention carried by peer educators in the experimental factories. 50 unmarried young adults among the study subjects in the experimental factories were selected and trained as peer educators by community family planning workers. A baseline survey, educational intervention and follow-up survey were conducted in these two pilot studies respectively. The third education phase was a three-year scaling-up intervention among all young adults of the county by applying the innovative models developed in the previous two pilot studies. The effects of the program were evaluated by (1) comparing the results of survey before and after the intervention in both experimental and control group in the pilot studies; and (2) comparing the results of survey before and after the intervention in the scaling-up study.

Results: In the pilot studies, the experimental groups significantly improved their knowledge, attitudes and sexual behaviors related to STD/AIDS, following the intervention respectively. Experimental subjects reporting condom use during the last episode of sexual intercourse from 9% at baseline to 14% at follow-up ($P<0.05$) among married young adults and from 40% at baseline to 66% at follow-up ($P<0.05$) among unmarried young adults who were sexually active. No such changes occurred among control subjects. In the scaling-up study for all young adults of the county, the post-intervention survey also showed a significant improvement of KAPB related to STD/AIDS prevention as the pilot studies did, particularly a similar significant increase of condom use among unmarried young adults who were sexually active.

Lesson Learned: This study demonstrated the feasibility of integrating STD/AIDS educational intervention into China's family planning services, and suggested that the community-based STD/AIDS program for promoting condom use among young adults can also be successfully implemented through existing family planning service network in countries with a similar culture.