

Abstract

The use of behavioral change communication has been widely known as an important strategy to influence sexual behavioral change among secondary school students. BCC involves the use of communication approaches and tools to empower young people with skills and capabilities to enable them promote and manage their own health and development. Besides fostering positive sexual behavior among young people, BCC is a method of increasing knowledge about sexual behavior and influencing adoption of positive sexual attitudes among students. However, it has not been certain whether BCC can also trigger risky sexual behavior and initiation of sexual intercourse when secondary school students are exposed to sexual content. Therefore, the purpose this study was to assess the role of BCC on the sexual behavior of secondary school students.

A descriptive cross-sectional study was therefore carried out involving 240 students of Muyenga high school which school was selected using simple random sampling. Data was collected on the type of sexual messages exposed to students and sexual behaviors of students using interviewer administered questionnaires. The data was then analyzed automatically using a computer program (SPSS version 16). The results of the study showed that students are exposed to different sorts of sexual information including sex and love stories, pornography, family planning and HIV/AIDS prevention. The sexual behaviors of students included having sexual intercourse, kissing, erotic touching and masturbation. Exposure to BCC was associated with different sexual behaviors among students. The results showed that 34% of the students obtained their BBC information from teachers, 21% used the mass media, 16% got information from health workers, 15% got information for their parents and 14% of the students reported to get information from peers and friends. And that 56% of the students preferred the parents and guardians as their main source of BCC information, 23% preferred teachers, 10% preferred peers and friends, 23% preferred teachers, 2% preferred mass media while 9% preferred health workers.

In conclusion, the study revealed that all students who participated in the study had been exposed to sexual content and had had BCC sessions. The number of students engaged in different sexual behaviors was high. BCC messages that contain sexual content such as pornography, and sex and love stories can trigger risky sexual behavior among students. The mass media was the most popular source of sexual information but students preferred parents as a main source of sexual information because students believed that parents are more confidential than other sources of BCC messages. Therefore, school administrations and parents should restrict the use of literature containing sexual content especially pornography. Parents should initiate sex education at home since they are more trusted as a confidential source of sex information.