
A photograph of a person from the waist down, wearing a red t-shirt and blue denim jeans. The person is leaning against a red brick wall with their right hand resting on the bricks. The background is the brick wall, and the lighting is bright, casting shadows.

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Health Care Workers'
BELIEFS and PRACTICES
Around **PAP SCREENING**
FOR ADOLESCENTS Seeking
Contraception



The United States continues to have one of the highest adolescent pregnancy rates, with an adolescent birth rate in 2009 of 34.2 births per 1,000 women compared to other developed countries such as Canada and the Netherlands with rates of 14.1 and 5.3 per 1,000 women, respectively (UNdata, 2013). Many adolescents, defined as 10 to 19 years of age (World Health Organization [WHO], n.d.) in the United States do not use contraception at sexual debut. Between 23 percent and 52 percent of adolescents report not using contraception at sexual debut, and the younger the adolescents the less likely they are to use contraception (Coles, Makino, & Stanwood, 2011; Finer & Philbin, 2013; Gibbs, 2013; Martinez, Copen, & Abma, 2011). Annually, approximately 252,000 pregnancies occur in adolescents ages 15 to 17 who didn't use contraception at their first intercourse (Finer & Philbin, 2013). Many adolescents don't seek contraception for weeks or even months after becoming sexually active (Finer & Philbin, 2013).

Abstract: Adolescents often avoid seeing a health care provider to obtain contraception because they do not want to undergo a pelvic exam and Pap screening for fear of stress, pain or embarrassment. The purpose of this quality improvement project was to study health care workers' attitudes and beliefs about Pap screening and to educate them on the latest evidence-based guidelines, with the hope of ultimately decreasing unnecessary screening. Results showed a modest reduction in the frequency of Pap screening; however, many adolescents continued to undergo unnecessary Pap screening. The reluctance of health care workers to change their practice demonstrates the need for better methods of translating evidence-based guidelines into practice. DOI: 10.1111/1751-486X.12203

Keywords: adolescents | birth control | contraception | Pap screening | quality improvement project | unintended pregnancy

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