

## Background

- Adolescent pregnancy results in a variety of negative consequences for both teen parent and the child. Reducing adolescent pregnancies by delaying sexual debut and improving the use of contraception are key health objectives of the Healthy People 2010 goals.
- Studies on teen sexual behavior have identified a vulnerabilities cluster consisting of health risk behaviors (tobacco, drug, and alcohol use), exposure to community violence, and lack of father involvement.
- Thus, this vulnerability cluster impacts the early onset of sexual initiation and use of contraception for sexually active teens and will be explored in this study.

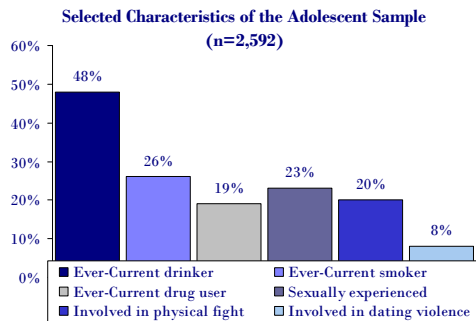
## Objectives

- To explore whether patterns of sexual behaviors that have been found for adult women living in violent relationships are also found among adolescents, while controlling for demographic, socioeconomic, and health risk behaviors.
- To explore the relationship of interpersonal violence and sexual behavior among both male and female adolescents.
- To explore the effect of interpersonal and dating violence on contraceptive use among adolescents.

## Methodology

- Bivariate and regression analysis of data from the 2005 California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) which includes a representative sample of the California population. Results were weighted to adjust for California's population by age and race/ethnicity.
- Telephone interviews with adolescents ages 14-17 years (n=2,592) in randomly selected households included questions about their sexual experience and behavior, involvement in physical fights and dating violence, and health risk behaviors:
  - dating violence: "Have you ever been slapped, kicked, or physically hurt by a boyfriend or girlfriend you are romantically involved with, not just a friend?"
  - Involvement in violent social interactions: "In the last 12 months, were you actually in a physical fight with a guy or girl, or a group of people around your age?" "In the last 12 months, did you start a physical fight with a guy or girl, or with people around your age?" "In the last 12 months, were you in a physical fight that someone else started?"
  - Health risk behaviors: ever/currently use of tobacco, alcohol, and substances
  - Demographic and socioeconomic variables: Race/ethnicity, insurance status, parents' marital status, poverty status

## Sample Description



- Close to half of California's teenagers report using alcohol, while 26% report smoking and 19% report using other drugs.
- Nearly a quarter (23%) of adolescents ages 14-17 are sexually experienced; of these teens, 23% are not using consistent, effective contraception.
- Violent social interactions are common among teens; one in five teens (20%) reported being involved in a physical fight.
- Overall, 8.2% of adolescents ages 14-17 reported having experienced dating violence. Adolescent males (10.6%) were significantly more likely than adolescent females (5.7%) to report dating violence ( $\chi^2=20.6$ ,  $p=0.0003$ ). This proportion translates to approximately 177,000 youth ages 14-17 in California.
- Of those reporting having been slapped, kicked, or physically hurt by a boyfriend or girlfriend, more than half, 57%, indicated that this happened in the past 12 months.

## Non-use/Inconsistent use of contraceptive

- Inconsistent or non-use of contraception was significantly predicted by being female, dating violence, and low-income (below 200% of the federal poverty level).
- Health risk behaviors were not predictive of failing to use contraception.
- Sexually experienced girls were twice as likely to be inconsistent or non-users of contraception as boys. This may be related to the high prevalence of condom usage in this age group, which is reported primarily by boys.
- Teens who reported experiencing dating violence are twice as likely to not use contraception consistently and effectively. This could also be related to power and control issues in the relationship.

## Selected Results: Sexual Experience, and Contraceptive Use

Odds ratios (and 95% confidence interval) showing the likelihood that teens are sexually experienced by teens' selected characteristics

Characteristic	All Teens (n=2,592)		Male (n=1,217)		Female (n=1,265)	
	Odds ratio	95% CI	Odds ratio	95% CI	Odds ratio	95% CI
<b>Demographic</b>						
Age (continuous)	<b>1.88***</b>	(1.60 - 2.21)	<b>1.84***</b>	(1.48 - 2.29)	<b>1.92***</b>	(1.54 - 2.39)
Sex (female)	0.98	(0.68 - 1.43)				
Ethnicity (Hispanic)	1.03	(0.71 - 1.51)	0.95	(0.55 - 1.62)	1.14	(0.67 - 1.94)
Parent's marital status (married)	<b>0.49***</b>	(0.35 - 0.69)	<b>0.44***</b>	(0.28 - 0.71)	0.57*	(0.34 - 0.90)
<b>Socioeconomic</b>						
Poverty level ( $\leq$ 200% FPL)	1.20	(0.81 - 1.78)	1.30	(0.74 - 2.30)	1.14	(0.68 - 1.93)
Health insurance status (insured)	0.93	(0.51 - 1.71)	0.62	(0.30 - 1.28)	1.46	(0.54 - 3.95)
<b>Risky Behavior</b>						
Smoking (ever)	<b>3.69***</b>	(2.46 - 5.55)	<b>2.84**</b>	(1.68 - 4.82)	<b>5.14***</b>	(2.74 - 9.65)
Drinking (ever)	<b>2.39***</b>	(1.62 - 3.53)	<b>2.68**</b>	(1.32 - 4.72)	<b>1.96*</b>	(1.12 - 3.42)
Drug use (ever)	<b>2.20**</b>	(1.45 - 3.32)	<b>2.06**</b>	(1.19 - 3.56)	<b>2.50**</b>	(1.34 - 4.66)
<b>Involvement in physical fight last 12 months</b>						
Ever been slapped, kicked or physically hurt ...	<b>1.82**</b>	(1.19 - 2.79)	<b>2.21**</b>	(1.38 - 3.63)	1.22	(0.54 - 2.76)
	<b>2.21**</b>	(1.37 - 3.64)	1.51	(0.83 - 2.75)	<b>4.09***</b>	(1.82 - 9.22)
<i>p</i> <.05; ** <i>p</i> <.001; *** <i>p</i> <.0001						

## Sexually Experienced

- As expected, teens are more likely to report being sexually experienced as age increases.
- Teens with married parents are less likely to be sexually experienced. Marital status could be a proxy for the consistent involvement of fathers or greater parental supervision. The protective impact is larger and more significant among males than females.
- All three of the health risk behaviors are significantly predictive of adolescent sexual experience. Surprisingly, smoking is the strongest predictor of teen sexual activity, particularly for girls. Girls who smoke were five times as likely to be sexually experienced as nonsmokers.
- Interpersonal violence had a differential effect on boys' and girls' probability of being sexually experienced. Being involved in a recent physical fight was significantly predicting sexual experience among males, but not in females. In contrast, dating violence was a strong predictor of sexual experience among girls, but not among boys. Girls who reported abuse from a romantic partner were four times as likely to report being sexually experienced.

## Limitations

- Measurement of dating violence is limited to one screening question. It does not capture contextual factors, severity of injury, threatening behavior, or sexual violence.
- Recall bias is possible especially to sensitive questions and if respondents are unable to recall information correctly that occurred earlier in their lives.

Odds ratios (and 95% confidence interval) assessing the associations between teens' contraceptive use and selected characteristics

Characteristic	All sexually experienced teens (n=586)	
	Odds ratio	95% CI
<b>Demographic</b>		
Age (continuous)	1.36	(1.01 - 1.85)
Sex (female)	<b>2.10*</b>	(1.07 - 4.11)
Ethnicity (Hispanic)	1.05	(0.55 - 1.98)
Parent's marital status (married)	0.83	(0.47 - 1.48)
<b>Socioeconomic</b>		
Poverty level ( $\leq$ 200% FPL)	<b>2.31*</b>	(1.25 - 4.28)
Health insurance status (insured)	1.16	(0.50 - 2.67)
<b>Risky Behavior</b>		
Smoking (ever)	1.16	(0.62 - 2.19)
Drinking (ever)	0.69	(0.31 - 1.56)
Drug use (ever)	0.93	(0.52 - 1.67)
<b>Involvement in physical fight last 12 months</b>		
Ever been slapped, kicked or physically hurt ...	1.21	(0.66 - 2.22)
	<b>2.10*</b>	(1.08 - 4.08)
<i>p</i> <.05		

## Conclusions

- Adult women who experience intimate partner violence are more likely to use contraception inconsistently or ineffectively. This finding was replicated for adolescents in violent dating relationships.
- Dating violence was a particularly high predictor of being sexually experienced among females. However, more male teens reported having experienced violence by a romantic partner than female teens.
- Dating violence among teens seems therefore to have a different dynamic than for adult women and the traditional model of one (male) abuser and one (female) victim may not characterize most adolescents' experience of dating violence.
- These findings will have important implications for teen and dating violence prevention programs.

## Contact

Heike Thiel de Bocanegra, Ph.D., M.P.H.  
Voice: 916-552-8793 Fax: 916-650-0454 E-mail: htthiel@dhs.ca.gov