

Tikobulabula': Conceptualization of Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Well-Being in Fiji

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Abstract

Background: Over the past 40 years research in well-being has gained in momentum, with a greater focus being placed on measuring subjective well-being over economic and material development. The term well-being is commonly used when referring to sexuality and reproduction. However, in reality the 'wellbeing' component of sexual and reproductive 'health and wellbeing' is often not explicitly addressed in policies, programs and services and there is a scarcity of literature on the meaning of well-being in relation to sexuality and reproduction. This study explores how Fijian adolescent sexual and reproductive well-being (ASRW) is conceptualised by adolescents and those who work with or for adolescents. Understanding how ASRW is conceptualised provides a framework to guide decision makers and implementers in undertaking actions which aim to enhance subjective ASRW of the beneficiaries they intend to serve.

Method: Fourteen focus group discussions took place (between 3 and 10 participants per discussion) with adolescents aged 15 – 19 years and forty key informant interviews were held in two urban and two rural settings in Fiji. Both adolescents and key informants were asked how they conceptualise adolescent sexual and reproductive well-being (ASRW) and the factors which influence it. The results were analysed within a Social Constructionist framework using thematic coding in Nvivo 10.

Results: The study found that ASRW is perceived by adolescents and stakeholders in Fiji to be: experiencing positive emotions and life satisfaction; being physically healthy; possessing a set of capabilities; having a supportive social environment; and having materials and structural needs met. These findings are compared with and discussed in relation to dominant well-being theories.

Conclusion: This study provides a significant contribution to understanding the meaning of ASRW from the 'emic' (Insiders) perspective. Furthermore, the findings provide a framework which can be used to guide service providers, implementers and policy makers in improving adolescent subjective sexual and reproductive well-being.

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