SEXUAL PRACTICE OF MALAYSIAN YOUNG MEN: SHARING THE EXPERIENCE OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Objectives: Socio-cultural changes have affected the sexual and intimate relationships of Malaysian citizens by the changing attitudes, behaviours and expectations of the new generation in male-female relationships. In most health and development programs, when compared with girls, young boys have seldom been the focus. In the area of sexual and reproductive health, boys and men have been left out while they are more likely to involve in risk taking behaviours. This paper reports on data from a larger qualitative research whose overall aim was preparing a counseling module for sexuality and romantic relationship of young people in Malaysia.

Material and Methods: This qualitative study utilized in-depth interviews with 36 Malaysian male university students aged 18-30 representing a range of sexual practices. This research involved three Malaysian largest ethnic groups (Malay, Chinese and Indian). Thematic analysis approach was used.

Results: The findings revealed that the concept of sex is seen only within a heterosexual relationship. Almost half of the participants expressed previous experience of sexual intercourse, and the rest had explored with foreplay and masturbation. Almost all of the younger guys (18-24) have had pre-marital sex. The reasons for having sex were: making love, to have fun, a natural and physiological need, and to gain experience for future marital relationship. Reasons for those who never had sex were: concerning about Sexually Transmitted Diseases, pregnancy, and religious beliefs. Having fear of mal-performance was reported by inexperienced respondents due to a common concept regarding the acknowledgment of highly masculine behaviours. Most of them did not view oral sex and foreplay as sexual practice, but enjoyed more with oral sex. Condom use was not a "must" among sexually experienced participants. Some participants stated they lacked dating and communicating skills.

Conclusions: Pre-marital sex is common among younger men. Lack of information on sexual issues and communication skills was revealed. Misconceptions regarding the highly masculine behaviours and traditional myths require a gender specific education. A sexuality education program containing materials for improving protection, performance and communication skills is warranted.

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