

PAA 2005, Abstract Submission

Title:

Behavior of Mexican Adolescents during their First Coitus under the Interaction Sexual Theory

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Sessions chosen for submission

Choice 1

Session 301: Adolescent Relationship and Sexual Behavior

Wendy D. Manning

Choice 2

Session 116: Sexual Behavior

Amy Tsui

“BEHAVIOR OF MEXICAN ADOLESCENTS DURING THE FIRST COITUS UNDER THE INTERACTION SEXUAL THEORY”

Rodrigo Jimenez Uribe

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

JUSTIFICATION

Most Mexican adolescents begin their sexual life without planning, in conditions of sexual ignorance and without contraceptive methods. HIV and other STI's infections are mainly produced in people of 10 to 24 years old. In Mexico the age at first coitus has been descending constantly. Also we have to consider that in Mexico *circa* the 25% of population has 10 to 19 years old, that adolescent pregnancies in Mexico are common and very often not-wished (Marston, Juárez and Izazola, 2004) and finally the 86% of the whole HIV cases until 1999 were infected through the sexual via (Jimenez, 2001).

First sexual intercourse is very significant because it defines the subsequent coitus. It's very hard to switch the previous sexual risky behavior into a safety one (Pedrosa & Vallejo, 2000). Sexual education programs are essential in the evolution to the first sexual intercourse; it's documented that young people who received sexual education are more prone to use condoms in their first coitus (Pick de Weiss and Townsend, 1989; cited in Population Reports, 1995).

When asking young people about the non use of contraceptive methods the answer often states in first place the non expected sex and in second place the lack of sexual information (Zelnik and Shah, 1983; Menkes and Suárez, 2002). It's usual that adolescents start their sexual life without thinking and therefore without planning it.

Adolescents around the world say they learn about sex not at school or with their parents, but with their friends, magazines, media and streets. However, a considerable proportion of this information is erroneous and incomplete; even if this information is given by parents who are not well documented. Also they say that sexual information they received was not enough and had arrived too late (Population Reports, 1995). As a consequence, they want to know more about sexuality.

It has been seen with the European experience that those countries who have accomplished the demographic transition have suffered such social transformations: an earlier sexual beginning, a marriage deferment, a sexual activity beyond the conjugal union, marriage replacements by consensual unions and the raise of births away from the marriage (Juarez, 1999; Quilodrán, 2000). Because of the Mexico's advanced stage in the demographic transition is imperious to study the adolescent sexuality (Quilodrán, 2000).

This is our interests, we have to focus in young people who are discovering their own sexuality and don't comprise with an accurate information about the implications of risky sex, like not-wished pregnancies and STI's infections –mainly HIV–. It's also in this period, of the puberty, when adolescents are developing their personalities, and that's why we have to investigate what kind of information they get and from where it comes.

Nowadays formal agents of information like teachers and doctors exist but also it exist another ambit: the familiar and the friendship domain. It's for that reason at the moment we don't know who the sexual informative agent of adolescents is, and if this information plays a crucial role in the adolescent's sexual knowledge and neither we know if the adolescent sexual knowledge has positive or negative outcome in the adolescent sexual behavior. It's important to discover if the information is differential by agent or not, because if that's true under the policy view it will be necessary to identify which agent and which information is the one that facilitate a healthy sexual behavior to prevent the STI's and HIV, and which one is that induce a risky sexual behavior.

Recent research in social theories about sexual behavior have reached the conclusion that people's sexual decision, whether safety or risky, is influenced not only by the individual characteristics but by the partner's, environment and community characteristics (Aral y Gorbach, 2002). In such way, the same person could act in different manners with different partners or in different environments like Mexican migrants when arrive in the United States.

By all these reasons it's crucial to know the conditions at the first adolescent coitus and which factors play the most important roles in the last decision of young people to use or not the condom.

OBJECTIVES

The aim of this paper is to understand the mechanism that finally leads an adolescent to have safe sex with condom, feature that is of main concern, it hasn't been well analyzed and thus, it lacks data to implement effective politics and programs heading for prevention of STI's and mainly HIV considering that nowadays we don't have a real cure.

The intention of this work is to study the relation between sexual communication and sexual knowledge of the Mexican adolescents, to demonstrate that exist an association between sexual communication and quality of adolescent's sexual knowledge, depending the agent. Also, it pretends to prove the association between adolescent's sexual knowledge and adolescent's sexual behavior of Mexican adolescents. It's taken the Sexual Interaction Theory (SIT) as theoretical framework to understand the mixed implications between all the involved factors: individual, partner, environment and community. Finally it pretends to illustrate that sexual knowledge have an important influence in the sexual behavior of young people.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

This paper uses data collected in the survey for the program called “Gente Joven” carried out by MEXFAM in 1999 among 3097 adolescents of both sexes aged 13-19 in several urban and rural areas of Mexico. The issues covered by the questionnaire include socio demographic background, relationship with parents and partner, knowledge about sexual matters, self-assessment of personality and attitudes relevant to contraceptive methods –including condom use–, STI’s and HIV risk awareness and beliefs, presence of the program “Gente Joven” and prevalence of STI’s and adolescent pregnancies.

Multinomial logistic regression models are used to examine the influence of communication in sexual knowledge depending agent. Also, using multinomial logistic regression models, it’s studied the condom use choice within the context of SIT, i.e. analyzing each one of the spheres: individual, partner, environment and community that affect the adolescent’s choice at first intercourse.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Depending agent it exists a differential grade of sexual knowledge in adolescents whether they have started their sexual life or not, being teachers and doctors those who give the more reliable information.

Sexual knowledge plays a major role in almost all the spheres of the SIT (excluding the environmental sphere) to use the condom at first coitus, even that this condition is necessary but not sufficient. At individual sphere scholarship besides to sex and social status are determinants in the adolescent’s choice of using condom at fist intercourse. At the partner sphere the communication among the couple and the age difference among the couple are fundamentals in the decision of practicing safe sex with condom at first coitus. At the environmental sphere self-assessment of personality, attitudes relevant to contraceptive methods, living with both parents and lack of “machismo” are crucial in the adolescents’ choice of condom use at the first sex and contrary to the expected the high sexual communication with parents stimulates the risky sex. Finally at the community sphere the high prevalence of STI’s is associated with the probability of using condom at first intercourse and the prevalence of adolescent pregnancies is not statistically significant in the model.

We expect the knowledge achieved in this work could contribute to understand how the first sex is developed and which characteristics leads to practice safe sex with the condom use. Also we hope that this work aid to implement politics and programs in Mexico that helps adolescents to avoid STI’s and HIV.

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