



Characteristics of Sexual Behavior and Associated Factors Among Adolescents in Kota Tengah Subdistrict

Siti Maryam L.Z Ngabito* ¹, Nurbaiti ²

¹Departement of Health Promotion, Faculty of Engineering and Health Sciences,
Bina Taruna Gorontalo University

²Polytechnic Kesdam VI Banjarmasin, Indonesia

**Author's Email Correspondence (*): maryamngabito09@gmail.com
082290499655**

ABSTRACT

Forms of sexual behavior such as premarital sex are one of the causes of adolescents vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. HIV/AIDS cases in 2020 in Gorontalo Province in adolescents 15-24 years old amounted to 30%. The purpose of the study was to obtain an overview of the determinants of sexual behavior in adolescents in Gorontalo Central City District. Descriptive survey research with a population of 1,977 adolescents (15-18 years old) and a sample of 333 people using purposive sampling technique and univariate data analysis. The results showed that out of 333 respondents, 111 respondents (33.3%) had severe sexual behavior and 222 respondents (66.7%) had mild sexual behavior. The forms of sexual behavior that have been carried out by respondents are dating 62.8%, fantasizing sex 31.8%, holding hands 65.2%, kissing cheeks and foreheads 28.5%, hugging 31.5%, kissing lips 12.9%, fingering sensitive areas 10.5%, petting 4.2% and having sexual intercourse 2.1%. The results of the two-variable analysis showed that the majority of severe sexual behavior was found in adolescents with a lack of knowledge 60.0%, in adolescents with access to a lot of positive information media 38.1%, in adolescents who had high-risk leisure activities 92.9% and in adolescents who were exposed to pornography 52.0%. It is expected that adolescents fill their spare time for more useful things, and this research can be a reference for the Central City District government and parents in fostering adolescents.

Keywords: Adolescents; Sexual behavior; Reproductive health

Published by:

Tadulako University

Address:

Jl. Soekarno Hatta KM 9. Kota Palu, Sulawesi
Tengah, Indonesia.

Phone: +6282197505707

Email: preventifjournal.fkm@gmail.com

Article history :

Received : 27 05 2025

Received in revised form : 12 06 2025

Accepted : 28 08 2025

Available online : 31 08 2025

licensed by Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.



INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is known as the critical period when an individual develops into adulthood. Globally, engagement in sexual behaviors by adolescents aged 10-19 years and 15-24 years is a public health concern. Early onset of sexual activity, unprotected sex, sex in exchange for money or other benefits, sex with multiple partners or sex with older partners are risky sexual behaviors that increase their risk of HIV/AIDS or other sexually transmitted infections (IMS) in addition to unplanned pregnancy ⁽¹⁾ ⁽²⁾.

All actions driven by sexual desire that are carried out together with the opposite sex or the same sex are sexual behaviors ranging from holding hands, kissing, hugging to having sexual intercourse ⁽³⁾. The Youth Risk Behaviour Survey in 2021 shows that the percentage of high school students in the United States who have had sex is 30% and 11% of high school students experience sexual violence. Meanwhile, in Asia, 11% of high school students have had sex and 6% have experienced sexual violence, namely high school students forced by anyone to do sexual things including kissing, touching or being physically forced to have sexual intercourse when they don't want to ⁽⁴⁾.

Data from the 2017 Indonesian Demographic Health Survey shows that 8% of men and 2% of unmarried women aged 15-24 years have had sexual intercourse, this trend has increased compared to the 2012 IDHS data, which was 8% of men and 1% of women who had sexual intercourse ⁽⁵⁾. Meanwhile, data from Communicable Disease Control, the accumulated number of HIV / AIDS cases from 2001 - October 2020 was 609 cases, Gorontalo City had the highest number of cases in Gorontalo Province with 210 cases (34.5%) and based on the address shows the Central City Subdistrict with the highest number of cases, namely in 2018 by 19.9% cases, in 2019 by 20.3% and in 2020 by 20% cases, the distribution of HIV / AIDS cases in 2020 based on age groups was reported in adolescents aged 15-19 years by 2% of cases and adolescents aged 20-24 years by 25% ⁽⁶⁾.

Based on preliminary studies on 10 teenagers, 100% of teenagers have dated, held hands and have never had sexual intercourse, 50% have hugged, 60% have kissed and 30% have touched their partner's sensitive areas. Of the 10 adolescents, 70% had gone to karaoke places with their partners, 60% had been exposed to pornography, 70% had never received information on reproductive health knowledge in a positive way and said that holding hands, fantasizing about sex and kissing were not forms of sexual behavior. This study aims to describe the sexual behavior of adolescents and the characteristics of adolescents based on the level of knowledge, access to information media, leisure activities of respondents and exposure to pornography.

METHODS

This research uses survey research with a quantitative descriptive approach. The research was conducted in the Central City District of Gorontalo City. The population in this study were all adolescents who were in the middle adolescent development stage aged 15-18 years in Kota Tengah District in 2020 as many as 1,977 people and a sample size of 333 people taken using Proportional Sampling technique and then withdrawing samples using Purposive Sampling technique. Primary data was obtained by interviews and questionnaires to adolescents. Secondary data were obtained from existing sources, namely the Gorontalo Provincial Health Office, the total population of Kota Tengah District in 2020 and data from the SDKI. Data analysis using Univariate analysis.

RESULTS

The frequency distribution of respondent characteristics is presented in the following table:

Table 1
Distribution of Respondent Characteristics

Respondent Characteristics	n	%
Age		
15	36	10,8
16	100	30,0
17	102	30,6
18	95	28,5
Gender		
Male	150	45,0
Female	183	55,0
Address		
Paguyaman	47	14,1
Pulubala	60	18,0
Liluwo	32	9,6
Dulalowo	72	21,6
Dulalowo Timur	49	14,7
Wumialo	73	21,9
Current Education		
Middle school	21	6,3
High school	290	87,1
Collage	22	6,6
Knowledge		
Less	10	3,0
Enough	63	18,9
Good	260	78,1
Information Media Access		
A Little	178	53,5
A Lot	155	46,5
Leisure Activities		
Low Risk	215	64,6
Medium Risk	90	27,0
High Risk	28	8,4
Exposure to Pornography		
Exposed	179	53,8
Not Exposed	154	46,2
Sexual Behavior		
Heavy	111	33,3

Respondent Characteristics	n	%
Light	222	66,7
Total	333	100,0

Source: Primary Data

The results of the study in table 1 show that out of 333 respondents, most of the respondents were at the age of 17 years 30.6%, female gender 55.0%, residing in Wumialo village 21.9%, current high school education 87.1%, living with parents 91.9%, had a good level of knowledge 78.1%, little access to information media 53.5%, low-risk leisure activities 64.6%, exposed to pornography 53.8%, and had mild sexual behavior 66.7%.

Tabel 2
Distribution of Respondents Based on Forms of Adolescent Sexual Behavior

Forms of Sexual Behavior	Activity			
	Ever		Never	
	n	%	n	%
Ever / currently dating	209	62,8	124	37,2
Fantasizing / imagining sexual activities	106	31,8	227	68,2
Holding hands	217	65,2	116	34,8
Kissing cheeks and foreheads	95	28,5	238	71,5
Embracing partner's shoulders and waist (hugging)	105	31,5	228	68,5
Kissing lips	43	12,9	290	87,1
Groping sensitive areas (breasts and genitals)	35	10,5	298	89,5
Gluing genitals together (petting)	14	4,2	319	95,8
Having sexual intercourse	7	2,1	326	97,9

Source: Primary Data

Table 2 distribution of respondents based on the form of sexual behavior shows that of the 333 adolescents, the most have done the form of sexual behavior of holding hands at 65.2% and the most forms of sexual behavior that have never been done is having sexual intercourse at 97.9%.

Table 3
Distribution of Knowledge Level of Adolescents in Kota Tengah Subdistrict Based on Question Answer Score

Question	Respondent Answer Value			
	False		True	
	n	%	n	%
Any behavior driven by sexual desire, whether with the opposite sex or the same sex is sexual behavior.	72	21,6	261	78,4
The development of sexual organs has an influence on adolescents' interest in the opposite sex	58	17,4	275	82,6
Masturbation (masturbation) is not a form of sexual behavior	136	40,8	197	59,2
Having sex only once will not cause pregnancy	94	28,2	239	71,8
Reproductive health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being in all matters relating to the function, role and reproductive system	35	10,5	298	89,5
Women can only become pregnant after having sexual intercourse many times	138	41,4	195	58,6
IMS are diseases that attack the genitals of women or men due to sexual intercourse	59	17,7	274	82,3
Having sex with the same sex can contract IMS	85	25,5	248	74,5
HIV-contaminated blood transfusions can transmit HIV/AIDS	29	8,7	304	91,3
Pregnant women with HIV/AIDS can transmit HIV/AIDS to their fetuses	62	18,6	271	81,4

Source: Primary Data

Table 3 shows that out of 333 adolescents, the highest number of incorrect answers was on the question “women can only get pregnant after multiple sexual intercourse”, 41.4%, and the highest number of correct answers was on the question “HIV-contaminated blood transfusions can transmit HIV/AIDS”, 91.3%.

Table 4
Distribution of Adolescent Information Media Access Based on Media Used

Media	Access			
	Yes		No	
	n	%	n	%
Television	220	66,1	113	33,9
Internet (in mobile)	315	94,6	18	5,4
Radio	97	29,1	236	70,9
Books	225	67,6	108	32,4
Magazines	100	30,0	233	70,0
Newspapers	112	33,6	221	66,4
Posters/Brochures/Pamphlets	143	42,9	190	57,1

Source: Primary Data

Table 4 shows that out of 333 adolescents, the most used media access was the internet (in mobile phone media) at 94.6% and the most media not used or accessed was radio at 70.9%.

Table 5
Distribution of Youth Leisure Activities Based on Activities Performed

Leisure Activities	Activity			
	Ever		Never	
	n	%	n	%
Staying out	302	90,7	31	9,3
Dating	209	62,8	124	37,2
Smoking	79	23,7	254	76,3
Going to discotheques/bars/nightclubs	25	7,5	308	92,5
Going to karaoke	96	28,8	237	71,2
Consuming alcoholic beverages	38	11,4	295	88,6
Taking illegal drugs	5	1,5	328	98,5

Source: Primary Data

Table 5 shows that out of 333 adolescents, most of them had stayed overnight outside the house, namely 302 respondents (90.7%) and the most activities that were never done to fill spare time were using illegal drugs at 98.5%.

Table 6
Distribution of Adolescent Pornography Exposure Based on Activities That Result in One's Exposure

Activities Conducted	Access			
	Yes		No	
	n	%	n	%
Reading novels, porn stories (leading to adult stories)	107	59,8	72	40,2
Viewing pornographic images/photos	151	84,4	28	15,6
Watching porn	100	55,9	79	44,1
Visiting / searching porn sites	71	39,7	108	60,3

Source: Primary Data

Table 6 shows that out of 179 adolescents who were exposed to pornography, the highest number had viewed pornographic images/photos (84.4%) and the highest number had never been exposed to pornography (60.3%).

DISCUSSION

Distribution of Respondents Based on Forms of Adolescent Sexual Behavior

The results showed that the majority of adolescents were in the mild sexual behavior category (66.7%) who were involved in non-penetrative sexual activities such as holding hands, imagining sexual activities and hugging, while the severe sexual behavior category (33.3%) showed more serious sexual activity involvement. In addition, the distribution of sexual behaviour based on the form of sexual activity carried out by adolescents with the largest percentage shows that severe sexual behaviour is found in the form of sexual behaviour in the form of having had sexual intercourse by 100%. This can be interpreted by the form of sexual behaviour in the form of having sex 1 time is more risky than other forms of sexual behaviour such as holding hands 100 times. As well as adolescents who have never dated but have severe sexual behaviour, this is because the teenager does not have a girlfriend but has many friends of the opposite sex so that sexual behaviour ranging from

holding hands, kissing cheeks and foreheads to hugging with the opposite sex which is included in severe sexual behaviour is considered normal by the teenager and causes adolescents who have never dated to have severe sexual behaviour.

This is in line with research conducted by Purnama ⁽⁷⁾ shows that the dominant sexual behavior is holding hands with a boyfriend or girlfriend of the opposite sex. Cases of premarital sexual behavior in adolescents in Bali by Wijaya et al ⁽⁸⁾ shows that the sexual behavior that adolescents have done at school is in the form of kissing, touching / rubbing sexual organs and having sexual intercourse.

Distribution of Adolescent Knowledge Level Based on Question Answer Value

In this study, knowledge is seen based on questions about reproductive health. The number of adolescents who were wrong in answering questions about women can only get pregnant after multiple sexual intercourse was 41.4%. This shows that there are still many adolescents who do not understand or misperceive about sexuality in terms of teenage pregnancy, the understanding held by adolescents that pregnancy will occur if it is done many times, sex done once does not make teenage girls pregnant. This can cause adolescents to think that sex is not a problem if it is only done once as long as it is not repeatedly so that it can cause pregnancy.

Premarital sex among adolescents poses a risk of sexually transmitted diseases and teenage pregnancy. Unplanned pregnancies among adolescent girls can lead to abortion and teenage marriage, which in turn can have an impact on the future of the adolescent, the fetus, and her family ⁽³⁾. This finding is in line with research ⁽⁹⁾ the knowledge of adolescents about sexuality contributes to the occurrence of premarital sexual behavior of adolescents, where adolescents with low knowledge of sexuality are 1.195 times more likely to engage in premarital sexual behavior than adolescents with good knowledge.

Distribution of Adolescent Information Media Access Based on Media Used

The results showed that adolescents have little access to information media related to positive and useful information on reproductive health and sexuality. Adolescents in Kota Tengah Subdistrict mostly use the internet, reading books and television as media to access positive information related to reproductive health. The dissemination of information on the internet is unlimited, allowing teenagers to quickly and easily obtain information from the internet via their mobile phones. Similarly, teenagers can easily obtain reading materials from school or other sources of knowledge, as well as electronic media such as television, where messages or information about health are often conveyed to teenagers in the form of advertisements, soap operas, and question-and-answer sessions about health issues. Meanwhile, media that are rarely used by teenagers to obtain information about reproductive health and sexuality include radio, magazines, newspapers, and brochures. This is because teenagers more often obtain information from media that are easier and faster to access compared to these rarely used media, such as radio, which is no longer widely used among the public, especially teenagers, as it has been replaced by more advanced media that can provide clearer information.

Both print and electronic mass media are sources of sexual information that are currently more widely used by adolescents than by their parents and peers, because mass media provide better information about sexual desires and needs⁽¹⁰⁾. The use of the internet with long access intensity by adolescents can be risky for adolescent sexual behavior, this makes technological advances likened to two sides of a knife that can provide benefits but on the other hand also provide disadvantages and adverse effects⁽¹¹⁾.

Distribution of Youth Leisure Activities Based on Activities Performed

The results showed that leisure activities by teenagers still showed that the majority of teenagers were in the moderate risk category. Deviant activities carried out by adolescents are inseparable from their activities, adolescents in Kota Tengah Subdistrict spend time doing things that can provoke themselves to commit serious sexual behavior.

Leisure activities such as staying outside the home 90.7%, dating 62.8%, going to karaoke places 28.8% have become common activities among teenagers, moreover there are many teenagers who choose places to stay outside the home such as friends' houses, staying at hotels / lodging with girlfriends.

This does not rule out the possibility that when these activities become boring for teenagers, they will look for new habits that may be even worse than the current ones. Moreover, the demands of life for teenagers of this age are still relatively low, which allows them to look for more exciting things to do to spend their days. This is in line with research Khaerudin stated that recreational activities such as watching pornography (56%) and dating (54%) have become commonplace among teenagers, and when teenagers feel bored they look for new habits that may be worse than their habits ⁽¹²⁾.

Distribution of Teen Pornography Exposure Based on Activities that Result in Exposure

The results showed that the majority of adolescents in Kota Tengah Subdistrict have been exposed to pornography, adolescents are exposed to pornography through viewing pornographic images/photos, reading pornographic novels/stories, watching movies and visiting pornographic sites. The frequency of adolescents accessing pornography in a week varies, namely the categories with the largest percentage < 3 times a week, 3-5 times a week and >9 times a week. This shows that the freedom and ease of teenagers in accessing pornography has become a common thing for teenagers, which is feared that this common thing will encourage teenagers to do worse things and imitate what is seen and watched. According to Rahabav ⁽¹³⁾ exposure to media information on sexuality is generally pornographic in nature which is not beneficial for adolescents in their great curiosity in trying new things. Pornographic content that spreads on the internet is a phenomenon that presents an undeniable reality, moreover access to such content can be obtained at no cost. Continuous exposure to pornographic content is thought to trigger sexual arousal. This can

influence an increase in a person's sexual response to objects intended to provoke interpersonal or sexual activity⁽¹⁴⁾.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The results showed that the majority of adolescents had sexual behavior in the mild category. The level of knowledge of adolescents about reproductive health is good. However, access to positive information media related to sexual health is still low. Most adolescents filled their spare time with activities that were categorized as low risk, and the majority of adolescents were also found to have been exposed to pornographic content.

Based on the results of the study, it is expected that parents can provide education about reproductive health openly, especially in assisting adolescents to access healthy information and other positive activities that can fill free time productively, while preventing exposure to pornographic content. For future research, it is recommended to use an analytical design to determine the relationship between variables and identify factors that significantly contribute to risky sexual behavior in adolescents..

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Kar S, Choudhury A, Singh A. Understanding normal development of adolescent sexuality: A bumpy ride. *J Hum Reprod Sci*. 2015;8(2):70–4.
2. Owino WO, Asakhulu NM, Mwanja JM, Mwanza R. Attachment Styles and Risky Sexual Behaviors in Adolescents. *Probl Educ 21st Century*. 2021;79(6):928–41.
3. Hapsari A. *Buku Ajar Kesehatan Reproduksi Modul Kesehatan Reproduksi Remaja*. Malang: Wineka Media; 2019. 143 p.
4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Youth Risk Behavior Survey data & summary. 2023;1–89.
5. BKKBN. *Survei Demografi Dan Kesehatan : Kesehatan Reproduksi Remaja 2017*. Badan Kependud dan Kel Berencana Nas [Internet]. 2017;119–20. Available from: <http://www.dhsprogram.com>.

6. Gorontalo DKP. Jumlah Akumulasi Kasus HIV-AIDS Tahun 2001 – 5 Okteber 2020. Gorontalo; 2021.
7. Purnama LC, Sriati A, Maulana I. Gambaran perilaku seksual pada remaja. Holistik J Kesehat. 2020;14(2):301–9.
8. Wijaya MK, Giri MKW, Wahyuni NPDS, Setiawan KH. Premarital sex behaviors of teenagers: a case in Bali, Indonesia. Int J Health Sci (Qassim). 2018;2(3):11–21.
9. Fitriani H, Suwarni L, Hernawan AD. Determinan Perilaku Seks pranikah Remaja Di Kota Pontianak Tahun 2019. J Vokasi Kesehat. 2019;5(2)(111):107–14.
10. Kusumastuti S. The Influence of Personal and Environmental Factors on Sexual Behavior in Adolescents. Universitas Sebelas Maret; 2015.
11. Bukit DS, Rochadi RK, ... Paparan Lama Internet dan Media Sosial Hubungannya Terhadap Perilaku Seks Remaja. J Ilm ... [Internet]. 2024; Available from: <https://journal.stikeshangtuah-sby.ac.id/index.php/JIKSHT/article/view/342>
12. Khaerudin MW, Mamlukah M, Wahyuniar L, Suparman R. Analisis Faktor-Faktor Yang Berhubungan Dengan Perilaku Seksual Pranikah Pada Remaja Di Sma Negeri 1 Cidahu Kabupaten Kuningan Tahun 2022. J Ilmu Kesehat Bhakti Husada Heal Sci J. 2022;13(02):202–11.
13. Rahabav M, Yoedtadi MG. Analisis Isi Konten Pornografi di Instagram. Koneksi. 2021;5(1):1.
14. Mareta Akhriansyah, Surahmat R, Agustina N. Increasing Knowledge About the Dangers of Pornography on Adolescent Brain Development in Students of SMA Negeri 1 Sungai Pinang, Ogan ilir Regency. J Pengabd Masy Formosa. 2022;1(5):543–50.