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Adolescent girls' #MeToo experiences: Findings from a randomized controlled trial

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The #MeToo movement has highlighted a prevalent problem facing women, the risk of sexual violence by men. Females who experience sexual violence or abuse are more likely to engage in risky behaviors as teens and later on in life. Little is known about the prevalence of such threats faced by adolescent girls, thus, the purpose of this study was to describe the risk faced by 738 urban girls ages 15-19 enrolled in a randomized controlled trial testing HIPTeens, a sexual risk-reduction intervention. Using audio computer-assisted self-interviews, we collected data describing girls' experiences with men pressuring, threatening or forcing them to have: (a) sex play, (b) attempted intercourse or (c) actual penetrative sex. We assessed whether a man used his position of authority or substances to do so. Unfortunately, every behavior assessed was reported by at least some of the girls in our sample. One-half reported they had given in to sex play (fondling, kissing, petting but not intercourse) when they didn't want to because they were overwhelmed by a man's continual arguments and pressure; one-quarter reported having done so multiple times. Even the least frequently endorsed question "How often have you had sexual acts (anal, oral or penetration by objects other than a penis) when you didn't want to because a man threatened you or used some degree of physical force?" was reported by 10% of girls. These findings should raise alarm over the frequency with which teen girls are sexually pressured, coerced or victimized, often by men who use their position of authority or providing substances (to an underage child) to perpetrate such acts. Tailored evidence-based interventions that integrate strategies that focus on both sexual violence and HIV prevention can help improve both outcomes. Further research addressing interventions targeting males is critical.

Biography

Dianne Morrison-Beedy joined The Ohio State University in 2018 as Chief Talent and Global Strategy Officer and Centennial Professor of Nursing. She was a Fulbright Scholar (Scotland), and recently listed on the Fulbright Specialist roster, and had a Senior Administrator Fulbright Award (France). She served as College of Nursing Dean and Senior Associate Vice President of USF Health, University of South Florida. She developed a sexual risk reduction intervention for adolescent girls, HIPTeens, recognized by the CDC and US Department of Health and Human Services as an exemplary evidence-based intervention for HIV/STI/teen pregnancy prevention. She has received numerous awards for her work; International Nursing Research Hall of Fame, Florida Top 100 Nurses, Excellence in HIV Prevention Award from Association for Nurses in AIDS Care, and Florida and New York State's Distinguished Researcher. She has over 250 publications including award-winning book on intervention research, and over \$12 million/research funding.

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