EXPERIENCE REPORT OF A SCHOOL PROJECT: HEALTH EDUCATION AND IMMUNIZATION STRATEGIES AGAINST DENGUE

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ABSTRACT

Health education acts as an essential tool in health promotion, empowering people to adopt preventive practices that ensure safety and well-being, both individually and collectively. This educational process is fundamental for building a more conscious and healthy society. Dengue is a serious viral disease, and immunization is one of the main strategies for its control. Objective: To promote awareness of the importance of safe vaccination using interactive and playful teaching methods. Methodology: An illustrative lecture on the symptoms and prevention of dengue was given, followed by discussion groups and thematic activities to reinforce the children's learning. Interactive games were used to assess the students' understanding. Results: The playful activities facilitated the children's assimilation of the content, highlighting the effectiveness of interactive methodologies in health education. Conclusion: Adapting teaching methodologies to the age group of the target audience is crucial for the success of health education projects, suggesting that interactive and participatory approaches are essential for engagement and understanding of complex topics such as immunization against dengue fever.

Keywords: Immunization; Dengue; Patient Safety; Health Education.

INTRODUCTION

Dengue is a febrile arboviral disease, with compulsory notification, that affects more than 110 countries, mainly those with tropical and subtropical climates. The disease is transmitted through the bite of the *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* mosquitoes, which are highly adaptable and resistant to insecticides (BRASIL, 2024). In Brazil, vaccination is an essential strategy for the prevention of infectious

diseases, with the National Immunization Program (PNI) achieving vaccination coverage of over 90% for most immunobiologicals. However, vaccine acceptance faces challenges, including misinformation and resistance, which can compromise the effectiveness of immunization campaigns and public health (BRAZIL, 2024).

In this context, the Academic League for Patient Safety (LASPAC) carried out an educational project in elementary schools, focused on vaccination against dengue. The initiative aimed to promote health education among children and their families, addressing the importance of vaccination and preventive practices against dengue. Health education is an essential process for increasing individuals' autonomy in caring for their health and in dialogue with professionals and managers, as defined by the Ministry of Health (BRAZIL, 2006).

Increased resistance to vaccines and the spread of misinformation about their safety and efficacy pose critical challenges to public health. Vaccination, as a preventive strategy, is essential for controlling dengue, a disease that can lead to serious complications and even death. The educational approach adopted by LASPAC in elementary schools is justified by the need to engage the school community in disease prevention and the promotion of healthy practices. With the aim of addressing resistance and improving vaccine acceptance, the project sought to dispel myths and provide evidence-based information about dengue and the importance of immunization.

Educational activities in school settings allow direct contact with children and their families, creating opportunities for disseminating crucial information and promoting public health. This experience report describes the actions carried out by LASPAC, highlighting the methodologies used and the results obtained, with the aim of contributing to the improvement of educational and vaccination practices in public health.

METHODOLOGY

The project was implemented in an elementary school on June 3 and 4, 2024, from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. The activity was divided into two groups of classes: on the first

day, we worked with children aged 3 to 6, and on the second day, with older children aged 7 to 10. On the first day, we started with an interactive lecture, using illustrative posters to explain the symptoms of dengue and how to prevent it. The visual approach was effective in making the content more accessible and understandable for young children. We then held discussion circles with the children and teachers, allowing for more in-depth discussions on the topic. This space for dialogue was essential for clarifying doubts and facilitating communication between children and educators. To make learning more playful and reinforce the content of the lecture, we organized several themed games. Among them, we highlight the game "Hit the Mosquito," in which each winner received a gift, and the "Game of Seven Errors," which used an illustrative image of an environment conducive to dengue, challenging children to identify errors and reflect on ways to prevent it. We also played a "Memory Game," during which we talked to the players about dengue prevention while they played, thus reinforcing the content of the lecture. To conclude, we distributed themed drawings about dengue for each child to color, consolidating their learning in a creative way. On the second day, the approach was similar, but adjusted for the older age group. We repeated the interactive lecture, but with a more advanced level of detail, and the conversation circles were adapted to allow for a deeper and more critical dialogue about dengue. The games were adjusted to challenge older children, keeping the "Hit the Mosquito" and "Spot the Seven Differences" games with more complex rules and content. The "Memory Game" was also enriched with more detailed questions about dengue. We ended the day with a quiz on the topic, where children could win prizes for answering correctly. We concluded by distributing coloring pages, encouraging creative expression and reinforcing learning. The methodology applied aimed not only to convey information, but also to actively engage children through interactive and playful activities and, creating an educational and engaging environment that promoted a deeper and more lasting understanding of dengue prevention.

Figure 1. Lecture on dengue symptoms and prevention.

Source: Own work, 2024.

Figure 2. The memory game.

Source: Own work, 2024.

RESULTS

During the project, it was observed that playful and interactive activities were effective in helping children assimilate the content, proving the efficiency of this methodology in health education. The activity also involved the participation of the pedagogy course and highlighted the importance of interdisciplinarity in the development of educational projects. In addition, the experience revealed the challenges of communicating health information to children, emphasizing the need to adapt language and teaching approaches according to the age group of the target audience.

CONCLUSION

The project demonstrated that health education for children can be significantly improved through interactive and playful approaches, which facilitate students' understanding and engagement. The experience reinforced the importance of adapting teaching methodologies to the age group of the target audience and of interdisciplinary collaboration in the development of educational projects.

The success of the initiative suggests that future health education initiatives should continue to explore dynamic and participatory methods to address complex public health issues such as dengue immunization.

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