Snapshots from the Evaluation of a Comprehensive Sex Education Program

Jennifer Grossman, Linda Charmaraman, Ineke Ceder, Sumru Erkut
Why Middle School
Sex education?

- Early sexual debut increases the risks for negative health and educational outcomes
- 32% of adolescents have had sexual intercourse by 9th grade (CDC, 2010)
- Need to educate teens before they have sex
Goals of the Evaluation

To assess the effectiveness of Planned Parenthood’s curriculum *Get Real: Comprehensive Sex Education that Works*:

- Delay of sexual initiation
- Correct and consistent use of protection methods
Get Real

- 3-year comprehensive sex education program with nine sessions per year for grades 6, 7, and 8
- Factually accurate, age-appropriate, culturally sensitive information on sexual health and relationships.
- Change model applies Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) and social and emotional learning to an ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) to explain healthy sexual development.
Recruitment

- 402 middle schools identified across the state
  - 207 schools not eligible
  - 195 school identified as possible

- 160 schools/districts were pursued either once or multiple times
  - 82 district or school level meetings were held

24 signed on
Evaluation Design

- 24 Schools randomly assigned to Intervention and Control conditions
  - (13 public, 9 charter, 2 private)

- Students followed 4 years after baseline measure

- Assesses knowledge, attitudes, and behavioral outcomes
Randomization

- Schools recruited over 12 month period
- Rolling randomization
- Block randomization not possible
  - Timing of recruitment
  - School needs & expectations
Intervention Schools

- PPLM educators teach *Get Real* to a cohort of students starting in 6th grade, continuing in 7th and 8th grade.
- Evaluators survey 6th grade cohort at the beginning of 6th grade, start of 7th, end of 8th grade, and one year beyond middle school.
- PPLM trains teachers/staff.
Control Schools

- Sex education is taught as it has been taught in each school.
- Evaluators survey 6th grade cohort at the beginning of 6th grade, start of 7th grade, end of 8th grade, one year beyond middle school.
- PPLM trains teachers/staff.
“Are you just pissing and moaning, or can you verify what you’re saying with data?”
## Evaluation Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>6th Pre-test</th>
<th>7th Pre-test</th>
<th>8th Post-test</th>
<th>9th grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td>Follow-up</td>
<td>Follow-up</td>
<td>Longer-term follow-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Spring 2012</td>
<td>2012-2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample Description

- 1230 students baseline & 7th grade data
- 56% female
- 57% Intervention
- 35% Latino, 32% Black, 24% White, 3% Asian, 6% Biracial

Age
- 6th Grade: 11.89 (9.5 to 15 years)
- 7th Grade: 12.86 (10.3 to 16 years)

Parent Education: slightly more than H.S.
Sample by Intervention/Control

**Intervention = 705**
- 60% Female*
- 33% White*; 27% Black*; 30% Latino*, 4% Asian, 6% Biracial
- Age 6\(^{th}\):11.80
- Age 7\(^{th}\): 12.79*
- Parent Ed: HS +

**Control = 525**
- 40% Female
- 11% White, 39% Black, 41% Latino, 2% Asian, 7% Biracial
- Age 6\(^{th}\):12.01
- Age 7\(^{th}\):12.96
- Parent Ed: HS -
Who had sex?

**Intervention = 705**
- baseline: 36 (5.1%)
- 7th grade sexual initiation: 33 (5.3%)

**Control = 525**
- baseline: 24 (4.6%)
- 7th grade sexual initiation: 38 (8.5%)
## Year 1 Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Odds ratio</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Had sex 6th grade</td>
<td>4.06**</td>
<td>2.69-6.12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Desirability</td>
<td>0.38**</td>
<td>0.21-0.69</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>1.40**</td>
<td>1.18-1.68</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>0.66**</td>
<td>0.49-0.88</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intact family</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>0.98-1.56</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>0.83-1.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention Status</td>
<td>1.32*</td>
<td>1.03-1.70</td>
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<td>Intact family</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>0.86-1.61</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>1.48*</td>
<td>1.04-2.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>1.62**</td>
<td>1.14-2.30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intervention Status</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>0.97-1.61</td>
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Results

- Students in intervention schools were 30% less likely to have initiated sex by 7th grade than those in control schools.

- Initial imbalance control vs. intervention
  - gender, age, Black race
  - Latino ethnicity
What these findings mean

- *Get Real* is effective in reducing 7th grade sex
- Given sex in middle school is rare, findings are notable
- Trend-level of intervention effects with Latino students
  - Unclear if intervention is effective with this group
Limitations

- Self-report measures
- Lack of block randomization
- Limited generalizability to non-vaginal sex
Our next steps

- Assess the impact of *Get Real* on 7\textsuperscript{th} and 8\textsuperscript{th} grade students
- Evaluate long-term impact of *Get Real* among 9\textsuperscript{th} graders
  - Using on-line survey
- Control for dosage of sex education in intervention
- Explore how *Get Real* works for different groups
Liaison work

- Middle school students
- Teachers/School administrators
- Parents
- PPLM
Chief Relationships Officer
Students

- Captive audience while in middle school, low refusal
- Mostly cooperative
- Introspective (or combative)

“I felt nervous at first, then it became less weird or uncomfortable because I realized it was for a good cause”
(6th grade student, survey comments)

“This survey in my opinion is a waste of time and class. I think we shouldn't take them at all. In a way it is disturbing, nosy, and inconsiderate”
(6th grade student, survey comments)

“That was the first time anyone has ever acknowledged that at the age of 12, I can be a lesbian. That meant so much to me. Although I have come out to no one, I have never felt more accepted. Thank you.”
(7th grade student, private note to educator)
Relationship Building

- Students
  - Yearly surveys
  - Transitioning to online survey
  - Incentives (in class, online)
  - Continued contact past 8th grade
Relationship Building

Liaisons in Schools
- Teacher/Administrator
- Intrusion on class time
- Accommodation
  - Consent forms for parents
  - Class space
  - Kids who don’t participate
  - Thank-you gifts
- School-level data
- New liaisons and hiccups
Relationship Building

Parents
- Approval
- Interviews

Educators
- Data collection
- School liaison
Next Steps

- Online survey 8th and 9th grade (vendor selection, gift selection, contact database)
- Spring survey time
- High school liaisons?