

Navigating sex, intimacy and contraception among Latino youth: A male versus female perspective

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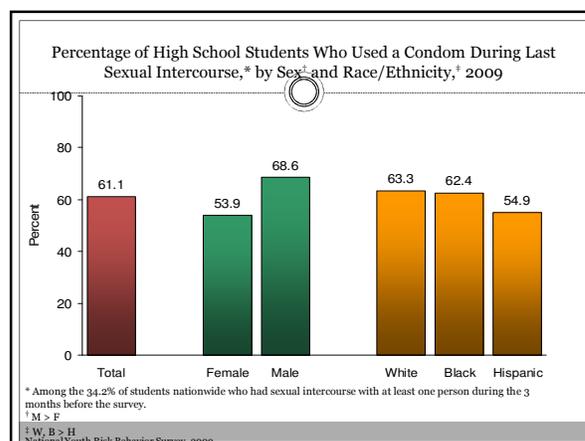
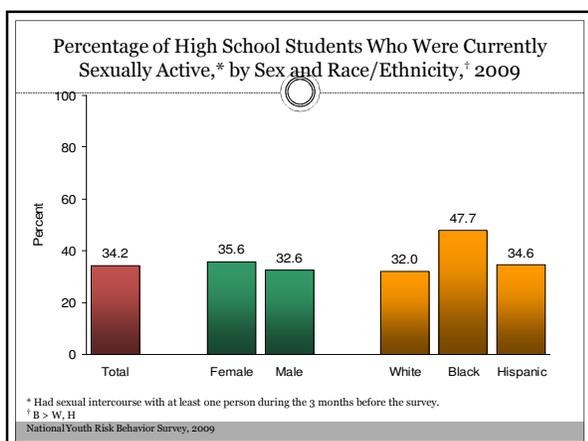
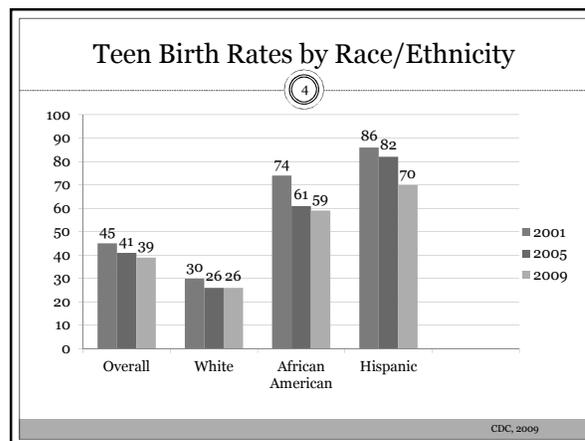
Genevieve Martínez-García

(1) The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:

“No relationships to disclose”

Pregnancy and Latinos

- Increased need to effectively address teen pregnancy in the Latino community.
- 1 in 2 Latina teens will become pregnant by age 20.
- 1 in 4 becomes a mother before age 20.
- Research suggest pregnancy may be intended.
- 69% percent of Latina teen moms drop out of high school.
- Nearly 80% of teen moms never marry the father.

Research Questions

- How do Latino youth decide to have sex?
 - How long does it take to have sex after they start dating?
 - How do they negotiate sexual relations?
- What do Latino youth think about contraception?
 - What contraception do they use the most?
 - What beliefs do Latino youth have about popular contraceptive methods?
- What do Latino youth think about teen pregnancy?
 - Why would Latino youth intentionally become pregnant?
 - How do Latino youth think a pregnancy will affect their lives?
- What messages do Latino youth receive from parents and peers about sex, contraception and pregnancy?

Focus Group Methods

- **Recruitment:**
 - CBO recruited from their after-school program
 - \$ 20 gift card incentive plus food
- **Facilitation:**
 - Demographic survey administered prior to focus group discussion
 - Gender exclusive focus groups
 - FG held at a convenient, safe and private location
 - Bilingual facilitator, no note taker
 - Youth appropriate elicitation techniques



Analysis

| Categories | Analysis |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderator Guide Categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Abstinence attitudes ○ Negotiating sexual intimacy ○ Contraception knowledge and beliefs ○ Pregnancy attitudes ○ Parental and peers' norms on all topics discussed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All recording were transcribed. • Two coders developed categories and coded for emerging themes. • Used MaxQDA software to manage text. • Analysis disaggregated by sex. • Preliminary findings available. |

Sample Description

- 7 groups, 59 youths from Mid Atlantic County
 - 28 Males (3 groups)
 - 31 Females (4 groups)
- Age range: 14-20
- **Marital Status:**
 - Single: 93.2%
 - Living w/ partner: 5.1%
- **Religion**
 - Catholic: 49.2%
 - None: 23.7%
 - Christian/ Evangelical: 22%
- **Country of Birth:**
 - USA: 42.4%
 - El Salvador: 30%
- **Legal Residents: 56%**
- **Language spoken at home:**
 - Spanish only: 28.8%
 - Spanish & English: 47.5%
 - English Only: 1.7%
- **Vaginal intercourse**
 - Never: 20.3%
 - Past experience: 78%
- **Ever Pregnant: 12%**

How do Latino youth decide to have sex?

- How long does it take to have sex after they start dating?
 - Latino youth start having sex between 13-15 years old.
 - Sexual intimacy may start between 1 day to several months after dating.
 - Having sex is highly dependent on:
 - Trust
 - How the relationship is coming along.
 - If the girl wants to have sex.
 - Level of pressure from boy.



How do Latino youth decide to have sex? How do they negotiate sexual relations?

| Males | Females |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pressure tactics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ verbal insistence ○ try to make them fall in love ○ make promises ○ threat with leaving her ○ show benefits of sex • For boys having sex is not a proof of love, girls believe it is. • It depends on the girl. • Think that a girl that respects herself will make them wait. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive pressure from boys, expect boys to demand sex. • If boys love her, he would wait. If he pressures, he doesn't love her. • Afraid boyfriend will cheat on her if she doesn't want to have sex. |

**How do Latino youth decide to have sex?
How do they negotiate sexual relations?**

| Males | Females |
|--|--|
| <p><i>“Because if the girl really wants to do it with the guy, they’re going to do it; but if she doesn’t want to, he’s going to try to convince her.”</i></p> | <p><i>“Also, if the guy’s not serious, he’s going to put pressure on the girl, and then if the girl’s in love with him, she’ll fall like quick.”</i></p> |

**What do Latino youth think about contraception?
What attitudes do Latino youth have about popular contraceptive methods?**

| Males | Females |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condoms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Most common, but boys don’t like them. ○ Believe they break and are ineffective. ○ Depends how well you know the partner. • BCP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hard to use and access. ○ Girls may forget. ○ Make girls gain weight, and get spots on the face. ○ Don’t trust girls will take it correctly. • Withdrawal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Feels better. ○ Not effective. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condoms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cheap or free, easy to access. ○ Guys don’t like it. ○ Guys don’t feel the same. ○ May get stuck inside the vagina. • BCP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Girls gain weight and get spots on the face. ○ It’s ineffective. ○ Girls might forget. ○ Guys feel more. • Withdrawal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Not effective.  |

**What do Latino youth think about teen pregnancy?
Why would Latino youth intentionally become pregnant?**

- Although all groups indicated that male and female youth do not get pregnant intentionally, they recognize that some might desire a pregnancy.
 - To keep their current partner attached.
 - Start a new family.
 - Substitution for lack of father.



**What do Latino youth think about teen pregnancy?
Why would Latino youth intentionally become pregnant?**

- Male:

“If you don’t have a father in your life, it fills that empty spot in your heart”.
- Female:

“They probably want to get pregnant to have the baby, or say she is pregnant so that the guy will stay with her.”



**What do Latino youth think about teen pregnancy?
How do Latino youth think a pregnancy will affect their lives?**

| Pros | Cons |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Way to mature quickly. • Learn to be a mother and father. • Girls get benefits (WIC, food stamps). • School support parenting girls. • Start a family with partner. • Adults take you seriously. • See your children grow. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop out of school. • Have to work. • Housing instability. • Female bodies change. • More responsibility. • Financial constraints. • Force to grow up. • Loss of freedom. • Partners do not stay. |

**What do Latino youth think about teen pregnancy?
How do Latino youth think a pregnancy will affect their lives?**

Female:

“Ok, sí, es una bendición traer un bebé, pero ellas saben que están perdiendo mucho. Tienen que trabajar, cuidar por su bebé. Ya no solo van a pensar en ellas. Son dos bocas ahora que hay que alimentar. Es un cambio radical en su vida.”

“Ok, yes, it is a blessing having a baby, but they know they are losing a lot. They have to work, take care of the baby. They won’t be thinking about themselves only. There are two mouths to feed. It is a radical change in their lives.”

**What do Latino youth think about teen pregnancy?
How do Latino youth think a pregnancy will affect their lives?**

Males:
"She would probably be happy because she's having a kid, and a baby is a blessing of God, and she would probably be happy because of that, and because maybe she has her baby's father still with her, and he's giving her support in any way that he can."

*"Porque cuando tenés un niño, es como que digan que "ya sos hombre hecho" y ...y que puedes hacer las cosas."
 "Because when you have a kid it's like they say you are a grown man and that you can do things."*

What messages do Latino youth receive from parents about sex, contraception and pregnancy?

| Messages to Boys | Messages to Girls |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mothers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Disappointed if son gets girlfriend pregnant, but will support him and be happy. • Fathers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Likely to encourage sons to be sexually active. • Friends: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Will pressure them to have sex. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Will call them names (gay) if he doesn't have sex. ▪ Threaten to have sex with their girlfriends. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mothers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Will prefer daughters to be abstinent. ○ Will be disappointed if daughter is pregnant, but will be happy eventually. ○ Will be more understanding of a pregnant daughter. • Fathers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strictly prohibit any type of sexual activity. ○ May kick the daughter out the house if pregnant. |

What messages do Latino youth receive from parents about sex, contraception and pregnancy?

Males:

- If dad finds out about daughter's pregnancy:
 - *"He would probably kick her out for a day."*
- When mom found out about son's girlfriend's pregnancy:
 - *"My mom, when I told her, she was like, "Estúpido, te dije! No te acerques a la casa!"... Then they get happy later on."*
- If dad finds out that son is NOT having sex:
 - *"I have a gay son."*



What messages do Latino youth receive from parents about sex, contraception and pregnancy?

Females:

- If dad finds out his daughter is having sex:
 - *"Sería como si él le dijera, like if he said, "You're a disgrace to the family."*
- If dad finds out his daughter is NOT having sex:
 - *"I raised my girl well. He'll be like, "That's my Maria""*
- If mom finds out his daughter is having sex:
 - *"She's not going to trust you no more."*



Conclusions

- **Sexual Activity:**
 - Latino youth are in a tug of war when it comes to having sex. Friends pressure male friends, males pressure girlfriends.
 - If relationship is considered serious, or couple is in love, condoms might not be used.
- **Pregnancy:**
 - Pregnancy is usually not intended, but youth might not take appropriate steps to prevent it.
 - Youth will be supported by family and friends if they get pregnant.
- **Messages:**
 - Youth receive gender specific messages from parents.
 - Messages uphold traditional gender roles.

Programmatic Implications

- Consider participants' characteristics:
 - Gender and sexual experience
 - Acculturation/ generation
 - Differences in gender role
- Strengthen parent/child communication
- Support educational attainment
- Address social norms on relationships and pregnancy
- Address contraception beliefs and attitudes
- Use a positive youth development approach
- Address healthy relationships and self-esteem
- Use friends and family as positive role models



