PII-5: It Drives Us To Do It: Pregnant Adolescents Identify Drivers for Sexual Risk-taking

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Abstract:
Introduction: In the United States, 47.8% of ninth through twelfth grade adolescents are having sexual intercourse. Certain sexual risk-taking behaviors increase an adolescent’s chance of becoming pregnant or acquiring a sexually transmitted infection. Although efforts have been made to prevent adolescent sexual risk-taking through sexuality education, this phenomenon continues to perplex researchers, educators, healthcare providers, and parents. Insight into these behaviors can improve educational and preventative programs. The purpose of this study was to explore and give voice to pregnant adolescents’ experiences and realities related to school-based sexuality education (SBSE) and their perceptions of its efficacy.

Method(s): To meet the purpose of the study, a feministic qualitative design and in-depth interviews were used. The purposive sample consisted of 15 pregnant adolescents ranging from 15 to 19 years of age. Narrative data were analyzed using content analysis and constant comparison. Trustworthiness of the findings were ensured by the use of an explicit audit trail, member checking, verbatim transcription, investigator triangulation and research reflexivity.

Results: Analysis of the data revealed the overarching theme “Drivers for Sexual Risk-taking”. The factors comprising this theme included six drivers categorized as internal or external. Internal drivers were described as Fitting In, Curiosity, and Forbidden Fruit, while external drivers were Partner Pressure, Peer Pressure and Media. In their accounts of experiences with sexuality education, each identified these drivers as powerful influences on sexual decision-making. Participants discussed how these influences “overpowered” knowledge gained from sexuality education.
**Discussion & Conclusions:** When developing preventative efforts for adolescent sexual risk-taking, the drivers identified by pregnant adolescents should be considered. Programs and initiatives need to include not only a focus on knowledge acquisition, but also address these influential factors that are not typically included in SBSE curricula.

**Abstract History:**

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