

**Acceptable school-based sex education in the Thai society: Perspectives of stakeholders in
Chanthaburi province, Thailand**

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Abstract

Background: During puberty, adolescents change remarkably in sexual characteristics which in turn contribute to an increase in sexual feelings and arousal. Many of them experience in sexual behaviors. Despite rapid westernization in Thailand, sexual matters are still culturally taboo. Thus, perspectives of Thais toward acceptable school-based sex education for Thai adolescents are not well understood.

Objectives:

1. To understand the perspectives of stakeholders toward acceptable school-based sex education.
2. To identify points of concern when designing a school-based sex education in Thailand.

Methodology: This study is based on the descriptive approach to qualitative research.

Data were collected from parents, teachers, school administrators, community leaders, and provincial government authorities from January to April 2006. A total of 48 individuals participated in 28 in-depth interviews and 4 focus group interviews. Content analysis was used to analyze study data.

Results: Regarding school-based sex education, all participants concluded that: 1) its benefits outweighed its costs; 2) the costs of not having school-based sex education were much greater than having it; and 3) school-based sex education should be given to adolescents starting in grade 7. Parents expected that the focus of school-based sex education content should be a combination of abstinence-only and safe sex with more emphasis on abstinence-only. Teachers should teach sex education openly and explicitly for all topics except for sexual intercourse. Also, parents requested schools to conscientiously instill morality and Thai cultural values in their students in order to discourage them from engaging in sexual behaviors in general and to prevent them from being encouraged to get involved in premarital sex by school-based sex education in particular.

Conclusion: It was expected that school-based sex education acceptable for Thai society should be provided with appropriateness in regards to the focus and explicitness of the content, its sense of morality, and cultural concerns.

Key words : School-based Sex Education, Adolescents