

# Comprehensive Sex Education vs. Abstinence-Only Education In Preventing Teen Pregnancy

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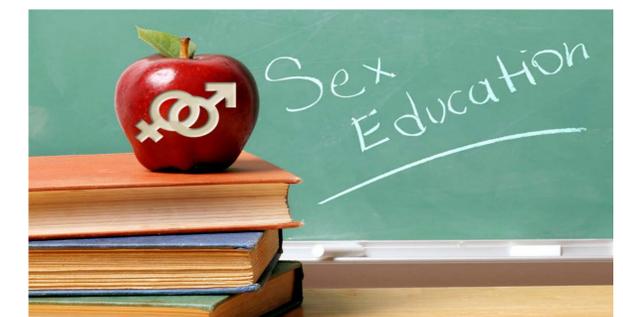
**QUESTION**

In adolescents ages 13-19 years old, in the United States, what are the effects of abstinence focused sexual education versus comprehensive sexuality education on teen pregnancy rates?

Study	Description	Results
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>“Comparing School- Based Teen Pregnancy Prevention Programming: Mixed Outcomes in an At-Risk State”</b> (Oman, Merritt, Fluhr, Williams, 2015)</p>	<p>Compares the effectiveness of a national abstinence-only teen pregnancy prevention (TPP) intervention to a national comprehensive TPP intervention. Observes how each intervention influenced different factors regarding teen sexual behaviors within states with high teen birth rates (Oman et al., 2015, p. 886).</p>	<p>The findings suggested comprehensive TPP intervention was only marginally more effective than abstinence-only TPP intervention in improving outcomes contributing to teen pregnancy (p. 887).</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>“Consequences of Sex Education on Teen and Young Adult Sexual Behaviors and Outcomes”</b> (Lindberg, Maddow-Zimet, 2011)</p>	<p>Surveyed whether formal sex education (abstinence-only, comprehensive, or neither) was correlated with healthier sexual health outcomes and behaviors, such as teen pregnancy rates.</p>	<p>The study found that sex education that included information on abstinence and birth control had better sexual health outcomes and behaviors such as lower rates of ever being pregnant or getting their partner pregnant (pp. 332-336).</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>“Abstinence Only And Comprehensive Sex Education and The Initiation of Sexual Activity and Teen Pregnancy”</b> (Kohler, Manhart, Lafferty, 2008)</p>	<p>Researches the effectiveness of different types of sexual health education in regard to preventing certain sexual health risks, including teen pregnancy (pp. 344-345).</p>	<p>Researchers found that students who had comprehensive sex education were, “associated with a 50% lower risk of teen pregnancy,” (Kohler et al., 2008, p. 348).</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>“Abstinence-Only Education and Teen Pregnancy Rates: Why We Need Comprehensive Sex Education In The U.S.”</b> (Stranger-Hall, Hall, 2011)</p>	<p>Aims to find the best ways to educate teenagers in order to prevent adolescent pregnancy. The researchers in this study asked the question “what is the quantitative evidence that abstinence-only education is effective in reducing U.S. teen pregnancy rates?.” (p. 1).</p>	<p>The study concluded “that abstinence-only education does not reduce and likely increases teen pregnancy rates,” and comprehensive sex education was “correlated with the lowest teen pregnancy rates across states” (Stranger-Hall &amp; Hall, 2011, p. 2).</p>

## APPLICATION TO NURSING

- ❖ Nurses in a variety of different settings have the opportunity and responsibility to educate adolescents on how to prevent unwanted pregnancy.
- ❖ Having knowledge on the effects of each type of sex education allows nurses to best educate and meet the needs of each patient individually.
- ❖ The education and information patients receive as adolescents has the ability to shape their life-long outlook, attitudes and behaviors regarding sexual health.



<https://tinyurl.com/y95k9wwo>

## RESULTS

- ❖ Findings show that comprehensive education is generally more effective than abstinence-only education in reducing teen pregnancy rates, but the type of education cannot be determined as the cause for the decrease (Kohler et al., 2008; Lindberg & Maddow-Zimet, 2012; Oman et al., 2015; Stranger-Hall & Hall, 2011).
- ❖ Some evidence shows that comprehensive based sex education produces various levels of success in teen reproductive health outcomes, such as reduced teen pregnancy rates
- ❖ There are many other demographic factors that could have potentially influenced the rates of teen pregnancy and the type of sex education the students received.

## BACKGROUND

- ❖ Compared to other modern nations, the United States has the highest rates of teen pregnancy (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015)
- ❖ “In 2013, 456,000 women younger than 20 became pregnant. Some 448,000 of these pregnancies were among 15-19-year-olds, and 7,400 were among those aged 14 and younger” (Guttmacher Institute, 2017).
- ❖ State policies govern the type of sex education taught in each state (Stranger-Hall & Hall, 2011).



[https://www.google.com/search?q=classroom+of+teenagers&rlz=1C1CHWA\\_enUS641US642&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKFw5z0jP1K7aAhUzjMKHdx8CjwQ\\_AUICg8&biw=1280&bih=614&dpr=1.5#imgcr=6Q0E0p91pH2WM](https://www.google.com/search?q=classroom+of+teenagers&rlz=1C1CHWA_enUS641US642&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKFw5z0jP1K7aAhUzjMKHdx8CjwQ_AUICg8&biw=1280&bih=614&dpr=1.5#imgcr=6Q0E0p91pH2WM)

## DEFINITIONS

- ❖ Abstinence only programs consist of teaching abstinence as the only significant method of preventing teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease (STDs) (Kohler, Manhart, & Lafferty, 2008).
- ❖ Comprehensive sexual health programs include abstinence, but also offer education and prevention options on STDs and pregnancy, as well as the importance of safe sexual practices (Kohler et al., 2008).