

RAP* Time



RURAL CENTER *for* AIDS/STD PREVENTION

A JOINT PROJECT OF
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*Rural AIDS/STD prevention. rap (rap) v. Slang. To talk freely and openly. Vol. 3, No. 12, December 3, 1999

Greater Number of Coital Partners Related to Health Risk Behaviors Among Adolescents

About one-half of high school students nationwide report having had sexual intercourse and about one-third report having had coitus in the past three months. The percentage of adolescents with four or more coital partners was 18.8% in 1993, 17.8% in 1995, and 16.0% in 1997.

Methodology

This study determined the frequency and correlates of number of sexual intercourse partners from a survey of public high school students (grades 9-12) in South Carolina.

Data were collected during the 1993 academic year using the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS), developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The YRBSS focuses on six major areas of adolescent health behavior: intentional and unintentional injuries; tobacco use, alcohol, and other drug use; sexual behaviors; dietary behaviors; and physical inactivity.

The sample for this analysis consisted of 3805 subjects from 56 public high schools. The distribution of schools included

17 large schools, 20 medium schools, and 19 small schools.

Outcomes of the Study

Fifty-two percent and 48% of the participants were females and males, respectively. Forty percent and 60% were Black and White, respectively.

Major findings include:

- Fifty-two percent and 61% of the White females and males, respectively, reported previous coitus with at least one partner in their lifetime.
- Seventy percent and 88% of the Black females and males, respectively, reported at least one lifetime coital partner.
- About 15% and 25% of White females and males, respectively, reported having four or more lifetime coital partners.
- About 26% and 56% of Black females and males, respectively, reported four or more coital partners.
- For Black females, alcohol, tobacco, marijuana use, and dating violence behaviors were the strongest predictors of an increased number of sexual partners; White females had similar predictors with the addition of physical fighting.

- For White males, alcohol, tobacco, marijuana use, physical fighting, carrying weapons, and dating violence were the strongest predictors of an increased number of sexual intercourse partners. Black males had similar predictors with the addition of binge alcohol use.

Implications for Prevention

An increased number of sexual intercourse partners were correlated with a cluster of risk behaviors that placed the adolescents at risk for unintended pregnancy, HIV infection and other STDs. Prevention of adolescent sexual and other health risk behaviors requires creative approaches in school and community settings. Intervention strategies designed to minimize a broad range of health risk behavior risk may also decrease sexual risk behavior.

SOURCE: Valois., et al. (1999). Relationship between number of sexual intercourse partners and selected health risk behaviors among public high school students. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 25, 328-335.

Relationship Characteristics Associated with Condom Use

The influence of relationship factors on condom use has been understudied. This study surveyed undergraduate men and women to examine the association between relationships characteristics and condom use.

A total of 215 unmarried undergraduates who attended a large public university in the Pacific Northwest participated in the study.

Higher levels of love, longer relationships, and more serious and committed relationships were individually associated with less condom use. Respondents were significantly less likely to use condoms if they were using a hormonal method of birth control.

The findings suggest that HIV/STD prevention interventions may be more effective with young adults in dating relationships if they include components that address relationship characteristics.

SOURCE: Civic, D. (1999). The association between characteristics of dating relationships and condom use among heterosexual young adults. *AIDS Education and Prevention*, 11, 343-352.

STDs High in Urban Teens Despite Moderate Risk Behaviors

An estimated 3 million U.S. teenagers acquire a STD annually. Adolescent females are at high risk for STDs for biological and social reasons. The prospective cohort study assessed the prevalence and incidence of STDs in female adolescents attending four teen clinics in a southeastern city, to describe risk behaviors and partner characteristics.

At enrollment, 260 (40%) of 650 sexually active females ages 14-19 years had an STD. At follow-up, 112 (23%) had an incident infection. At either enrollment or follow-up, 53% had an STD; of those with one lifetime partner, 30% had an STD. Having a new partner or friends who sell cocaine was independently associated with incident infection.

STDs were extremely high in this population, even in teenagers with only 1 lifetime partner. Individual risk behaviors appeared less important for STD risk than population factors.

SOURCE: Bunnell, R. E., et al. (1999). High prevalence and incidence of sexually transmitted diseases in urban adolescent females despite moderate risk behaviors. *Journal of Infectious Diseases*, 180, 1624-1631.

About 40,000 New HIV Infections Occur in U.S. Every Year

According to CDC, about 650,000 to 900,000 people are currently living with HIV in the U.S., with about 40,000 new infections every year (70% among men and 30% among women). Men who have sex with men represent an estimated 60% of the new infections, with injection drug use and heterosexual behavior representing 25% and 15% of the new infections, respectively.

SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A glance at the HIV epidemic. Fact sheet prepared by the CDC. December 1999.

Teens Believe Vaccine Would Increase Risk

Adolescents rated the impact of hypothetical vaccines described as 90% and 50% efficacious. The 50% vaccine was largely unacceptable and most believed that the 90% vaccine would cause increased risk behavior.

SOURCE: Webb, P. K., et al. (1999). HIV immunization: Acceptability and anticipated effects on sexual behavior among adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 25, 320-322.



RAP Time is a monthly publication of the Rural Center for AIDS/STD Prevention (RCAP). RCAP is a joint project of Indiana University, Bloomington and Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana. The major focus of RCAP is the promotion of HIV/STD prevention in rural America, with the goal of reducing HIV/STD incidence. The opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of Indiana University or Purdue University.

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