

The Persistence of Peers: Reproductive and Sexual Health Information Channels in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan

Previous research raises doubts regarding the accuracy of peer based information concerning reproductive and sexual health, particularly for young adults. (cite) Health programs often seeks to expand information channels for young adults, incorporating media efforts, increased familial awareness of educational needs, offering educational opportunities through medical professionals, and expanding educational opportunities available in schools. (cite). In this paper we examine two countries that have experienced large scale family planning programs over the past decade, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. In each case, efforts to improve reproductive health succeeded in raising contraceptive knowledge and use, leading to significant declines in abortion rates. Using two waves of Demographic and Health Surveys we find, heavy peers reliance for both young men and women. These survey finding are confirmed by interview and focus groups held in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan in 2002. We conclude with an assessment of the reproductive and sexual health risks in each countries linked to the continued reliance on questionable information channels for young adults.