

## KAP STUDY

**Analysis of factors related to behaviours to prevent sexual assault of teenage girls**Retnayu Pradanie<sup>1</sup>, Esti Yunitasari<sup>2</sup>, Adinda Reza Wibawati<sup>3</sup>, Wendy Abigail<sup>4</sup>**Abstract****Objective:** To analyse the factors associated with the behaviour of teenage girls in terms of preventing a sexual assault.**Method:** The descriptive, cross-sectional, correlational study was conducted in April 2021 at a senior high school in Cibitung, Bekasi, Indonesia, after approval from the ethics review committee of the Faculty of Nursing, Universitas Airlangga. The sample comprised class X-XII students aged 15- 19 years. Data was collected using a questionnaire. Data was analysed with logistic regression test using SPSS 20.**Results:** Of the 139 subjects, 52 (37.4%) were aged 16 years, 58 (41.7%) were in class XII. Significant relationship of behaviour to prevent sexual assault was found with knowledge ( $p=0.008$ ), attitude ( $p=0.010$ ) and peer interaction ( $p=0.007$ ).**Conclusion:** Preventing sexual assault behaviour among girls was found to be related to knowledge, attitude and peer interaction.**Keywords:** Adolescent, Sex offenses, Violence, Knowledge, Attitudes, Practice. (JPMA 73: S-126 [Suppl. 2]; 2023)**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.47391/JPMA.Ind-S2-30>**Introduction**

The phenomenon of sexual assault is an increasing global concern. Anyone can become a victim of sexual assault regardless of age, social status, rank, education, and position.<sup>1</sup> However, young women are particularly vulnerable on this account.<sup>2</sup> Violence or sexual assault that teenage girls experience is often due to a lack of awareness on the part of the surrounding community, which may result in harm.<sup>3</sup> There is a public perception that women are weaker than men, and, hence, are more likely than men to experience violence.<sup>4</sup>

A study in 2013 found that 26-80% of men had sexually assaulted women or girls.<sup>5</sup> A study on 324 boys and 309 girls aged 15-18 years showed that 51% of the girls had experienced violence, while only 43% of the boys had such an experience.<sup>5</sup> According to a 2019 survey conducted by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection in Indonesia, 1 in 11 girls and 1 in 17 boys had experienced sexual assault.<sup>6</sup>

Adolescence is a period of transition from childhood to adulthood which is usually marked by changes both biologically and psychologically.<sup>7</sup> The unstable conditions in this phase make teenagers very vulnerable to being victims of violence at home, which may be carried out by those closest to them, or outside the home by others.<sup>8</sup> Violence is the use of physical force and authority, threats

or actions against oneself, another person or a group of people or society that may cause injury and trauma, death, psychological harm, abnormal growth and development or deprivation of rights.<sup>9</sup> Prolonged trauma will arise in children or adolescents who experience violence physically, verbally and psychologically.<sup>8</sup> Sexual assault can cause a long-term trauma effect even until the victim becomes an adult.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, the impact of sexual assault can affect the self-esteem of adolescents which can manifest in their attitudes and behaviours.<sup>1</sup> Adolescents may have a negative self-image, always feel afraid, be silent, find it difficult to trust others and/or have feelings of unfairness.<sup>10</sup>

There are various strategies that adolescents and others could implement to assist in preventing sexual assault. Strategies that adolescents could implement include choosing friends having a positive influence on one's sexual behaviour, have knowledge about different forms of sexual assault, always being aware of suspicious people, make efforts to prevent sexual assault committed by parents, teachers or others by paying more attention.<sup>11</sup> A study conducted in 2015 among street children in Surabaya showed that adolescents with a good level of knowledge about how to prevent sexual assault could foster a positive attitude, influencing other adolescents in preventing sexual assaults.<sup>12</sup> Another study in 2019 in a Chilean school found that sexual assault by peers was reported by 13.5% of the students, with a higher frequency in male students and those in grades V and VI.<sup>13</sup> Friends were also found to play an important role in avoiding sexual assault against teenagers, and it has been recommended that teenagers be more selective in choosing friends in order to protect themselves.<sup>14</sup>

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A preliminary study conducted as a prelude to the current study on 10 young women at the targeted research location found 8(80%) students having lack of knowledge about sexual assault, 6(60%) students having a negative attitude because they would often hang out with boyfriends without restrictions, and 5(50%) students said they often saw their friends dating excessively, which indicated a risky sexual behaviour.

Based on these findings, it was planned to apply the Precede Proceed that has three main types of factors; predisposing factors, supporting factors and driving factors<sup>15</sup>. Predisposing factors include knowledge and attitude, the driving factor is peer interaction, and the supporting factors include health facilities and infrastructure, access and utilisation of health resources. The supporting factors do not have a direct relationship with the prevention of sexual assault behaviour in adolescents.<sup>7</sup>

The current study was planned to analyse the factors associated with the behaviour of teenage girls in terms of preventing a sexual assault.

## Subjects and methods

The descriptive, cross-sectional, correlational study was conducted in April 2021 at a senior high school in Cibitung, Bekasi, Indonesia, after approval from the ethics review committee of the Faculty of Nursing, Universitas Airlangga. The sample size was calculated using a formula cited in literature.<sup>16</sup> The sample was raised using simple random sampling technique. Those included were class X-XII students aged 15- 19 years. The names of all the students who fulfilled the criteria were placed in a box and the subjects were randomly selected. Since the respondents were minors, an explanation of the study and informed consent form was sent to the parents. Students who obtained signed informed consent from their parents were given an online questionnaire using Google Form. Those who could not furnish the consent form were excluded.

Data related to name, age, gender and grade/class was noted. Further data was collected using four questionnaires related to knowledge, attitude, peer interaction and sexual assault. All the questionnaires were self-designed based on modifications from earlier questionnaires and a review of the existing literature. The knowledge and attitude questionnaire modified the questionnaire from research conducted by Astuti on the knowledge and attitudes of street children about sexual violence.<sup>12</sup>

The knowledge questionnaire asked about the definition of sexual assault, factors that cause sexual assault, type of sexual assault, target victim of sexual assault, the effect of

sexual assault, how to prevent sexual assault, and the process of sexual assault. The questionnaire about attitude assessed the perception, response and prevention of teenage girls regarding sexual assault. The peer interaction questionnaire asked the behaviour of the peer group toward sexual assault as well as the tendency of the respondents to respond to the behaviour of their peer group. The sexual assault questionnaire asked about pattern of responses when experiencing incidents indicating sexual assault.

All the 4 instruments passed reliability and validity testing using value  $>r$  table 0.456 and Cronbach's alpha  $>0.60$ .

Data was analysed using descriptive and inferential analysis. Descriptive data was expressed as frequencies and percentages, while inferential analysis used logistic regression test with a significance value of  $p \leq 0.05$ .

## Results

Of the 139 subjects, 52(37.4%) were aged 16 years, 58(41.7%) were in class XII (Table 1). Overall, 41(29.5%) students had good knowledge level, 67(48.2%) had a

Tabl-1: Demographic characteristics of the respondents.

No.	Demographic Characteristics of Respondents	n (%)
1	Age (years)	
	15	27 (19.4)
	16	52 (37.4)
	17	41 (29.5)
	18	17 (12.2)
	19	2 (1.4)
	Total	139 (100)
2	Class	
	10	32 (23.0)
	11	49 (35.3)
	12	58 (41.7)
	Total	139 (100)

Tabl-2: Knowledge, attitude, peer interaction and behaviour to prevent sexual harassment.

Measured Variables	Category	n (%)
Knowledge	Less	67 (48.2)
	Enough	31 (22.3)
	Good	41 (29.5)
	TOTAL	139 (100)
Attitude	Negative	72 (51.8)
	Positive	67 (48.2)
Total		139 (100)
Peer Interaction	High	59 (42.4)
	Medium	24 (17.3)
	Low	56 (40.3)
Total		139 (100)
Behaviour to Prevent Sexual Assault	Negative	70 (50.4)
	Positive	69 (49.6)
Total		139 (100)

**Tabl-3:** Relationship of knowledge, attitude and peer interaction with behaviour to prevent sexual assault.

Variable	Regression						
	Coefficient	S.E	Wald	dF	Sig.	Exp (B)	Explanation
Knowledge	0.980	0.371	6.969	1	0.008	2.664	Significant
Attitude	1.636	0.633	6.689	1	0.010	5.135	Significant
Peer Interaction	0.901	0.331	7.401	1	0.007	2.461	Significant

positive attitude, 59(42.4%) had high peer interaction, and 70(50.4%) had negative sexual assault prevention behaviour (Table 2).

Significant relationship of behaviour to prevent sexual assault was found with knowledge ( $p=0.008$ ), attitude ( $p=0.010$ ) and peer interaction ( $p=0.007$ ) (Table 3).

## Discussion

Among other things, the current study found that knowledge had a relationship with preventing sexual assault behaviour. Knowledge is the result of knowing, and this occurs after someone has sensed a certain object.<sup>17</sup> Knowledge is a predisposing factor that determines the formation of a person's behaviour<sup>15</sup>. Adolescent knowledge about sexual assault is still found lacking.<sup>18</sup> This factor is coupled with misinformation obtained from unreliable sources, such as myths about sex, pornographic websites and other factors that lead to children's misunderstanding and perceptions of sex.<sup>7</sup> The greater the correct knowledge adolescents have about sexual assault, the more appropriate their behaviour will get towards preventing sexual assault.<sup>3</sup>

The current study also found that attitude was strongly related to the behaviour in teenage girls. Attitude is a form of a person's response to a particular stimulus or object that involves factors of opinion and emotion, such as feeling happy or unhappy, agreeing or disagreeing, good or not good.<sup>17</sup> The formation of attitudes in preventing sexual assault is influenced by the knowledge that adolescents are able to face and anticipate when sexual assault occurs<sup>19</sup>. The current study revealed that attitude was the most significantly related factor to behaviours that could prevent sexual assault. This is in line with an earlier study.<sup>20</sup> Adolescents with a positive attitude can avoid risky sexual behaviour, and vice versa, whereas adolescents with a negative attitude tend to carry out risky sexual behaviours.<sup>21</sup>

Peer interaction was also found related to behaviours in adolescent girls. Peers are teenagers who are approximately at the same age or maturity level.<sup>22</sup> Teenagers tend to choose friends who have similarities in

interests and values in order to create a sense of comfort in communicating, understanding each other, trusting each other, and being open to various problems that are not discussed with parents.<sup>3</sup> Adolescents have strong emotional bonds with their peers so that a high sense of solidarity in their association makes adolescents easily influenced by their peers.<sup>23</sup> This is in accordance with literature.<sup>24</sup> The support provided by peers is in the form of comprehension due to the conformity factor and direct involvement.<sup>25</sup> The role of interaction with the peer group can be in the forms of imitation, identification, suggestion and sympathy.<sup>26</sup>

The current study had its limitations. The study questionnaire was not pilot-tested, and, as such, the findings cannot be generalised.

## Conclusion

Knowledge, attitude and peer interaction were found to be related to behaviours toward sexual assault prevention in teenage girls. For adolescents to be safe from sexual harassment, it is vital that accurate research-based information is available to provide understanding of the issues faced so that preventative strategies may be put in place to protect them.

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