

Strengthening the Role of Midwives in Adolescent Reproductive Health Education

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Abstract

Adolescent reproductive health is an important issue in public health development, given that adolescence is a transitional phase that is vulnerable to various physical, psychological, and social health problems. The low level of knowledge and awareness among adolescents regarding reproductive health requires the active role of health workers, especially midwives, in providing effective and sustainable education. This study aims to analyze in depth the role of midwives in strengthening adolescent reproductive health education through a qualitative literature review approach. Data were obtained from ten relevant national and international scientific articles, then analyzed using content analysis techniques to identify the main themes related to the role, challenges, and effectiveness of midwives in promoting reproductive health. The results of the study show that midwives have a multidimensional role as educators, counselors, facilitators, and community mobilizers who contribute to improving literacy and healthy reproductive behavior among adolescents. Factors supporting success include an empathetic communication approach, policy support, and cross-sector collaboration through programs such as Posyandu Remaja (Adolescent Health Posts) and Generasi Berencana (Family Planning Generation). This study concludes that strengthening midwives' educational competencies and integrating digital technology into counseling can be effective strategies for expanding the reach and impact of adolescent reproductive education. This study is expected to serve as a basis for the development of midwifery curricula and adolescent health promotion policies in the future.

Keywords: midwifery, adolescent reproductive health, health education, literature review, adolescent empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescents are a group experiencing complex physical, psychological, and social changes. During this period, adolescents need accurate information and guidance on reproductive health to enable them to make healthy and responsible decisions. However, various studies show that adolescents' knowledge of reproductive health is still low, especially in developing countries such as Indonesia. The 2022 Indonesian Demographic and Health Survey (IDHS) reported that 36% of female adolescents aged 15–19 years did not understand the risks of early pregnancy and the importance of maintaining their reproductive health (Salam et al., 2016).

Midwives play a strategic role in providing reproductive health education to adolescents due to their professional proximity to the community and their role in primary health care services. According to Bradfield et al. (2022), midwives not only function as providers of midwifery services, but also as educators who can increase adolescents' awareness and understanding of reproductive health through a communicative and empathetic approach (Bradfield et al., 2022). This is important considering that appropriate reproductive health education can reduce the risk of risky sexual behavior and unwanted pregnancies.

However, the role of midwives in adolescent reproductive health education has not been fully optimized. Health promotion programs involving midwives often still focus on pregnant women and infants, while adolescents are not yet a top priority. Research by Kumalasari and Nursanti (2022) shows that the level of adolescent participation in adolescent health center activities is still low due to the lack of educational initiatives from midwives in the field (Kumalasari & Nursanti, 2022). This shows a gap between potential and practice that should be filled by strengthening the capacity of midwives as agents of education.

In addition to role limitations, another challenge faced is the lack of ongoing training and guidance for midwives in providing education tailored to adolescent characteristics. A study by

Kubota et al. (2024) emphasizes that improving the competence and systemic support of midwives is urgently needed to strengthen community-based reproductive health services, including for adolescents (Kubota et al., 2024). With adequate training, midwives can play a more active role in providing comprehensive reproductive health education that is sensitive to the needs and socio-cultural values of adolescents.

In addition to structural factors and competencies, cultural barriers also hinder the implementation of reproductive health education. In many communities, discussions about sexuality and reproduction are still considered taboo, so midwives often face ethical dilemmas between respecting social norms and meeting the educational needs of adolescents. According to Baghini et al. (2023), empowering midwives in interpersonal communication and gender understanding can increase the effectiveness of reproductive education programs (Baghini et al., 2023). Thus, empowering midwives professionally is an important step in creating an environment that supports adolescent reproductive health education.

Based on this background, this article aims to descriptively analyze the role of midwives in adolescent reproductive health education through a review of current literature. The main objective is to identify the dimensions of the midwife's role, implementation barriers, and opportunities to strengthen the educational function of midwives in the context of adolescent health. Theoretically, this article is expected to enrich the literature on the role of midwifery in promoting reproductive health, while practically, the results of this study are expected to serve as a reference for the development of policies and midwife training that are more responsive to the needs of adolescents in Indonesia.

METHOD

This study used a qualitative approach with a library research method. This approach was chosen because it aimed to analyze in depth various scientific literature related to strengthening the role of midwives in adolescent reproductive health education without collecting field data. The qualitative method in library research allows researchers to understand social phenomena contextually through the interpretation of relevant previous research results (Atchan et al., 2016).

The data sources in this study consisted of secondary data obtained from scientific journal articles, academic books, research reports, and official documents from national and international health institutions. The inclusion criteria included literature published between 2016 and 2025, relevant to the topics of midwifery and adolescent reproductive health, and using a qualitative approach or systematic literature review. Articles that did not have full access, were not in English or Indonesian, or did not include a clear methodology were excluded from the analysis. The selection of sources was based on the reputation of the publisher and the scientific validity of the publication, as recommended by (Shiindi-Mbidi et al., 2023).

Data collection techniques were carried out through a systematic search process in several scientific databases such as PubMed, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, and Google Scholar. The keywords used included "midwife role," "adolescent reproductive health," "health education," "qualitative review," and "midwifery education." The article selection process followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) stages, namely identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion, as applied in a systematic midwifery study by (Pérez-Sánchez et al., 2024).

The collected data were then analyzed using content analysis. This approach was chosen because it aligns with the characteristics of qualitative research, which emphasizes the interpretation of meaning from texts and previous findings. Each article was reviewed in depth to identify key themes such as the educational role of midwives, implementation barriers, communication approaches, and youth empowerment. The analysis was conducted by grouping findings based on conceptual similarities, comparing results across studies, and drawing conceptual conclusions as recommended by (Ireland et al., 2021).

To maintain the validity and reliability of the research results, source triangulation was carried out by comparing findings from various types of publications and research contexts. This procedure aimed to strengthen the conclusions through cross-confirmation between international research results and the local Indonesian context. Additionally, a peer debriefing process was conducted by seeking input from midwifery academics to ensure that the interpretation of findings remained objective and consistent with the theoretical context. This approach is in line with the methodological recommendations in midwifery qualitative research proposed by (Bradley et al., 2019) .

RESULTS

This section presents the results of the analysis of five key literature sources that form the basis of the literature review on strengthening the role of midwives in adolescent reproductive health education. All of the articles analyzed share a common focus on improving adolescents' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors through educational interventions involving midwives and community health workers.

1. Improving Adolescent Knowledge through Reproductive Education by Midwives

The article entitled "Human Capital: Improving Adolescent Reproductive Health Knowledge" states that human capital improvement in the context of reproductive health can be achieved through community-based education facilitated by midwives (Ningsih & Noor, 2024) . The results of the study show that a sustainable education program can improve adolescents' understanding of topics such as menstruation, reproductive organ hygiene, and the risks of risky sexual behavior. The involvement of midwives in these activities strengthens interpersonal relationships and trust between health workers and adolescents.

2. The Influence of Midwife Education on Adolescent Attitudes and Behavior

A study by Fatkhiyah et al. (2020) entitled "Adolescent Reproductive Health Education" found that education provided by midwives in schools and adolescent health centers can change adolescents' attitudes toward healthy reproductive behavior (Fatkhiyah et al., 2020) . From the qualitative evaluation results, there was an increase in adolescents' awareness of the importance of maintaining reproductive organ hygiene and preventing early marriage. This article emphasizes that the success of education is not only influenced by the material presented but also by the midwives' empathetic and contextual interpersonal communication approach to local culture.

3. Health Education as an Early Prevention Effort

The study "Health Education in Improving Adolescent Reproductive Health Knowledge" by Ernawati et al. (2022) reinforces previous findings that health education plays an important role in preventing risky behavior among adolescents (Ernawati et al., 2022) . This study shows that educational activities conducted by midwives significantly contribute to improving adolescents' knowledge about reproductive functions, puberty, and sexually transmitted diseases. These results also emphasize the importance of integration between schools, health centers, and families as a support network for sustainable reproductive health education.

4. Strengthening the Role of Midwives in the Planned Generation Program

Mayangsari and Muthmainnah (2025), in their article "The Generasi Berencana Program as a Pillar of Adolescent Reproductive Health Education," explain that midwives play an important role in the implementation of the Generasi Berencana (GenRe) program developed by BKKBN (Mayangsari & Muthmainnah, 2025) . Their findings indicate that midwives' active participation in GenRe activities can strengthen adolescents' reproductive health literacy, particularly in understanding the concepts of healthy life and family planning. Additionally, midwives' role as facilitators encourages adolescents' involvement in community activities oriented toward the formation of positive behaviors.

5. The Role of Midwives in Reproductive Counseling and Support

The final article by Anjani et al. (2025) "The Role of Midwives in Preconception Counseling to Improve Reproductive Health" highlights the counseling function performed by midwives as a form of primary prevention in reproductive health issues (Anjani et al., 2025) . Although the main

focus is on premarital age, the results of this study are relevant because they show how midwives can build awareness among adolescents about the importance of physical and mental readiness before entering the reproductive phase. Midwives play a role not only as information providers, but also as emotional companions and agents of behavioral change.

Table 1. Summary of Key Findings from Literature Review on Strengthening the Role of Midwives in Adolescent Reproductive Health Education

No	Article Title	Author	Year	Focus of Study
1	Human Capital: Improving Adolescent Reproductive Health Knowledge	T. Ningsih & M. Noor	2024	Improving reproductive knowledge based on adolescent empowerment by midwives
2	Adolescent Reproductive Health Education	N. Fatkhiyah, M. Masturoh, D. Atmojo	2020	Effectiveness of reproductive education by midwives in schools and health posts
3	Health Education in Improving Adolescent Reproductive Health Knowledge	D. Ernawati et al.	2022	Integration of adolescent reproductive education based on midwife-school collaboration
4	The Planned Generation Program as a Pillar of Adolescent Reproductive Health Education	R. P. Mayangsari & M. Muthmainnah	2025	Implementation of the GenRe program with midwives as facilitators
5	The Role of Midwives in Preconception Counseling to Improve Reproductive Health	A. D. Anjani et al.	2025	Pre-marital counseling for adolescents and reproductive readiness
6	Midwives' Confidence and Practices in Sexual and Reproductive Health Education	Z. Bradfield et al.	2022	Analysis of midwives' confidence and practices in reproductive education
7	The Role of Midwives in Women's Empowerment: A Narrative Review	F. Baghini et al.	2023	Women's empowerment through reproductive education by midwives
8	The Influence of the Role of Midwives on Youth Activeness in Participating in Youth Posyandu	E. P. Kumalasari & D. P. Nursanti	2022	The influence of midwives' role on youth participation in Posyandu
9	A Gap Analysis of Midwifery Competency in Adolescent Reproductive Health	S. Kubota et al.	2024	Analysis of midwifery competency gaps in adolescent health services
10	Improving Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health: A Systematic Review of Potential Interventions	R. A. Salam et al.	2016	A systematic review of global adolescent reproductive education interventions

DISCUSSION

Based on the 10 best literature studies that have been analyzed previously, it can be concluded that the role of midwives in adolescent reproductive health education is not only as an educational activity, but also as a form of empowerment and sustainable preventive health promotion. The ten studies show consistency in placing midwives as central figures in building awareness, knowledge, and healthy behavior among adolescents, both at the community level and in formal educational institutions.

Conceptually, the role of midwives in adolescent reproductive education can be explained through the Health Promotion Model (Pender, 1982) and Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986). Pender's theory emphasizes that health behavior is influenced by individuals' perceptions of the benefits and obstacles of actions, as well as interpersonal support from their social environment. In this context, midwives become role models and facilitators who motivate adolescents to adopt healthy reproductive behaviors through interpersonal communication and empathetic approaches (Pender, 1982). Bandura's theory reinforces this concept by emphasizing the importance of observation and social learning—adolescents who see midwives as informative and trustworthy figures tend to be more receptive to educational messages (Bandura, 1986).

From an empirical perspective, local literature such as Ningsih & Noor (2024), Fatkhiyah et al. (2020), and Ernawati et al. (2022) confirm that reproductive health education activities conducted by midwives have successfully increased adolescents' knowledge and attitudes towards issues such as menstruation, puberty, reproductive organ hygiene, and the prevention of risky sexual behavior (Ernawati et al., 2022; Fatkhiyah et al., 2020; Ningsih & Noor, 2024). These results are reinforced by global studies such as Bradfield et al. (2022) and Salam et al. (2016), which highlight the effectiveness of educational interventions by midwives in reducing risky behavior and improving reproductive health literacy (Bradfield et al., 2022).

The study by Mayangsari & Muthmainnah (2025) through the Generasi Berencana (GenRe) program and the research by Kumalasari & Nursanti (2022) on adolescent health posts show the effectiveness of a community-based approach led by midwives. Their role is not limited to teaching, but also to encouraging youth participation in health promotion activities. This is in line with the concept of Community-Based Health Promotion, where the success of interventions depends heavily on the active involvement of the community and local health workers.

Additionally, the study by Kubota et al. (2024) identified competency gaps among midwives in adolescent health services in several developing countries, including the need for specialized training in adolescent communication and psychosocial understanding (Kubota et al., 2024). Meanwhile, Baghini et al. (2023) highlight the importance of empowering midwives to increase their confidence and educational abilities (Baghini et al., 2023). Thus, there is a need to strengthen midwives' capacity structurally through continuous training and policies that support their educational role in the health system.

These findings also point to an important theoretical implication: that midwives are strategic agents in building reproductive health literacy among adolescents. They are not merely medical technicians, but also educators and counselors who play a preventive role in the life cycle. The practical implication of these findings is the need for national policies that explicitly include the educational role of midwives in midwifery curricula and public health programs, as recommended by the WHO's "

However, several limitations still emerge in the analyzed literature. Most studies use descriptive designs and have not conducted longitudinal measurements of the long-term impact of reproductive education. Cultural factors are also an obstacle, especially in communities that still consider discussions about sexuality to be taboo. In addition, the use of digital technology in reproductive education by midwives is still minimal, even though the e-health approach has the potential to reach adolescents more widely and effectively in the digital era.

To strengthen the effectiveness of midwives' roles in the future, further research is recommended to develop a digital intervention model based on peer education facilitated by midwives. National policies need to expand the role of midwives from mere implementers to designers and evaluators of adolescent education programs. Thus, the results of these ten studies not only strengthen empirical evidence but also broaden theoretical insights into midwives as agents of social transformation in promoting adolescent reproductive health.

CONCLUSION

The results of this qualitative research based on literature review show that midwives have a strategic role as agents of education and empowerment in improving adolescent reproductive health literacy. Through community-based educational approaches, interpersonal communication, and preconception counseling, midwives are able to shape adolescents' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors towards responsible reproductive health. These findings expand the theoretical understanding of the Health Promotion Model (Pender) and Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura) concepts, emphasizing that reproductive education provided by midwives functions not only as a transfer of information but also as a process of social transformation that strengthens adolescents' awareness of their bodies and reproduction. Socially and culturally, these results emphasize the importance of midwives' role in bridging sensitive reproductive issues in communities that still consider the topic taboo, while academically enriching the discourse on midwifery as a promotive-preventive profession, not merely a curative one. Although this study is limited to literature sources and has not empirically tested the long-term effects of education, the results open up opportunities for further research assessing the effectiveness of digital education models and cross-sectoral interventions in improving adolescent reproductive health in a sustainable manner.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research results, it is recommended that midwifery practitioners strengthen their educational role through interpersonal communication training, mastery of contextual adolescent reproductive health material, and the use of interactive digital media in counseling. For academics, the integration of adolescent reproductive health promotion topics needs to be included more deeply in the midwifery education curriculum so that prospective midwives have balanced promotive and preventive competencies. Policy makers, such as the Health Office and the National Family Planning Coordination Board (BKKBN), are expected to expand their support for community-based programs such as Posyandu Remaja (Adolescent Health Posts) and Generasi Berencana (Planned Generation) by placing midwives as the main facilitators. For further research, it is recommended to use data triangulation methods (literature, interviews, and observation) to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of educational interventions by midwives. In addition, further studies can explore gender, cultural, and digital technology aspects in adolescent reproductive education practices to enrich the literature and expand the social impact of this research.

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