

Title:

Effects of School Sex Education on Post-Adolescent Romantic Relationships

Area:

Developmental Psychology

Main Purpose:

Research on sex education focuses on differences between abstinence-only and comprehensive programs and their effects. According to research, comprehensive sex education is negatively correlated with teen pregnancy, whereas abstinence-only education had no effect on reducing sexual encounters at a young age (Kohler, Manhart, & Lafferty, 2008). Additionally, research on relationship violence finds correlations between early sexual behaviors and sexual abuse; according to Homma and colleagues (2012), adolescent sexual behaviors, especially involving abuse, can influence sexual behavior in teens (Homma et. al, 2012). Furthermore, sexual violence is found to be associated with teen pregnancy, and the effects of these are further influenced by experience with child abuse (Logan, Holcombe, Ryan, Manlove, & Moore, 2007). Yet, few studies examine whether there is a direct correlation between presence of sex education – or what kind of education, if present – and relationship/sexual violence. The proposed study explores the association of sex education to post-adolescent relationships with an emphasis on relationship abuse.

Procedure:

A Qualtrics survey was distributed among students at the University of Missouri – Columbia. The survey was completed online and asked characteristic questions about each participant, including age, gender identity, sexual preference, and race/ethnicity. Following were questions about the extent of each participant's experience with sex education in school. In

addition, information about participants' romantic relationships was gathered, including information on abuse. Following the survey, students were thanked for participation and provided resources for sexual health, relationship violence, sexual assault, and contraceptive use. Students who completed the study were entered in a raffle to win a gift card.

### Results:

Data collection is completed and undergoing analyses. An ANOVA test is being used to determine correlations.

### Conclusion:

Our findings will contribute to the knowledge of effects of sex education on adolescents. This will be beneficial not only for further research, but for schools to know how best to contribute to the well-being of students. Greater knowledge of sex education will help children make safe decisions about their sexual endeavors and reduce the likelihood of abuse, unwanted pregnancy, and STIs.

### References:

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