

SOCIOMETRICS PROJECT No. 13

TESTING AN INTERVENTION MODEL FOR TEEN FERTILITY CONTROL

This project designed, implemented, and evaluated the effectiveness of a public health-based sex educational outreach program designed to increase teenagers' contraceptive and pregnancy-avoidance perceptions, lead to increased fertility control behaviors, and, ultimately, help reduce pregnancy rates among females and responsibility for pregnancies among males. The Health Belief Model was used as a conceptual framework for trying to understand and change teenagers' motivations, intentions, and behaviors. Major findings of the evaluation were: First, it was possible to carry out a reasonably rigorous impact evaluation with adequate funding and an appropriate level of agency cooperation. Second, programs as short as eight to ten hours of instruction appeared to be beneficial to participants in terms of increasing sexual and contraceptive knowledge and making modest changes in favorable sexuality-related beliefs and perceptions from pre- to post-intervention. Third, there was some evidence to suggest that teenagers' level of sexual knowledge and increases in knowledge could affect their subsequent fertility control behavior. Fourth, intervention programs needed to be client-group specific: One size did not fit all. The HBM-SLT program appeared to work best with more sexually experienced males; the (combined) comparison programs appeared to be most effective with inexperienced females.

Sponsor: The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
Demographic and Behavioral Sciences Branch
Center for Population Research
6100 Executive Blvd., Room 8B-13
Bethesda, MD 20892
(301) 496-1174

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Staff: M. Eisen, S. Baratz, L. Davis, S. Lin