



News Release

Kaiser Family Foundation
2400 Sand Hill Road
Menlo Park, California 94025

For further information contact:
Amanda Mitchell 650-854-9400

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TEENS SAY SEX ON TV INFLUENCES BEHAVIOR OF PEERS Some Positive Effects Seen

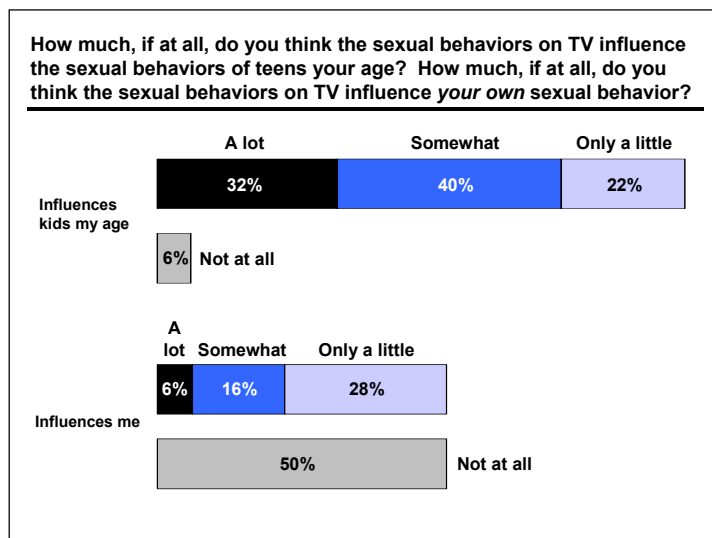
New Kaiser Family Foundation Survey on Teens, Sex, and TV

Menlo Park, CA, May 20, 2002 -- As TV programming and music videos continue to push the envelope of sexual content, a new national survey released today finds that nearly three out of four 15-17 year olds (72%) believe that sexual content on TV influences the behavior of kids their age "somewhat" (40%) or "a lot" (32%). Just one in four (22%), however, think it influences *their own* behavior to this degree (16% "somewhat," 6% "a lot").

On the positive side, many teens say they have learned something helpful from sexual scenes on TV, like how to say no to a sexual situation that makes them uncomfortable (60%) and how to talk to a partner about safer sex (43%). The survey, *Teens, Sex and TV*, is a nationally representative sample of more than 500 15-to 17-year-olds and was jointly conducted by the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation and *US News & World Report*.

The survey also indicates that TV's sexual content can help bring about parent-child communication. One in three 15-17 year-olds (33%) say they have had a conversation with one of their parents about a sexual issue because of something they saw on TV.

"This survey points to the incredible power of TV in teens' lives," said Vicky Rideout, a vice president at the Kaiser Family Foundation. "We're not saying TV causes teen pregnancy, we're not advocating censorship, and we're not trying to get sex off of TV," she continued. "But we are saying that we need to pay attention to the messages TV is sending about sex, because the teens themselves are definitely paying attention."



(more)

Methodology: *Teens, Sex and TV* was a national random sample survey of 503 teenagers ages 15-17. The survey was designed and analyzed by staff at the Kaiser Family Foundation, in consultation with *US News & World Report*. Fieldwork was conducted by International Communication Research (ICR) of Media, Pennsylvania. The survey was conducted by telephone April 4-8, 2002. The margin of error is plus or minus five percentage points.

Copies of the survey snapshot, *Teens, Sex, and TV* (publication # 3229) are available on the Kaiser Family Foundation's website at www.kff.org/entmedia.

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