Behavioral Risk Factors: Adolescents with Recently Diagnosed STDs throughout the State of Florida
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Abstract

Background: In the summer of 2008, the Florida Department of Health (FDOH) mandated the interviewing of all adolescents age 15 and under newly diagnosed with a sexually transmitted disease (STD). During interviews, adolescents are asked questions regarding their demographics and behavioral risk factors. Previous research has shown links between STD diagnoses and behaviors including inconsistent condom use, substance abuse and prior history of STD.

Objectives: The aim of this study was to 1.) Examine the behavioral risk factors and demographics associated with STD diagnoses among adolescents throughout the state of Florida and 2.) Examine the demographics of those interviewed versus those who were not.

Methods: This sample consists of all adolescents age 15 and under. Available data collected from all counties throughout the state of Florida was included. Data was taken from the Patient Reporting, Investigation and Surveillance Manager (PRISM). The data was then coded and analyzed using SPSS 17.0. Descriptive Statistics and Measures of Association were run.

Results: Sample included 3063 adolescents, 1377 (45%) of which were interviewed. 7% of all STD cases within this population were re-infections while 11% were co-infections. Of the males interviewed (N=140), 14% report sex with multiple partners; 15% sex while intoxicated or high; 11% report a prior history of STD; 26% report a new partner within the past 90 days; 9% report never using condoms; and 48% report condom use sometimes. Of the females interviewed (N=1237), 8% report sex with multiple partners; 4% report sex while intoxicated or high; 18% report a history of prior STD; 15% report a new partner within the past 90 days; 11% report never using condoms; and 44% report condom use sometimes. Compared to males, which accounted for 10% of the sample, being interviewed was significantly associated with being female 90% (OR=1.445; 95% CI=1.157, 1.805; p<.05). Compared to whites, blacks were significantly more likely to report a history of prior STD (OR=1.464; 95% CI=1.014, 2.114; p<.05).

Conclusions: The STD epidemic continues to spiral out of control, specifically among adolescents and young adults. Adolescents’ sexual risk behavior should be carefully and routinely assessed at all clinical encounters. Behavioral interventions aimed at addressing behavioral risk factors identified in this study are needed.