



YouthNet

The Characteristics of Effective Sex Education and HIV Prevention Programs

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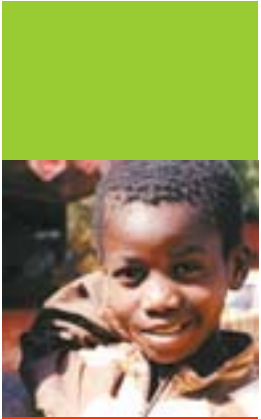
Based on work by Doug Kirby, ETR Associates,
for YouthNet



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Curriculum-based Sex Education and HIV Programs Have Multiple Goals

- Decrease unintended pregnancy
- Decrease STDs, including HIV/AIDS
- Improve sexual health in other ways



Systematic Literature Review of Curriculum-based Programs

- Program criteria:
 - Targeted young people ≤ 25
 - School- or community-based
 - Developed and developing countries
- Study criteria:
 - Experimental or quasi-experimental design
 - $N > 99$
 - Measured impact over 3-6 month period
 - Published in 1990 or later



Findings of the Study Review

- Sex and HIV education programs **do not increase** sexual activity
- **Some** sex and HIV education programs
 - **Delay** initiation of intercourse
 - **Reduce #** of sexual partners
 - **Increase** use of condoms/contraception
- Some do **all three**
- Programs effective with **multiple groups**
 - Males and females
 - All major ethnic groups in US
 - Sexually experienced and inexperienced
 - Youth in advantaged and disadvantaged communities



Replication Studies

- Curricula remain effective if replicated with all activities and similar structure
- Shortening programs reduces effectiveness
- Deleting condom activities reduces condom use
- Moving from voluntary after-school format to classroom may reduce effectiveness



Identifying the 17 Characteristics of Effective Programs

- Identified 28 programs that have the strongest evidence for positive behavior change
- Obtained 19 curricula for effective programs
- Conducted in-depth content analyses of these curricula and identified common characteristics of curricula
- Most curricula with nearly all the characteristics were effective



Process of Curriculum Development

1. Involved multiple people with different backgrounds to develop curriculum
2. Assessed relevant needs and assets of target group
3. Used a logic model approach
4. Designed activities consistent with community values and resources available
5. Pilot-tested the program



Curriculum Content

6. Focused on clear health goals
7. Focused narrowly on specific behaviors leading to these health goals
8. Addressed multiple sexual and psychosocial risk and protective factors affecting sexual behaviors
9. Created a safe social environment for youth to participate
10. Included multiple activities to change each of the targeted risk and protective factors
11. Employed effective teaching methods
12. Included content appropriate to youths' culture, developmental age, sex, and sexual experience
13. Covered topics in a logical sequence



Implementation

14. Secured at least minimal support from appropriate authorities
15. Selected educators with desired characteristics, trained them, and monitored/supervised them
16. If needed, implemented activities to recruit and retain youth and overcome barriers to their involvement
17. Implemented virtually all activities with reasonable fidelity



Implications for Program

- Curriculum-based education does not promote risky behavior
- The *right* curriculum can be effective in reducing risk behaviors
- Curricula should be selected, adapted, or developed with the 17 characteristics in mind
- Curriculum-based education should not be relied as the *SOLE* means of reducing risky behavior within a school or community



Report

Impact of Sex and HIV Education Programs on Sexual Behaviors of Youth in Developing and Developed Countries by Douglas Kirby, B.A. Laris, and Lori Rolleri

- 83 matrices summarizing the findings of each study
- Available on the web: <http://www.fhi.org>

Characteristics Assessment Tool (CAT)

available by e-mail from Lori Rolleri:

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