Title:
Sex Education and Its Impact on Adolescent Pregnancy Rates and Sexually Transmitted Infections

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Keywords:
STD's/STI's, adolescent pregnancy and sex education

References:


Abstract Summary:
Adolescent pregnancy is a public health concern which demands the attention of educators, providers, parents, and students. Sex education in schools is mandatory; the various forms of this education vary. It is imperative the appropriate approach be utilized to help decreases the incidence of adolescent pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.

**Learning Activity:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEARNING OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE</th>
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<td>The learner will be able to effectively demonstrate why adolescent pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections are a major health concern, and be able to discuss why it is important for sex education to be implemented into the school curricula.</td>
<td>-Statistics will be provided to support why adolescent pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections are a major public health concern. -Information will be provided to demonstrate risks of acquiring certain sexually transmitted infections -The research provided will demonstrate why sex education is an important aspect in the school system.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The learner will be able to effectively identify which form of sex education is most beneficial</td>
<td>-Research clearly demonstrates which form of sex education is most beneficial when aiming</td>
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Abstract

Objective: Adolescent pregnancy continues to be a public health concern, as it bears a vastly large financial burden on the country, and often, the health and welfare of the mother and child becomes compromised. Although the rate of adolescent pregnancy has decreased in the United States (U.S.), the number remains too high. The estimated rate of adolescent pregnancy in the U.S. is the highest in the developed world – with approximately 900,000 annually – roughly 400,000 of which result in births (Kann, Brener, McManus, & Wechsler, 2012; Stanger-Hall & Hall, 2011). To help combat this issue, schools have implemented mandatory sex education programs into their curricula with the goal of not only decreasing the number of adolescent pregnancies, but also minimizing the incidence of sexually transmitted infections (STI's), specifically gonorrhea and chlamydia, which have been shown to cause major adverse effects later on in life. As such, an integrative review was performed to determine if sex education has positive effects on adolescent pregnancy and STI rates, and if so, which form of sex education – abstinence-only or comprehensive – provides the desired results.

Methods: Three electronic databases (PubMed, The Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature [CINAHL], and Google Scholar) were searched to provide sufficient evidence to support the integrative review. All research studies were published within the past five years. In addition, supplemental articles were used to further support the review. Research studies included both systematic reviews and randomized-controlled trials.

Results: Compared to abstinence-only sex education, comprehensive sex education demonstrated much greater outcomes in adolescents, resulting in decreased rates of pregnancy and STI's. It is important to note that while comprehensive sex education discusses topics such as sexuality, contraception, STI's, and human anatomy, the ultimate goal is to teach abstinence as the best way to prevent pregnancy. Studies also found a lack of evidence to support the notion that comprehensive sex education causes adolescents to engage in increased risk taking behaviors (Lindberg & Maddow-Zimet, 2012).

Conclusions: The results from this integrative review can help guide sex educators and nurse practitioners in their future practices when providing sex education for the adolescent population. Providers and educators must continue to improve their teaching strategies to effectively target the adolescent population in order to help produce desirable outcomes related to pregnancy and STI's. The results from this integrative review can also help guide future policy makers towards making practical decisions in sex education, by promoting the most appropriate form of sex education; comprehensive sex education, which has demonstrated a reduction in adolescent pregnancy and STI's.