

Condom Use, Concurrent Sex Partners, and “Hooking Up:” Social Media Usage as a Correlate of Sexual Risk Behavior on the College Campus

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Abstract

With an increase in technology and social media applications, college students have a way of connecting with others more efficiently than ever. The present study identified whether amount of time spent on Facebook, currently the most popular social media application, was related to sexual risk behaviors (i.e. sex without a condom, multiple concurrent sex partners, and pursuing “hookups”). The hypotheses tested whether Facebook usage would be associated with having sex without a condom, having concurrent sex partners, and pursuing “hookups” on Facebook. Gender was tested as a moderator in these relationships as well, given the differences in STI risk behaviors and online dating behavior. Data were gathered from 236 African American college-aged students. Facebook usage of 3 or more daily hours was associated with having sex without a condom and using Facebook to pursue hookups. In addition, females who spent 3 or more hours on Facebook were less likely to have sex without a condom, but more likely to have concurrent sex partners than men whose usage was 3 or more hours daily; and men who spent 3 or more hours on Facebook were more likely to pursue hookups via Facebook than women whose usage was 3 or more hours daily. This study provides a starting point to further explore how social media consumption can be used to perpetuate or ameliorate risky sexual behavior among a vulnerable population.

Image

Facebook and Sexual Risk Behavior

Facebook Usage	Males Mean(S)	Female Mean(S)	Total Sample Mean(S)
How many hours do you spend on Facebook daily?	3.2(.3)	3.5(.5)	3.3(.4)
Reasons for Facebook Usage			
	Males %yes(N)	Female %yes(N)	Total Sample %yes(N)
Stay in touch with family/friends	88(85)	87(121)	87(206)
Find old friends/family/high school classmates*	61(60)	76(105)	70(165)
Discover events/places for entertainment	36(35)	29(41)	32(76)
Scholastic/academic reasons (homework, organizing study groups with classmates)*	32(31)	45(62)	39(93)
Community or university service organizations *	32(31)	20(28)	25(59)
Find romantic dates***	46(45)	14(20)	28(65)
Play games			
Sexual Behavior and Relationship Status			
Have you have voluntary heterosexual intercourse in past 3 months?	100(97)	100(139)	100(236)
In the past 3 months, have you had vaginal or anal sexual intercourse without a condom?	53(51)	46(64)	49(115)
Currently, how many sexual partners do you have?			
0-1	59(57)	63(88)	61(145)
2-3	25(24)	15(21)	19(45)
4 or more	16(16)	13(18)	14(34)
Refused	0(0)	9(13)	5.5(13)
In the past 3 months, have you used Facebook in order to find hookups (i.e. sexual partners)?	26(25)	35(49)	31(74)
Do you consider yourself to be in a committed and monogamous relationship?***	23(22)	46(64)	36(86)

Recent Publications

Carmack, C., Lewis, R. K., Roncancio, A. M., and Gerecht, L. T. (2016). Guidelines for Construct Measurement Yielding Unexpected Higher-Order Constructs: An Application for the Theory of Planned Behavior Applied to Condom Use. *American Journal of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences*, 3(5), 25-33.

Carmack, C. and Lewis, R. K. (2016). Assessing whether religious behaviors and positive and negative affect are associated with alcohol use and abuse among a sample of college students living in the Midwest. *Religion and Health*, 55(3), 1107-19.

Carmack, C., Lewis, R. K., & Roncancio, A. (2015). Get the message: Targeting beliefs to develop risk reduction intervention messages for African American adolescents. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 55(3-4), 396-410.

Biography

I am a community psychologist with a specialty in statistics and methodology and a background in adolescent and young adult risk behaviors. I received my training at Wichita State University and completed a NIH dual-appointment post-doctoral position at The Pennsylvania State University. I am currently an assistant professor at the University of Houston, where I contribute to the field of prevention science through teaching, community involvement, and personally meaningful research. Specifically, my focus is on 1) psychosocial and socio-environmental factors that promote or deter condom use and other STI risk-taking behaviors, and 2) family resilience as a health protector among underserved populations. My goal is to create, tailor, and evaluate health promotion programs that reflect the unique cultural needs of underserved populations. Email: ccarmack@central.uh.edu

