



A Second Look



Parent–Adolescent Sexual Communication

ALLYSSA HARRIS

Risky sexual activity among adolescents is a major public health concern. Recent statistics from the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey indicate that 46.8% of adolescents have had sexual intercourse and that 34% are currently sexually active (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014b). Early sexual activity places adolescents at risk for pregnancy, with approximately 6% of adolescent females having experienced a pregnancy in 2010 (Kost & Henshaw, 2014). Adolescents account for approximately 50% of the 20 million

cases of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) annually, with one in four adolescent females currently infected (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014a). Adolescents and young adults between the ages of 13 and 24 years accounted for 24% of all new HIV infections in 2010 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015). Therefore, understanding the factors that may reduce adolescent sexual activity is important.

Multiple factors have been found to be protective in reducing adolescent sexual risk

Abstract Risky sexual behavior among adolescents is a major public health concern with potentially long-lasting consequences, including pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, and HIV/AIDS. Researchers have demonstrated that parent–adolescent sexual communication can mitigate adolescent risky sexual behaviors; the development of interventions that support this process are vital. This column examines a recent study that evaluated a parent–adolescent sexual communication intervention. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.nwh.2016.01.002>

Keywords adolescent sexual activity | parent–adolescent sexual communication | parent–child communication | STI



behaviors, including family structure stability (Kotchick, Shaffer, Miller, & Forehand, 2001), academic achievement and educational aspirations (Scott et al., 2011), religiosity (Landor, Simons, Simons, Brody, & Gibbons, 2011), parent-child closeness (Cox, Shreffler, Merten, Schwerdtfeger Gallus, & Dowdy, 2014; Markham

Adolescents have identified parents as their most important source of sexual information and knowledge and the greatest influence on their decisions about sex

et al., 2010), and parent-adolescent sexual communication (Levine, 2011). Chief among them is parent-adolescent sexual communication, which may include topics such as pubertal development, healthy relationships, pregnancy and contraception, and STI and HIV/AIDS prevention (Beckett et al., 2010; Sneed, Somoza, Jones, & Alfaro, 2013).

Adolescents have identified parents as their most important source of sexual information and knowledge and the greatest influence on their decisions about sex (Albert, 2010, 2012).

Parent-adolescent sexual communication is one vehicle by which parents communicate their values, beliefs, culture, and community norms (Bleakley, Hennessy, Fishbein, & Jordan, 2009; Hutchinson & Wood, 2007; Werner-Wilson & Fitzharris, 2001). These conversations can play a significant role in shaping adolescent sexuality.

Researchers have provided evidence that parent-adolescent sexual communication plays a significant role in delaying sexual debut, reducing sexual activity, increasing contraception and condom use, and decreasing the number of sexual partners (Diiorio, Pluhar, & Belcher, 2003; Harris, Sutherland, & Hutchinson, 2013; Hutchinson, Jemmott, Jemmott, Braverman, & Fong, 2003; Hyde et al., 2013). In addition, adolescent sexual risk behaviors are reduced when the sexual communication between parent and adolescent is open, honest, comfortable, and knowledgeable (Jerman & Constantine, 2010; Whitaker, Miller, May, & Levin, 1999).

Although many parents engage in parent-adolescent sexual communication, there are many others who do not. Parents often report feelings of discomfort and embarrassment, lack of sexual knowledge, and lack of communication skills (Jaccard, Dittus, & Gordon, 2000; Miller et al., 2009; Widman, Choukas-Bradley,



Allyssa L. Harris, PhD, RN, WHNP-BC, is an assistant professor in the William F. Connell School of Nursing at Boston College in Chestnut Hill, MA. The author reports no conflicts of interest or relevant financial relationships. Address correspondence to: harrisal@bc.edu.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/2634079>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/2634079>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)