



¡Encuentro! A Healthy Youth Development Project

Adolescent Contraceptive Use: Perspectives of Local Latina Youth



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Background

- Latinas have the highest rates of teen pregnancy and birth of all major racial/ethnic groups, both in Minnesota and in the United States
- Alarming numbers of Latina teens engage in behaviors that place them at risk for pregnancy
- Teen childbearing limits opportunities (e.g., higher education)
- Great need to develop pregnancy prevention programs tailored to Latina youth and their cultural and social contexts
- Few qualitative studies describe the cultural and social contexts of risky behaviors among Latino youth



Study Purpose

To examine influences on Latina teens' decisions around contraceptive use, using data from focus groups conducted with Twin Cities Latina youth ages 14-21 years.

Youth Focus Group Methods

Focus Group Eligibility

- Live in Minneapolis or St. Paul
- Must have lived in U.S. for a year
- Ages 14 - 22
- Both male and female youth are eligible
- Non-parenting youth under 18 must have written parental consent

Focus Group Recruitment

- Research staff informed youth about focus groups through schools & community agencies
- In some cases, agency or school staff invited research staff to inform groups of young people
- Separate groups for young men (n=4 groups) & young women (n=6 groups)

Focus Group Procedure



Data Analysis

- Focus group transcripts coded and reconciled by a team of 4 university and community partners
- Descriptive content analysis
- Preliminary findings are from 2 young women's focus groups

Focus Group Question

What influences youth to prevent pregnancy by using condoms or other birth control methods, such as the pill, the shot, the ring?

Study Sample

Characteristics of Study Sample (N=22 young women)

Ages	n
14	1
15	4
16	4
17	3
18	6
19	1
20	1
21	2

Currently Parenting

Yes	3
No	19

Length of Time Living in U.S.

Whole Life	8
1-5 years	3
5-10 years	5
10 or more years	6

Ethnicity**

Mexican	19
Caribbean	1
Central American	2
South American	2

** Participants were able to select multiple ethnicities

Current Living Situation

Live with Mother & Father	7
Live with Mother Only	13
Live with Father Only	1
Live with No Adult Relative	1

Preliminary Findings

• **Prevention:** Reasons Latino youth decide to use contraception

- Avoid pregnancy
- Do not feel ready to be a parent
- Be safe and prevent STI's and AIDS
- Want to focus on future goals

"It's the simple fact that we don't want to get pregnant... we don't want to make it hard on ourselves cause we have better things to focus on than a child and that is ourselves."

• **Image:** How youth perceive themselves in regards contraceptive use

- Awareness of girls their age who become pregnant leads some youth to use contraception
- Desire to avoid stigma or stereotypes that often go with teen pregnancy

"Something I think influences a lot of girls in high school not to get pregnant is the simple fact of just seeing the pregnant girls in school... And they would just label her like 'oh, there goes the pregnant girl,'... no girl wants to feel like that."

• **Access to and Knowledge of Birth Control:** Knowing and understanding the different types of birth control that are accessible and available to youth

- Knowing where birth control is available
 - Free at clinics
 - School clinics
- Knowing about different birth control methods and the effectiveness of different methods
- Friends as role models for using contraception
- Friends hold each other accountable for using contraception

"All these different methods is what helps them actually use them... So having all these options to use to protect yourself, be safe, that's number one. Everyone wants to be safe, but some people don't know how to be safe."

• **Adult/Mentor Relationships:** Having an adult mentor who supports contraceptive use

- Caring adult who supports youth
- Open communication with adults
- Mentor about sexuality education, periods and puberty
- Importance beyond just birth control method itself

"What makes people want to use birth control pills or whatever it is, shot, to not get pregnant is having a mentor. Someone that's like having an older sister... Somebody that tells you what's up."

• **Parent & Family Influences:**

- Parents can either support or discourage contraceptive use
- Potential negative family consequences of teen pregnancy

"Una sale embarazada su familia cambia con uno en la forma de que ellos piensan que nosotros somos una cualquiera, que somos muchachas bien fáciles, que no valemos la pena, que nadie nos va a tomar en serio."

• **Events:** Things that influence the use of contraception

- Being a parent
 - Life-changing event
 - Limits certain opportunities
 - Baby (parenting) becomes a new main priority
- Intentional misuse of contraception in order to become pregnant

"There are some that want to get pregnant and the boyfriend will want to wear a condom and then they will make a little hole."

Discussion

- Focus group themes highlighted influences on youth's contraceptive use which including the desire to prevent negative sexual health outcomes, negative images associated with teen pregnancy, knowledge and access to contraception, adult mentors who support young people's use of contraception, parent and family expectations, and life events
- Previous research suggests that larger issues related to gender roles and relationship power issues (Talashek et al. 2009) and lack of parent-teen communication about sex-specific topics (Guilamo-Ramos, et al. 2006) may make Latina youth more vulnerable to unplanned pregnancies
- Themes from youth focus groups will inform development of programming to promote Latina adolescents' sexual health