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Adolescent perceptions of sexual health education transmitted via social media

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In 2012, results from an evidenced based social networking intervention (Facebook) supported social media as an encouraging method for information dissemination and the promotion of positive behavioral changes among 15-24 year olds. Using an accepted national questionnaire, these researchers documented a 23% self-reported increase in intention to use condoms and a 54% reduction in positive Chlamydia cases among 15-17 year olds in a Midwestern community. In 2010, a Community STD Collaborative was formed by a similar community to address the high rate of STD's experienced among 15-24 year olds. This collaborative consists of teens, young adults, and health/social service agency providers. Working with this collaborative, eight focus groups comprised of individuals age 15-24 were assembled to gather critique of the previously presented Facebook intervention. In addition the purpose of these groups was to explore how best to present engaging, appealing and meaningful STD content to this population. Participants were recruited from a Midwestern University, and local urban, suburban and rural high schools. Sixty-Three adolescents and young adults (56% female, 44% male; 48% high school, 53% college) participated in the focus groups. Findings support that youth consider the internet a reliable source of health information and that Facebook is an ideal site for the dissemination of messaging to increase STD knowledge and awareness. Participants reported a lack of knowledge/awareness of susceptibility factors for STD infection. Additionally, current messaging was seen as unreliable for sourcing, condescending and judgmental towards youth, and not vibrant nor appealing to the technology proficient learner of today.

Biography

Krista Jones is a Clinical Assistant Professor in the Department of Health Systems Science and Associate Director of the Urbana Regional Program at UIC College of Nursing. At UIC she has completed a Doctorate in Nursing Practice degree (2011), a Master's degree in Advanced Community Health Nursing (2007), a Post-Master's degree in Nursing Administration and Leadership (2009) and a Teaching Certificate in Nursing Education (2008). Her research interests include the development, implementation and evaluation of social-networking interventions to reduce risky behaviors among adolescents and young adults. She has presented her research at numerous national, regional and local conferences.

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