

PARENT-ADOLESCENT SEX COMMUNICATION AFTER A PARENT-CHILD COMMUNICATION INTERVENTION IN MEXICO

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Background/Purpose: The family process of parent-adolescent communication has been documented as an influential factor on adolescent sexual behavior. A growing number of interventions are now including parents as a way to support safer sex behavior in adolescents. Few however, have been tested in Mexico. The purpose of this paper is to describe parent comfort with sex communication with their adolescents following participation in a parent and adolescent HIV prevention intervention in Monterrey, Mexico.

Method: A two group randomized control trial was designed to determine the efficacy of an intervention designed to decrease the risk of sexually transmitted HIV among adolescents (Villarruel, 2000). Families were invited to participate in the program *Cuidate* "Take care of yourself" and after completing pre-intervention questionnaires, were randomly assigned to either the control or intervention groups. Parents and adolescents received similar content in small groups of parents or adolescents. The total sample population included 784 parents and 824 adolescents. The content of the parent-intervention group included discussions about the influence of family factors on adolescent attitudes and sexual behavior, HIV prevention information, and activities to support and improve parent-adolescent communication. In this analysis, a subset of randomly selected mothers (n=20) and fathers (n=20) who were assigned to the parent-communication intervention were selected. Responses from open-ended questions from the post-test and 6-month follow-up were used for this analysis. The qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis. Responses were recorded and analyzed to identify parents' comments related to improved communication between the parent and adolescents. Responses between males and females were compared at both post-test and the 6-month follow-up.

Findings/Discussion: Analysis of data indicated that the intervention increased parents' confidence and knowledge regarding specific topics. Parents also reported improved (quality and quantity of) communication with their sons/daughters. Parents reported that the intervention helped to take away the shame and embarrassment that initially accompanied discussions about sex. There were minor differences between the male and female responses at either the post-test or 6-month intervals. Overall, *Cuidate* was able to support parent-adolescent communication as well as bring parents and their children closer together. Results from this analysis provide support for the intended effects of the intervention – to improve parent-adolescent communication related to sexual issues.