

November-December 2007

‘Do You Know What You’re Doing?’ College Students’ Experiences with Male Condoms

William L. Yarber, Cynthia A. Graham, Stephanie A. Sanders, Richard A. Crosby, Scott M. Butler, and Rose M. Hartzell

Background: Although quantitative assessment of male condom use errors and problems has received increased research attention, few studies have qualitatively examined this sexual health behavior. Purpose: This study examined problems of male condom use as experienced by college men and women at a large, public Midwestern university.

Methods: Single-sex focus groups were conducted, two involving men (n=9, n=9) and two involving women (n=7, n=13). Eight research questions guided the discussion.

Results: Six categories of problems and errors were identified: availability and provision of condoms, condom application, “fit and feel” of condom use, erection problems, incomplete use, and breakage and slippage. Participants expressed concerns, including mistrust of each gender for supplying and applying condoms, inadequate lubrication during condom use, condoms partially or fully slipping off, “losing” part or all of the condom in the vagina, delayed application, and reduced sensation and irritation. Some men expressed concern that vigorous sex might cause condom breakage, while some women indicated they did not like the smell of condoms. Discussion: Both male and female students expressed numerous concerns and issues related to condom use.

Translation to Health Education Practice: Greater attention to correct condom use as well as the sexual relationship dynamics related to condom use is needed in college health education programming.

Health Literacy Instruction and Evaluation among Secondary School Students

Betty Hubbard and Jacquie Rainey

Background: Tobacco use, poor eating habits, and physical inactivity are the modifiable risk behaviors most associated with the leading causes of morbidity and mortality in the United States. Because these risk behaviors are established during adolescence, the nation’s schools are uniquely positioned to develop health literacy in students. Purpose: The purposes of this study were (1) to evaluate textbook-based health literacy instruction on the acquisition of health concepts and skills, and (2) to use the Health Education Assessment Project (HEAP) database items to assess changes in the concepts and skills associated with risk behaviors. Methods: The study participants consisted of 669 secondary students. Items were selected from the database to measure students’ achievement in concepts and skills related to tobacco, nutrition, and physical activity.

Results: Results indicated significant improvements in concepts and skills scores from pretest to post-test in the treatment group when compared to the control group.

Discussion: Exposure to health literacy instruction through a comprehensive, health education textbook has a positive influence on the development of concepts and skills that contribute to health literacy. Translation to Health Education Practice: Teachers

should provide instruction from curricula that focus on health concepts and skills. Additionally, HEAP database items should be used for evaluative purposes.

Relationship between Religiosity and “Hooking Up” Behavior

Tina Penhollow, Michael Young, and William Bailey

Background: “Hooking up” behaviors, or sexual activities without commitment or emotional attachment, are occurring among college students. Purpose: This study examined the relationship between hooking up and two measures of religiosity. Methods: Data was obtained from students at a mid-southern university (n=459). Results: Most respondents indicated that they have hooked up. Males (64%) were more likely to report the behavior than females (47%). Religious attendance and religious belief played a significant role in distinguishing between those who have and have not participated in hooking up behaviors. Discussion: Results indicate religiosity may determine involvement in casual high-risk sexual encounters that expose college students to sexually transmitted infections and unintended pregnancy. Translation to Health Education Practice: Results should be of value to college-level sexuality educators and considered by those involved in sexual health programming on college campuses.

University Students’ Involvement in Body Piercing and Adherence to Safe Piercing Practices: Do Males and Females Differ?

Keith A. King and Rebecca A. Vidourek

Background: Health concerns of body piercing include infection, scarring, allergic reactions, pain, and disease. Current gaps in the research include students’ perceived piercing risks and safe piercing practices. Purpose: The purpose of this study was to examine university students’ involvement in body piercing, risk consideration and adherence to safe piercing practices. Methods: A sample of 536 university students completed a 44-item survey regarding body piercing. Results: Results indicated that 35% had ever had a body piercing. Most obtained their piercing at a tattoo parlor (65%) and most did not consider the risks of allergic reaction (43%), HIV (31%), Hepatitis B (20%) or Hepatitis C (20%). Males were significantly less likely than females to have considered the risks and to have engaged in safe piercing practices. Two-thirds reported that information about the risks of body piercing would be helpful in making decisions on whether to obtain future piercings. Discussion: Education on potential complications is warranted. Awareness campaigns should ensure that young males are informed regarding risks and safety precautions. Translation to Health Education Practice: Health educators should become aware of the risks of piercings and share this information with young adults so they can make healthy and informed decisions.

Authorship Trends in the American Journal of Health Education: 1996–2006

Teri L. Malo, David L. Hogeboom, and Robert J. McDermott

Background: Publication is the primary means of contributing to and establishing credibility within the scientific community. Some researchers have reported an increase in the average number of authors per manuscript for some scholarly journals in the past

two decades. Whereas author proliferation may be warranted in some cases, other reasons for increasing the overall number of authors per manuscript may have more dubious motives, including gratuitous authorship for embellishing curriculum vitae. Purpose: The purpose of this study was to determine whether there was evidence of authorship proliferation in the American Journal of Health Education during 1996–2006. In addition, other selected authorship information was identified. Methods: A content analysis of original articles published from January 1996 through December 2006 (N=755) was performed. Results: There has not been a statistically significant change in the number of authors per manuscript for the time period studied. Discussion: Although no significant change in number of authors was found, other investigative methods may be necessary to estimate the practice of gratuitous authorship. Translation to Health Education Practice: Health educators should be cognizant of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) criteria for authorship and endeavor to ensure that all authors meet these criteria.

Educating Health Professionals about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders FASD Regional Training Centers Consortium*

Prenatal exposure to alcohol is a leading preventable cause of birth defects and developmental disabilities. Individuals exposed to alcohol during fetal development can have physical, mental, behavioral, and learning disabilities, with lifelong implications. These conditions are known as fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs). Health care professionals play a crucial role in identifying women at risk for an alcohol-exposed pregnancy and in identifying the effects of prenatal alcohol exposure among individuals. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities has funded four universities as FASD Regional Training Centers (RTCs). The RTCs, in collaboration with the CDC and the National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, are developing, implementing, and evaluating educational curricula for medical and allied health students and practitioners and seeking to have the curricula incorporated into training programs at each grantee's university or college, into other schools throughout the region, and into the credentialing requirements of professional boards. This article highlights some of the innovative training approaches that the RTCs are implementing to increase knowledge regarding FASDs and the ability of health professionals to identify, treat, and prevent these conditions.

Power-Up Your Writing: Integrating Writing Skills with Health Instruction

Karen D. Liller and David A. Liller

Objectives: By completion of the writing lessons students will (1) use proper grammar in addressing health education topics; (2) discover common writing errors that interfere with proper planning and writing; (3) demonstrate the ability to write a persuasive logical argument related to a health topic; and (4) incorporate proper writing skills when preparing health education assignments and reports. Target Audience: Students enrolled in high school or college-level health education and related courses.