

ABSTRACT

This is a comparative study carried out on 95 adolescents in the age range 12 - 15 years from a rural all-age school. The aim of the study was to examine the knowledge and attitudes of adolescents regarding elderly citizens in a rural community. Two groups of adolescents were used in the study. Group one (school group) consisted of 62 students who did not have structured exposure to issues of aging and the elderly whereas group two (Band of Mercy) consisted of 33 students who had structural exposure to aging and the elderly.

The result indicated that in general both were knowledgeable about aging and the elderly and had positive attitude towards aging and the elderly. However, a larger percentage of the Band of Mercy group knew that the elderly population is increasing than the school group. Furthermore, more of the Band of Mercy group indicated that they respected the elderly than the school group. On the other hand, less of the school group felt that older people with little education are not respected than the Band of Mercy group.

Programmes of this nature should be estimated in a Public Health Epidemiological framework and should embrace the pillars of primary care and the fundamental principles of health education. The principles of learning speak to the fact that knowledge alone does not ensure change in attitude.