

Survey finds many adolescents are not talking to their doctors and parents about sex

May 5 2018

Nearly half of adolescents (45 percent) reported that they were not routinely asked about sex by their primary care providers (PCPs) and only 13 percent were offered sexually transmitted infection (STI) screening, according to results of a new survey being presented at the Pediatric Academic Societies (PAS) 2018 Meeting. The survey also found that 90 percent of parents reported that they talk to their adolescents about sex but only 39 percent of adolescents reported the same.

The objective of the survey was to assess the rate at which adolescents discuss sex with their parents and PCPs and the frequency at which they receive screening for STIs. In this study, 582 adolescents, aged 13-17, and 516 parents of adolescents attending the 2017 Minnesota State Fair were surveyed.

Adolescents were asked whether they had seen a PCP in the past year, if they were asked about sexual activity and/or offered STI screening, and whether they discuss sex with parents. Parents were queried about their knowledge of discussions had by their child's PCP as well as discussions they personally have had with their adolescent about sex. Frequencies, Chi-square analyses and logistic regression were used to evaluate the variables.

"Teens and young adults account for more STIs than all other ages combined," said Dr. Kari Schneider, one of the authors of the study. "Pediatricians and parents play a vital role in discussing STIs and safer

sex practices with adolescents."

Additional findings include:

- Increased age was associated with greater likelihood of being asked about sex or offered STI testing.
- Females were more likely to be asked about sex.
- White adolescents were less likely than other ethnicities to be offered testing.
- Regarding PCP/[adolescent](#) discussion of [sexual activity](#), 49 percent of parents indicated awareness that such discussions occurred while 24 percent did not know.
- Twenty-five percent of [parents](#) felt that PCPs should not discuss sex.
- A female parent was more likely to discuss sex.
- Parents were less likely to report discussing sex if the teen was younger or if the parent's ethnicity was anything other than white.

Dr. Brinda Desai will present findings from the study, "Let's Talk about Sex: Do Adolescents' Parents and Primary Care Physicians Talk to Them About Sex?" during the PAS 2018 Meeting on Sunday, May 6 at 5:45 p.m. EDT.

Provided by Pediatric Academic Societies

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