



## Sexual Behavior of Adolescents: Risk Factors in Rural Areas

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### ABSTRACT

The percentage of adolescents who have actively engaged in sexual behavior before marriage is 4.92%. Adolescents living in rural areas are more likely to be exposed to risky behavior than those who live in urban areas. This study aims to identify the factors that influence risky sexual behavior among adolescents in rural areas. This study used a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. Data were collected using in-depth interview techniques on 12 participants consisting of 7 adolescents and 5 parents in rural areas. The samples were selected using a purposive sampling technique. The validity of the data was carried out using source triangulation and peer debriefing. The thematic analysis was carried out using Open code 4.03 software. This study showed that perception is a factor that can influence adolescents to engage in risky sexual behavior. It includes perceptions of risky sexual behavior such as dating, the definition of risky sexual behavior, risk factors, sexual relationships, and sexually transmitted diseases. In addition, adolescents' perceptions of risky sexual behavior in health, psychology, education, and the future are also the factors that influence risky sexual behavior. Apart from the perception, other factors include discomfort feeling at home, sexual experience, the influence of social media, the influence of friends, love from partners, and environmental influences. Based on our results, the better the adolescent's perception of risky sexual behavior is, the lower the risk of adolescents engaging in risky behavior will be.

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## INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a group of age who are prone to risky behavior. World Health Organization (WHO) reveals that adolescents are in the transition period between childhood and adulthood, ranging from 10 to 19 years old.<sup>1</sup> Adolescents also have specific physical, emotional, cognitive, and psychosocial characteristics.<sup>2</sup> The adolescent population reaches a considerable amount of 1.2 billion or 16% of the world population.<sup>3</sup> In Indonesia, the number of adolescents is 64.19 million (24,01%), consisting of males (50,78%) and females (49,22%) residing in urban areas (57,94%) and rural areas (42,06%). The estimation of the adolescent population in Yogyakarta (DIY) in 2020, ranging from 15-19 years old, reached 274,4 people, consisting of 140,3 males and 134,1 females.<sup>4</sup> A high percentage of those adolescents are at risk for risky sexual behavior.

According to a study, 4,92% of adolescents have already been sexually active. The sexual activities include 56,9% kissing, 30,7% of kissing restricted to the area of the neck and above (necking), 13,8% touching sensitive parts of the body (petting), 7,2% of oral sex, 5,5% of anal sex, and 14,7% of sexual intercourse before marriage.<sup>5</sup> The prevalence of the percentage of risky sexual the behavior of female adolescents is higher, as much as 54%, compared to male adolescents of 46%. They were exposed to premarital sexual activity as they loved each other. Besides, in the past five years, the percentage of female adolescents using condoms has increased to 49% compared to male with 27%.<sup>6</sup>

The Indonesian Family Planning Association states that risky sexual behavior are influenced by both internal and external factors.<sup>7</sup> This includes promiscuity, environmental factor, friends, school, families who are open to risky behavior, and the influence of the mass media.<sup>4</sup> Other factors include geographic conditions such as urban and rural areas.<sup>8</sup>

People in rural areas tend to be influenced by culture, limitations of health services, education, and the lack of accessible information.<sup>9</sup> Adolescents often lack information regarding health reproduction and have limited access to affordable health reproduction services where confidentiality is guaranteed.<sup>4</sup> According to the Youth Demographic and Reproductive Health

Survey in 2017, 57% of young women who live in urban areas can access information about sexual behavior. It is higher compared to young women in rural areas, namely only 47%. Furthermore, adolescents in urban areas have a higher level of education. 52% of female adolescents in urban areas graduated from high school, while only 39% of female adolescents graduated with the same education level in rural areas.<sup>10</sup> It might cause rural adolescents to have risky sexual behavior.<sup>11</sup> It is reported that rural adolescents are more likely engage in sexual activity (24,0%) than those in urban areas (19,7%).<sup>12</sup> Another study states that urban adolescents have less sexual activity without using a condom than those in rural areas. The difference between this study and earlier research is the criteria for respondents with an age range of 15-24 years. It was chosen because it became a consideration in the respondents answering this research question. This study also uses qualitative methods which aim to get more in-depth answers from respondents.

This phenomenon is influenced by poverty and lack of education.<sup>13</sup> Such behavior can harm adolescents and can be influenced by a range of factors. The factors that influence sexual behavior in adolescents consist of internal factors and external factors. The internal factors include a free lifestyle, sexual education, and harmful norms. Meanwhile, the external factors include the risky environment, influence from surrounding peers, and unharmonious family relationships.<sup>14</sup> Another study stated that the factors associated with premarital adolescent sexual behavior are influenced from surrounding peers, alcohol consumption, and adolescent attitudes toward maintaining their virginity.<sup>15</sup> In addition, the lack of attention from school peers and the community also increases the risk of sexual behavior in adolescents because social values, beliefs, and norms are important factors, among others.<sup>16</sup> Based on the introduction above, the researcher is interested in identifying the factors that influence risky sexual behavior in rural areas.

## MATERIAL AND METHOD

This study used a qualitative method and phenomenological approach to scrutinize the relevant factors that influence risky sexual behavior in adolescents in rural areas. This research was conducted in Bangunjiwo Village,

one of the rural areas in Bantul Regency, Yogyakarta. The research location was chosen based on the results of earlier studies which showed that many adolescents engaged in risky sexual behavior. The sample in this study include seven adolescents and five parents selected using a purposive sampling method. The inclusion criteria in this study is shown in Table 1.

The instrument of this study was an in-depth interview guide that consists of several open-ended questions. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with parents and adolescents who had a history of risky sexual behavior. The analysis technique was conducted thematically using open code 4.03 software. The validity of the data was carried out using triangulation sources, member checks, and peer debriefing. This research has received ethical permission from the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences ethics committee, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, by the number 020/EC-KEPKFKIK UM/I/2021.

## RESULTS

Participants in this study were 12 people consisting of 7 adolescents and 5 parents with the participant characteristics in Table 2.

This study showed that there were many factors affecting risky sexual behavior among adolescents in rural areas (Figure 1). One of the factors was adolescents' perception of risky

sexual behavior and perceptions of the impact of risky sexual behavior. Adolescent perceptions of risky sexual behavior consisted of perceptions of the definition, perceptions of the risk factors, perceptions of dating, perceptions of sexual relationships, and perceptions of sexually transmitted diseases. Meanwhile, adolescent perceptions of the impact of risky sexual behavior included health impacts, psychological impacts, educational impacts, and future impacts. Apart from perception, other factors could influence adolescents to engage in risky sexual behavior such as the discomfort feeling at home, sexual experiences, the influence of social media or friends, love from partners, environmental influences, youth activities in the village, and the village regulations.

**Table 1. Inclusion Criteria of Participants**

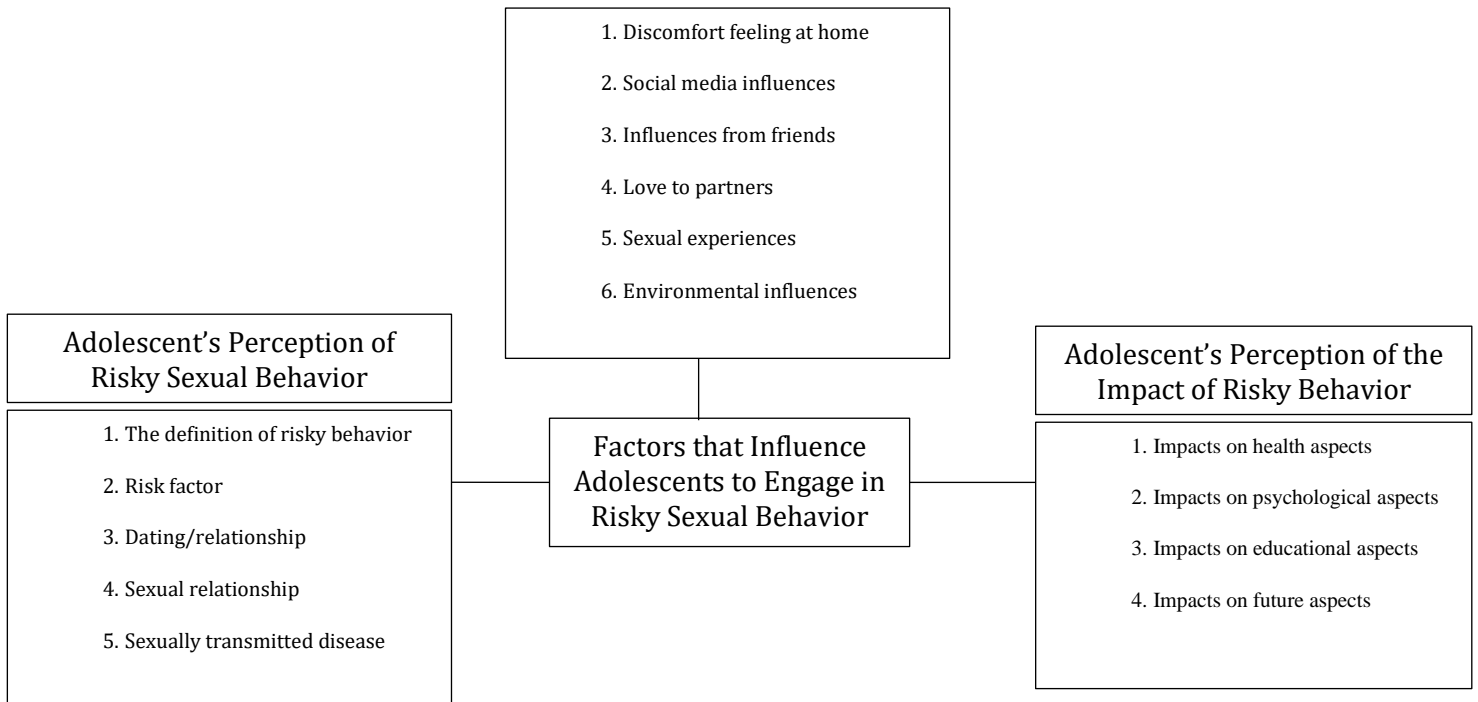
Adolescent		Parent	
1.	Willing to be a respondent in data collection	1.	Willing to be a respondent in data collection
2.	Able to communicate verbally well	2.	Able to communicate verbally well
3.	Residing in Bangunjiwo	3.	Residing in Bangunjiwo
4.	Adolescents who have a history of risky behavior aged 12-22 years	4.	Parents who have children with a history of risky behavior aged 12-22 years

Source: Primary Data, 2021

**Table 2. Participants Characteristics**

Participant Code	Gender	Age (Years)	Recent Education	Occupation	Status
Participant 1	Female	22 <sup>nd</sup>	Senior High School	Student	Adolescent
Participant 2	Female	17 <sup>th</sup>	Senior High School	Student	Adolescent
Participant 3	Female	16 <sup>th</sup>	Vocational High School	Student	Adolescent
Participant 4	Male	21 <sup>st</sup>	Senior High School	Student	Adolescent
Participant 5	Male	21 <sup>st</sup>	Senior High School	Student	Adolescent
Participant 6	Male	20 <sup>th</sup>	Vocational High School	Private Employees	Adolescent
Participant 7	Male	16 <sup>th</sup>	Vocational High School	Student	Adolescent
Participant 8	Female	46 <sup>th</sup>	Junior High School	Laborer	Parent
Participant 9	Female	46 <sup>th</sup>	Senior High School	Housewife	Parent
Participant 10	Female	41 <sup>st</sup>	Junior High School	Laborer	Parent
Participant 11	Female	48 <sup>th</sup>	Elementary School	Laborer	Parent
Participant 12	Female	35 <sup>th</sup>	Senior High School	Housewife	Parent

Source: Primary Data, 2021



Source: Primary Data, 2021

**Figure 1. Factors Affecting Risky Sexual Behavior among Adolescents in Rural Areas**

### Adolescent Perceptions of Risky Sexual Behavior

This study indicated that there are several perceptions of adolescents that can influence risky sexual behavior in this age group. It began with adolescents' perceptions of the definition of risky behavior and the risk factors. The result showed that the participant considered risky sexual behavior as a behavior that led to negative aspects and self-harm, such as unsafe sexual relations causing a disease. One adolescent said that when pregnancy out of wedlock happened, the carrier will experience untimely maturity due to circumstances and will suffer a loss for themselves. It was explained by the participant below:

*"Risky behavior is a behavior that leads to negative aspects. It can influence the family relationship and can embarrass parents. Something like that can lower the dignity of the family, that is my opinion." (Parent, Female, 46 years old)*

*"A sexual relationship without a condom can lead to pregnancy. That is all I know." (Adolescent, Female, 16 years old)*

*"Hmmm let me think. It might be self-harm behavior." (Adolescent, Female, 17 years old)*

*"Risky sexual behavior is related to a sexual relationship that can cause diseases. Such as kissing,*

*smoking, drugs. These are fun aspects that later leads to harm." (Adolescent, Male, 21 years old)*

The next is the perception of dating, sexual intercourse, and sexually transmitted diseases. Participants stated that the normal activities to do when dating include holding hands, kissing, and hugging. They also argued that having sexual intercourse is abnormal but mutually beneficial. However, it can lead to sexually transmitted diseases. The diseases are caused by frequent sexual activity or sexual intercourse. This sexually transmitted disease is a deadly disease. It is explained by participants as follows:

*"That's a bad thing. I remember my teacher told me that if we frequently do it (sexual relationship) with many different people, it will lead to disease (sexually transmitted diseases) and also can lead to death. Am I right?" (Adolescent, Female, 16 years old)*

*"The sexually transmitted disease happened because of infectious sexual activities." (Adolescent, male, 21 years old)*

*"It's like a disease that can be transmitted through sexual activity like sexual intercourse or anything like that...." (Adolescent, Female, 22 years old)*

*"I think it is becoming normal for people nowadays. Whenever a couple are alone in a quiet place, certainly something will happen between them, kissing is still normal. What is not normal is a sexual relationship. It*

*depends on the individual. When people like to watch porn movies and they have new partners, they are likely to do sexual relationships hahaha. It is unfortunate but they can take the fun from it. A mutual sexual relation is not a problem for me. However, there is no cure for sexually transmitted disease, a disease that can cause harm to reproduction and even leads to death". (Adolescent, male, 20 years old)*

### **Factors Affecting Adolescents to Engage in Risky Sexual Behavior**

The results indicated that other factors influenced adolescents in addition to their perceptions of risky sexual behavior. The factors included feeling discomfort at home, which caused them to seek comfort outside the home. The discomfort felt by adolescents can emerge from not having a close relationship with their parents. The closeness of adolescents with their parents makes adolescents feel that their parents are a safe space to tell stories even as friends. Adolescents tend to feel less or not close to their parents because of their parents busy schedule. This caused adolescents to engage in risky sexual behavior because family is a determinant to shape adolescents' behavior. This statement is in line with what was stated by the participant below:

*"Parents should provide a comfortable family environment for their children because family becomes the primary factor for children to behave appropriately. Children do bad things because they might not feel comfortable in their family circle." (Parent, Female, 46 years old)*

*"Hmm.. family environment seems to have a big influence on children. For example, when they do not feel comfortable at home and they are not close to their parents that will influence how they behave." (Adolescent, Female, 17 years old)*

In addition, adolescents were likely to engage in risky sexual behavior influenced by social media. For example, they usually used Google to access porn sites, which was considered normal to them. Besides, other factors include influence from peers and love from partners. Adolescents who had feelings of love for their partners stated that they had no regrets when engaging in risky sexual behavior as they thought they enjoyed the sexual activities. Thus, they did not have feelings of regret. It is proven in the participant's statement below:

*P: "Did you access porn sites?"*

*I: "Honestly yes. It is normal, isn't it? Haha"*

*P: "Is there something else?"*

*I: "When I access porn sites, I was curious which one is a good position for sexual intercourse hahaha." (Adolescent, Male, 20 years old)*

*"I only access Google and read what pops up. The worst one is accessing porn sites haha." (Adolescent, male, 16 years old)*

*"Surely, when we are friends with people who have no lovers, we are less likely to have lovers, too. But when we are friends with people who do, we tend to have a gut to be dating, too." (Adolescent, Female, 17 years old)*

*"It was due to influence from friends that I was curious. They told me it (sexual relationship) was fun; I was curious and I began to get addicted to it and do sexual activities several times with my ex-boyfriend." (Adolescent, Male, 20 years old)*

*"Hehehe (laughing), I think that's normal for new couples to do it (sexual activity)." (Adolescent, Female, 22 years old)*

Furthermore, another factor that also affects adolescents' risky sexual behavior is their sexual experiences. This study indicated that adolescents have had sexual experiences in the past. These experiences included sexual harassment, such as when others touched their breast without consent. Furthermore, the experience also included watching porn movies, holding hands, and doing sexual activities with their partners. It is proven in the participant's statement below:

*"Yes.. it possibly happened. When I was a child, I didn't know it (laughing) so others touched my breast." (Adolescent, Female, 22 years old)*

*P: "Have you ever seen people engaged in risky sexual behavior?"*

*I: "Yes" (Adolescent, Female, 16 years old)*

*"Yes, just holding hands ...." (Adolescent, female, 22 years old)*

*P: "How about a sexual relationship?"*

*I: "I have done it with my ex-girlfriend and also my girlfriend" (Adolescent, male, 20 years old)*

Another factor that also influenced adolescents to engage in risky sexual behavior was the environmental factor. In addition, due to the busyness and infrequency of the integrated service posts implementation, adolescents became less active in integrated service posts activities; thus, they lack information. Passive socialization in the village and grouping friendships resulted in adolescents looking for a

more comfortable environment outside of socializing and seeking information. It is proven by the participant's statement below:

*"It has an effect... people like to compare others and remind them not to do some things because it will lower their family's dignity." (Adolescent, male, 20 years old)*

*P: "There is Integrated Service Posts for youth here, isn't it?"*

*I: "Yes.. but it has been closed for a while"*

*P: "Did you participate?"*

*I: "I did"*

*P: "Were you actively participating?"*

*I: Not really, just knowing that there was a Posyandu Integrated Service Posts. I participated several times, that's all." (Adolescent, Female, 17 years old)*

*"The friendship here was divided by cliques/groups since not everyone get along with each other when it comes to friendship. Only a few people participated when it comes to a youth event. The others mostly stay home. We held a lamb cooking event once but only a few of them joined. Lack of participation in social events reduced the harmony of our friendship." (Adolescent, male, 20 years old)*

*"We have our typical friendship hehe.. (laughing). Hmm kinda promiscuity maybe....." (Adolescent, female, 17 years old)*

### **Adolescent Perceptions of the Impact of Risky Sexual Behavior**

This study showed that the factor of adolescents engaging in risky sexual behavior is adolescents' perception of the impact of risky sexual behavior, including health impacts, psychological impacts, educational impacts, and future impacts. First, the adolescent perception of the health impact of risky sexual behavior is when a person is aware that sexual activity leads to sexually transmitted diseases, such as HIV and syphilis. Another health impact is infertility, in which the activity can risk reproduction. It is proven by the participant's statement below:

*"Furthermore, when they have sexual relation intercourse and pregnancy happens, it will become a mental burden for both the parents and the family. And if they are diagnosed with sexually transmitted disease, it will risk their life." (Adolescent, Female, 22 years old)*

*"It tends to be free and there are no rules. After all, it's like having sex with many different people. And we never know whether there is a sexually transmitted disease going around. It affects a lot of our future." (Adolescent, Female, 17 years old)*

*"There are a lot of them (sexually transmitted diseases), one of which is HIV. The HIV is quickly transmitted. In terms of alcohol, it can harm our kidney. My friend collapsed due to syphilis." (Adolescent, male, 21 years old)*

*"Of course, HIV can harm our health. I do not know anything; I am still innocent hahaha." (Adolescent, male, 16 years old)*

*"Well, all I know is just that it is horrible. The disease can be anything. Maybe, infertility is the most severe. Haha." (Adolescent, male, 21 years old)*

*"Well, it's not good for health, especially the reproductive organs...." (Parent, Female, 46 years old)*

Furthermore, adolescents' perception of the impact of risky sexual behavior can be seen from psychological aspects. The impact is when adolescents suffered from stress and trauma, especially when they happen to have a child. In addition, adolescents are more likely to suffer from a mental disorder if they engage in risky sexual behavior. It is proven with the participant's statement below:

*"Wow, it has much impact. When people went through traumatic experience, they are more likely to hesitate to step forward. Trauma is hard to heal. I have been in that situation." (Parent, Female, 46 years old)*

*"It is more like... when one of them is harmed, it can be like a mental burden, you know." (Adolescent, Female, 22 years old)*

*"Usually, they accept that they are pregnant, and it can cause stress." (Adolescent, Male, 21 years old)*

Next, adolescents' perception of the impact of risky sexual behavior can be seen from educational aspects such as school dropouts. In addition, if students were impregnated or were pregnant, the school would not accept students who were currently pregnant. It is proven by the participant's statement below:

*"The student who got impregnated can get dropped out of school, for example. And when they have children, they could not provide sexual education for them." (Adolescent, male, 21 years old)*

*"It is clear that schools do not accept pregnant students. It will embarrass their image in society." (Adolescent, male, 21 years old)*

Finally, adolescents' perceptions of the impact of risky sexual behavior can be of influence in the future. If an adolescent engages in risky sexual behavior, it will impact all aspects of their life. For example, it will also impact their family and surrounding community if they get a premarital

pregnancy. In addition, they also lose hope for their future if they engage in risky sexual behavior. It is proven by the participant's statement below;

*"No matter which family background you came from, whether it is religious leader, the police, or the head of the village, if you get a pre-marriage pregnancy, you will be belittled. Not only you but also your family, even the community." (Adolescent, male, 21 years old)*

*"We come to know others' behavior in which we come to understand which one is good behavior. If one makes mistakes, it will affect a lot of aspects of their life. Like what I told my child that once a woman behaves badly, it will forever lead to her self-harm." (Parent, Female, 46 years old)*

*"That's horrible. They lose hope, sister. it costs responsibility when a person impregnates. Moreover, when he is still in the school year, he probably no longer can continue their education. And when they have babies, how can they raise the babies? They surely lost their minds. Moreover, when they are drunk, they go under control and have no clues about that." (Adolescent, male, 16 years old).*

## DISCUSSION

The research was conducted in rural areas because it was based on previous research which stated that rural adolescents had a history of sexual risk behavior. This is supported by a study that states that rural communities are influenced by a strong culture, limited health services, and lack of information received.<sup>9</sup> Other studies also explain that the knowledge of adolescents in rural areas is influenced by several factors including gender, several sources of information, and the use of parents as source information.<sup>17</sup>

### Adolescent Perceptions of Risky Sexual Behavior

The results of this study indicated that adolescent perceptions of risky sexual behavior are a factor that can influence adolescents in engaging in risky behavior. These perceptions included perceptions of the definition and perceptions of risk factors. In addition, the participant stated that sexual behavior leads to negative and self-harm, such as unsafe sexual intercourse, which can cause disease. These results align with research revealing that most adolescents who had negative perceptions of risky sexual behavior, especially premarital sex, are likely to behave in such a way due to the lack of understanding of premarital sex in

adolescents.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, it is supported by other studies stating that there is a relationship between sexual behavior and reproductive health as well as a sexually transmitted disease.<sup>19</sup>

Based on adolescents' perception that sexually transmitted diseases are caused by frequent unsafe sexual intercourse, an unhealthy relationship is also a factor in sexual behavior in adolescents. Another study explained that unhealthy relationships included holding hands, kissing, and hugging. Moreover, adolescents' risk of sexual intercourse began with unhealthy relationships.<sup>20</sup> The results of this study align with research revealing that risky sexual behavior included holding hands (42,7%), kissing the cheeks and forehead (31,4%), hugging (23,7%), kiss on the lips (20,4%), and having sexual intercourse (1,1%).<sup>21</sup>

Another study contended that 28% of adolescents had engaged in premarital sexual behavior such as hugging and kissing. It is caused by various factors, both internal and external factors.<sup>18</sup> In addition, the low awareness of adolescents about the risk of sexually transmitted disease led them to engage in sexual activity without protection or other activities related to risky sexual behavior. When engaging in risky sexual behavior, adolescents are more likely to be afraid of getting pregnant than fear of being infected by a sexually transmitted disease.<sup>22</sup>

### Factors Affecting Adolescents to Engage in Risky Sexual Behavior

This study indicated that several factors could influence adolescents in engaging in risky sexual behavior apart from perceptions such as discomfort feeling at home. Furthermore, another study stated that there was no relationship between adolescents' and parents' communication regarding sexual activity carried out by adolescents. This is because the topic of reproductive health and sexual education is still considered taboo by most parents. Moreover, it was also found that there was no relationship between family support and sexual behavior since adolescents who engage in risky sexual behavior are influenced mainly by environmental factors or peer relationships.<sup>23</sup> In addition, another study stated that adolescents

living in a broken home family had a greater risk for some risky behaviors such as smoking, drinking alcohol, having a sexual relationship, and others.<sup>24</sup> Thus, in this case, family is a very influential factor in adolescents.

Research in Korea argued that adolescents who did not live with their families had a high risk of engaging in risky behavior.<sup>25</sup> In addition, support from parents is essential in shaping behavior in adolescents and can prevent risky sexual behavior. Research stated that 55,6% of adolescents obtain low family support since parents do not monitor their children's sexual behavior.<sup>26</sup> Other research also stated that there is a relationship between the role of the family and premarital sexual behavior in adolescents. Thus, when the family provides good advice to adolescents, it can be a strength to avoid promiscuity.<sup>27</sup> In addition, promiscuity that triggers risky sexual behavior in adolescents is also influenced by peer factors.

This study showed that adolescents' risk factors for risky behavior are peer factors and love for their partners. Peer influence is where adolescents tend to imitate what their friends do. Moreover, love for their partners is considered a supporting factor for adolescents engaging in risky sexual behavior. It aligns with research revealing that there is a relationship between peer influence and premarital sexual behavior among adolescents.<sup>15</sup> The research showed that adolescents are likely to engage in risky sexual behavior due to peers' stories about their sexual experiences.<sup>28</sup> Preferences of sexual behavior in adolescents consisted of several aspects such as touching, kissing, and others. It is done as proof of love and affection for their partner.<sup>29</sup>

In addition, this study also showed that social media influences adolescents to engage in risky sexual behavior. It is in line with other studies stating that there is a very close association between adolescents' access to pornographic media and deviant dating behavior.<sup>30</sup> Other research also showed that 44.6% of adolescents are heavily exposed to social media with pornographic content. One will tend to have a distorted perception of sexuality if they are frequently exposed to pornography.<sup>31</sup> Other supporting research revealed that there is an increase in risky sexual behavior due to the use

of social media; nearly 90% of adolescents use cell phones. Adolescents' access to cellphone use is the internet, YouTube, and Instagram, which have consistently increased. Meanwhile, Facebook use has decreased from time to time.<sup>32</sup> Besides, factors from environmental influences and experiences of sexuality can also affect adolescents.

This study revealed that the environmental influence that affects adolescent sexual behavior included in active participation in the village and grouping friendship. In addition, 59,3% of respondents agreed that there was a relationship between the environment and risky sexual behavior.<sup>33</sup> This research aligns with other research showing that the social environment is a supporting factor for adolescent behavior. The social environment included family, peers, neighbors, villagers, village activities, and others.<sup>34</sup> Apart from these factors, this study also showed that there was an influence of sexual experiences in childhood on risky sexual behavior. Another study explained that a person's attitude is influenced by various aspects, including personal experiences, culture, important people, and emotional factors oneself.<sup>35</sup> These personal experiences may consist of sexual abuse in childhood or persistent behavioral problems during childhood considered an external problem at the age of 2. It can increase the risk of unexpected sexual relationships at the age of 15 years.<sup>36</sup> In addition, another study stated that the level of knowledge in adolescents can influence adolescents to engage in risky sexual behavior. This is because adolescents have not received maximum information about reproductive health. The ability of adolescents to absorb different information is also a supporting factor.<sup>37</sup>

### **Adolescent Perceptions of the Impact of Risky Sexual Behavior**

The results of this study found that adolescents have a perception of the impact of risky sexual behavior. Therefore, it becomes a factor influencing these adolescents in engaging in risky sexual behavior. The perception of this impact is the impact on health, where adolescents who engage in sexual behavior are at risk of experiencing sexually transmitted diseases. Other studies also stated that adolescents' perceptions of the health impact of



engaging in risky sexual behavior included unexpected pregnancy, venereal disease, or sexually transmitted diseases.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, another study revealed that risky sexual behavior had a risk of having a health impact, such as sexually transmitted infections and premarital pregnancy. Most of the respondents in other studies also mentioned that the impact of risky sexual behavior included HIV infections and sexually transmitted diseases.<sup>39</sup> Apart from the impact on health, there are also psychological impacts.

This study indicated that adolescents' perception of the psychological impact is that they are mentally affected, have trauma, or have mental pressure. It is in line with other research showing that premarital sex will impact the psychology of those who do it since premarital sex will cause unexpected incidences, leading to depression.<sup>40</sup> Another study stated that the effectiveness of adolescent reproductive services in developing healthy sexual behavior consists of several indicators, namely the courage to engage in assertive behavior, refrain from watching pornography, and no psychological pressure due to romantic relationship pressure. Thus, it indicated that there is psychological pressure due to a feeling of love in adolescents when they engage in sexual behavior.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, the impact afterward is an impact on their future.

This study indicated that adolescents' perception of the impact on their future is that they can be hopeless when they have engaged in sexual behavior. Other research also stated that there are many harmful impacts on the future when adolescents engage in sexual behavior, such as destroying their future and family. Furthermore, they are in higher risk when adolescents lack knowledge about sexual behavior.<sup>42</sup> In addition, another research supported that the excessive expression of love in partners will have the risk of adolescents engaging in sexual behavior, which will lead to the loss of adolescents' future.<sup>43</sup> In addition, another impact can happen to the educational aspect.

This study indicated that adolescents' perception of the impact on education is that they will experience school dropouts. Other studies also stated that promiscuity in the adolescents will affect their education negatively. When

adolescents commit adultery which will lead to early marriage, it will hinder them from receiving education or drop out of school.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, other studies stated that premarital pregnancy in adolescents impacts not only themselves but also the family. One of the impacts is school dropouts. Premarital pregnancy in adolescents is also associated with the knowledge possessed by the adolescent.<sup>45</sup>

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Many factors influenced adolescents in engaging in risky sexual behavior in rural areas, one of which is their perceptions. In addition, internal factors such as personal experiences and feelings of love and external factors such as family relationships, influences from friends, environment, and social media also affected adolescents to engage in risky sexual behavior. Thus, parents need to provide early sexual education to prevent the occurrence of risky sexual behavior.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

EM was carrying manuscript's concepts, design, definition of intellectual content, literature research, clinical studies, data acquisition, data analysis, as well as statistical analysis. EM also undertaking manuscript preparation, manuscript editing, and manuscript review. RAD was carrying concepts, design, definition of intellectual content, literature research, clinical studies, data acquisition, data analysis, and statistical analysis, DP was carrying data acquisition, data analysis, statistical analysis, manuscript preparation, manuscript editing, and manuscript review. HIP was carrying data acquisition, data analysis, statistical analysis, manuscript preparation, manuscript editing, and manuscript review. EM = Ema Waliyanti; RAD = Ratna Ajeng Dewantari; DP = Dewi Puspita; HIP = Harumi Iring Primastuti.

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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