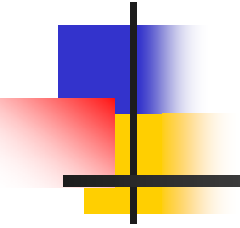


Teacher Perception of Adolescent Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behaviors Regarding Sexual Health





Background:

- Unintended teen pregnancies, HIV, and other Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are significant public health problems.
- Teenage mothers are less likely to complete high school and college, more likely to live in poverty and require public assistance, and less likely to get married than others the same age who are not parents.
- Additionally, the babies born to these teenage mothers are subject to low birth weight, costly medical interventions, sudden infant death syndrome, child abuse, and educational and behavioral problems later in life.



Background continued:

- The long-term consequences of infection with HIV and other STDs include infertility, chronic pain, cancer, and death¹.
- Almost 1 million teens become pregnant in the U.S. annually¹.
- HIV and other STDs and their complications are estimated to cost the United States \$17 billion each year.
- Approximately, 4 million teenagers are infected with an STD each year.



Background continued:

- The goals of many public health policies and programs have been to either increase the percentage of adolescents who abstain from sexual activity or increase the percentage of adolescents who consistently use condoms or other forms of birth control in addition to condoms.
- Unfortunately, although there have been some promising statistics that we are moving in the right direction, we are far from reaching the goals set forth by Healthy People 2010.
- In order to effectively change the sexual behaviors of adolescents across the U.S., we first must understand the knowledge and attitudes regarding sexual health that adolescents bring with them.



Purpose:

- To evaluate teacher perception of students in regards to sexual health knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors.
- Because adolescents spend a significant portion of their day with teachers and interact with their peers in front of teachers, the teachers' perceptions of the students' sexual health is the best indicator of the students' actual sexual health, short of asking the students themselves.
- The high school would not allow the students to be surveyed directly.



Methods:

- Oregon High School was selected as the study population, because Oregon, IL was the site of my rural preceptorship.
- Thirty surveys were distributed to Oregon High School teachers in their mailboxes. Nineteen surveys were returned to the high school secretary.
- The survey consisted of fifteen questions asking the teachers to estimate from what sources adolescents receive their sexual health knowledge, the percentage of students who know certain facts about sexually transmitted diseases (STD's), and the percentage of students who partake in certain sexually related behaviors.



Survey:

- Please answer the following questions by circling the number that corresponds to how much you agree with each of the following statements. 1 is highly disagree, and 5 is highly agree.

	Highly agree			Highly disagree	
■ Adolescents learn much of their sexual health knowledge from <u>parents</u> .	1	2	3	4	5
■ Adolescents learn much of their sexual health knowledge from <u>friends</u> .	1	2	3	4	5
■ Adolescents learn much of their sexual health knowledge from <u>doctors</u> .	1	2	3	4	5
■ Adolescents learn much of their sexual health knowledge from <u>television and movies</u> .	1	2	3	4	5
■ Adolescents learn much of their sexual health knowledge from <u>sexual education classes</u> .	1	2	3	4	5



Survey continued:

- For the following questions, please select what you think is the most accurate percentage.
- What percentage of high school students do you think know that sexually transmitted diseases can be transmitted through oral sex? 0-19% 20-39% 40-59% 60-79% 80-100%
- What percentage of high school students do you think know that sexually transmitted diseases (STD's) are the cause of Cervical cancer? 0-19% 20-39% 40-59% 60-79% 80-100%
- What percentage of high school students do you think know that sexually transmitted diseases (STD's) can cause infertility? 0-19% 20-39% 40-59% 60-79% 80-100%
- What percentage of high school students do you think would like more information from sexual education classes regarding STD's and birth control? 0-19% 20-39% 40-59% 60-79% 80-100%
- What percentage of high school students do you think have had oral sex? 0-19% 20-39% 40-59% 60-79% 80-100%



Survey continued:

- | | | | | | |
|---|-------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What percentage of high school students do you think have had sexual intercourse? | 0-19% | 20-39% | 40-59% | 60-79% | 80-100% |
|---|-------|--------|--------|--------|---------|

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|--------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Of those high school students who are sexually active, how many partners on average (oral sex or intercourse) do you think each has had? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 or > |
|--|---|---|---|---|--------|

- | | | | | | |
|--|-------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What percentage of sexually active high school females do you think use the <u>birth control pill</u>? | 0-19% | 20-39% | 40-59% | 60-79% | 80-100% |
|--|-------|--------|--------|--------|---------|

- | | | | | | |
|--|-------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What percentage of sexually active high school students do you think use <u>condoms regularly</u>? | 0-19% | 20-39% | 40-59% | 60-79% | 80-100% |
|--|-------|--------|--------|--------|---------|

- | | | | | | |
|---|-------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What percentage of sexually active high school students do you think use <u>no</u> form of protection or birth control? | 0-19% | 20-39% | 40-59% | 60-79% | 80-100% |
|---|-------|--------|--------|--------|---------|

- Please circle one of the following for each of the two demographic questions:
 - Your gender: MALE or FEMALE
 - Your age: 20-24 25-29 30-34 35-39 40-44 45-49 50-54 55-59 60- 64 over 65



Results:

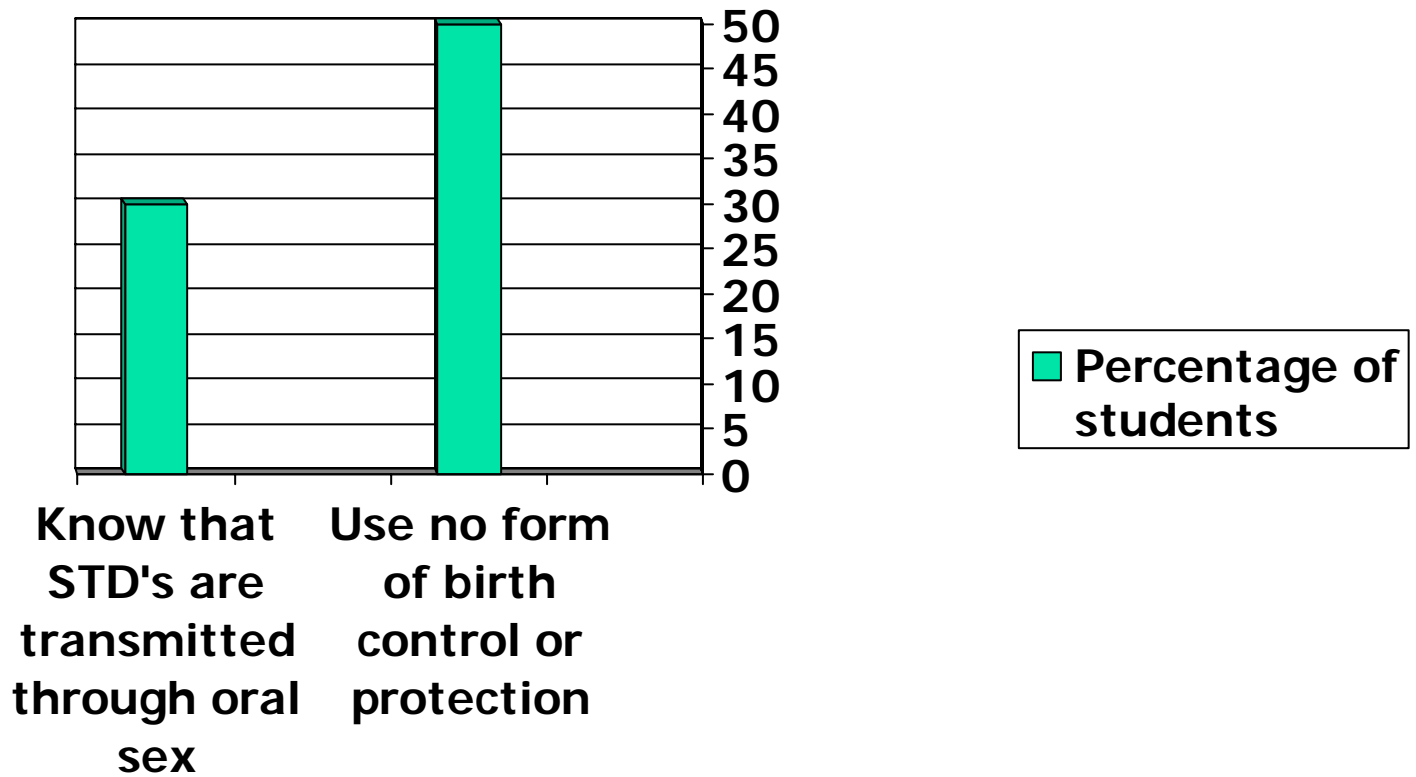
- Teachers believed that students learn most of their sexual health knowledge from friends, followed by (in decreasing order) television and movies, sexual education classes, parents, and lastly doctors.
- Teachers thought that only 20-39% of high school students knew that STD's could be transmitted through oral sex and only 0-19% knew that STD's could cause cervical cancer and infertility.



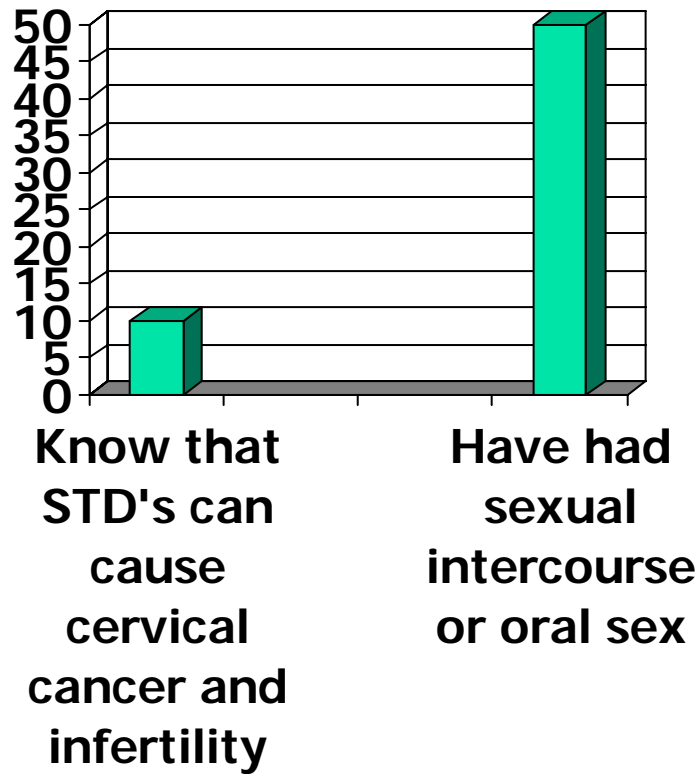
Results continued:

- Teachers estimated that 40-59% of students would like more information from sexual education classes.
- Teachers believed that 40-59% of high school students have had oral sex and 40-59% have had sexual intercourse, with an average number of three sexual partners.
- Teachers thought that 40-59% of sexually active high school females use the birth control pill and 40-59% use no form of birth control or protection.
- Teachers estimated that only 20-39% of sexually active high school students use condoms regularly.

Teachers think that...



Teachers think that...



Percentage of students



Conclusions:

- Based upon the teachers' responses, it seems that sexual health knowledge is lacking among high school students, although the students would like more information from sexual education classes.
- It appears that students learn more from sexual education classes than from parents or doctors, so implementing a more comprehensive sexual education class would probably be the most beneficial intervention.



Conclusions continued:

- The teachers believe that a significant proportion of high school students are engaging in high-risk sexual activity.
- Therefore, it would seem reasonable as a next step to survey the students directly in order to find ways to reduce their high-risk sexual behaviors.



References:

1. *Healthy People 2010*, Special edition CD-ROM, Healthy People Consortium Meeting and American Public Health Association Conference, November 2000.
2. Levine, SB and SM Coupey. "Adolescent substance use, sexual behavior, and metropolitan status: is "urban" a risk factor?" *Journal of Adolescent Health*. 32(5):350-5, May 2003.
3. Atav, Serdar and Gale A Spencer. "Health risk behaviors among adolescents attending rural, suburban, and urban schools: a comparative study." *Family & Community Health*. 25(2):53-64, July 2002.
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5. *National Survey of Adolescents and Young Adults: Sexual Health Knowledge, Attitudes, and Experiences*. The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. Menlo Park, California, 2003.
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