



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 2005



INTRODUCTION

When it comes to the health and well-being of teenagers in this country, there has been some good news over the past decade: fewer teens are having sex, and more of those who are having intercourse are using protection – and the teen pregnancy rate is going down as a result.

But the challenges regarding teens and sex remain significant, despite this progress: a third (34%) of young women still become pregnant at least once before they reach the age of 20 – about 820,000 a year. More than one in three sexually active teens report not using a condom the last time they had intercourse. About four million teens contract a sexually transmitted disease each year, and an estimated 50% of all new HIV infections in this country occur among people under the age of 25.

Parents, peers, health providers, churches and schools play key roles in helping young people chart the course of their transition to adulthood, including making healthy decisions about sex. Yet in today's world, young people also encounter another important influence likely to contribute to their sexual socialization: the mass media, and in particular, television.

Recent research confirms that, despite increases in the amount of time spent with video games and the Internet, television continues to dominate young people's media use, with 8-18 year-olds watching an average of three hours a day.

Both parents and teens say they believe that sexual content on TV influences the sexual behavior of young people. Eighty-three percent of parents say exposure to sex on TV contributes to children becoming involved in sexual situations before they're ready, and more than half (53%) say it contributes "a lot." Most teens agree: nearly three out of four 15-17 year-olds say sex on TV influences the sexual behaviors of kids their age.

For many years, scientific research about the impact of sexual media on young viewers lagged far behind research in related fields, such as the influence of media violence. However, in the past two years several important empirical studies have dramatically enhanced our understanding of the effects of sexual content in mainstream entertainment television programming.

For example, a longitudinal study of a nationally representative sample of more than 1,700 12-17 year-olds (conducted by the RAND Corporation) found that those who were heavy viewers of sexual content were *twice* as likely to initiate sexual intercourse over the subsequent year as those who saw the least amount of sexual content, even after controlling for factors such as socio-economic status, parental oversight and the child's mental health, self-esteem and religiosity. Exposure to talk about sex was associated with the same risks as exposure to depictions of sexual behavior. These researchers concluded that "The magnitude of these results are such that a moderate shift in the average sexual content of adolescent television viewing could have substantial effects on sexual behavior at the population level."

The RAND study also found that for an important subgroup of young people – African American youth – those who watched more TV shows that included storylines about safer sex, or the risks and responsibilities of sexual activity, were *less* likely to initiate intercourse in the subsequent year. The researchers concluded that "Increasing the percentage of portrayals of sexual risk and safety, relative to other sexual content, might inhibit early sexual activity, particularly among African American youths."

Because television is an important source of information about sex for young people – and perhaps even an influence on their sexual behaviors – it is important to understand the nature and extent of the sexual messages TV conveys.

In general, television's influence on social beliefs, attitudes and behaviors tends to occur by a gradual, cumulative process that is most likely to develop with repeated exposure over time to common patterns of portrayals. Therefore, it is the goal of this study to identify the common patterns of sexual messages on television. For this reason, instead of just focusing on a certain genre of television programming – such as soap operas, top teen shows, or the 'family hour' – this study includes all genres other than newscasts, sports events and children's shows. And it examines programming across the range of broadcast, basic cable, premium cable, and public television networks.

The study provides the following information:

- On average, how many shows across the television landscape include sexual content (either talk about sex or sexual behavior);
- What proportion of those shows include any reference to safer sex or the risks and responsibilities of sexual activity;
- How those findings vary by type of program; and
- How TV's depiction of sex has or hasn't changed over the past seven years.

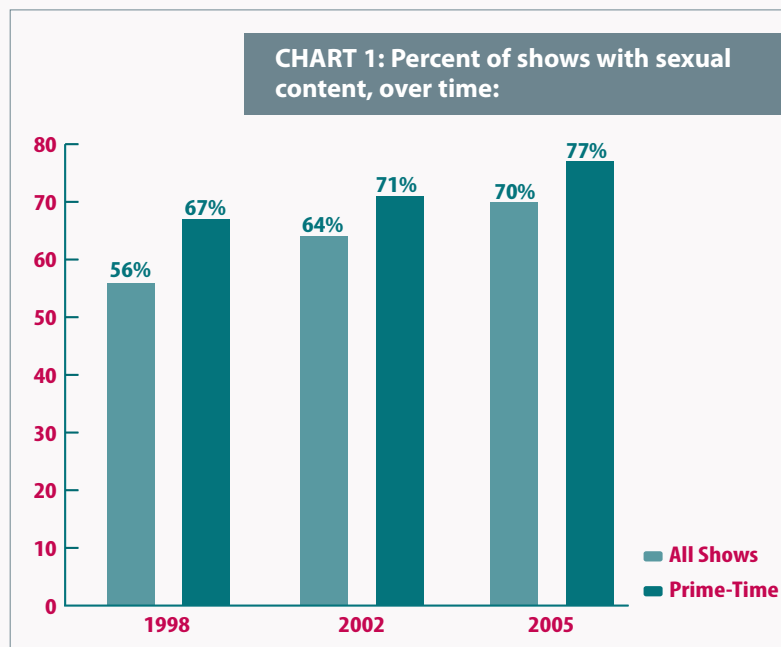
The research presented here represents the fourth in an ongoing series of studies. The initial report, based on a large, representative sample of programs from the 1997-98 television season, established a benchmark of the pattern of sexual messages presented across the overall television environment. Since then, that initial research has been replicated several times, by applying the identical content analysis measures to a complementary sample of programming gathered in the 1999-2000, 2001-02 and – as presented in this report – 2004-05 television seasons. Across the four studies, a total of 4,742 television programs have been analyzed, including 1,154 from the most recent season.

As teens are grappling with such questions as "Should I have sex with her?" and "What will my friends think of me if I do or don't?" they inevitably encounter stories on television that speak to these issues and may influence their thinking about them. This study helps us understand the patterns that are associated with television's treatment of sex. We know that "tweens" and teens in this country spend an average of three hours a day consuming TV's messages. Given the very high stakes involved, understanding the content of these messages is clearly important.

KEY FINDINGS:

1. The amount of sexual content on television continues to increase.

The study looked at a representative sample of more than 1,100 shows – covering the full range of TV genres other than daily newscasts, sports events, and children’s shows – and identified the proportion of shows that contained sexual content. The sexual content includes talk about sex (two friends talking about their sex lives, or a couple talking about whether to have sex, for example), as well as sexual behaviors, ranging from passionate kissing to intercourse (either depicted or strongly implied).

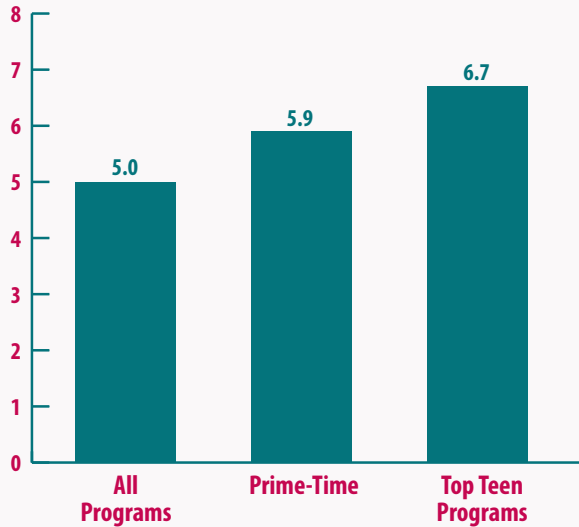


- **Seventy percent of all shows have sexual content, up from 56% in the first study in 1998 and 64% in 2002.** Two-thirds (68%) of all shows include *talk about sex*, and 35% of all shows include *sexual behaviors*.
- **The proportion of shows with sexual content in prime-time on the major broadcast networks has also increased.** Nearly eight in ten such shows (77%) include sexual content, compared to 67% in 1998 and 71% in 2002.





CHART 2: Among shows in 2005 with sexual content, the number of sex-related scenes per hour:



- In those shows that do include sexual content, the number of sexual scenes per hour is also up, to an average of 5.0 scenes an hour in the full composite week sample. This is an increase from both the 1998 study (3.2) and the 2002 study (4.4). The number of scenes per hour in *prime-time* and *top teen shows* is even higher, at 5.9 and 6.7, respectively.
- In fact, because of increases in both the *percent* of shows that have some sexual content and the *number* of sexual scenes in those shows, the total number of sexual scenes in the program sample has nearly doubled since this study was first conducted in 1998 (up 96% from 1,930 to 3,783).

- More than one in ten shows (11%) across the full composite week sample include scenes in which sexual intercourse is either depicted or strongly implied. This is up from 7% seven years ago, but down from a peak of 14% in 2002.
- Among the top 20 most-watched shows by teens, 70% include some kind of sexual content, and nearly half (45%) include sexual behavior. These rates are not statistically different from the rates found three years ago, the only other time the study examined top teen shows. In 2002 eight in ten (83%) of the top-20 teen shows had sexual content, but the difference is not statistically significant because of the small sample size (three episodes per show).

CHART 3: Percentage of shows with sexual content over time, by type of content:

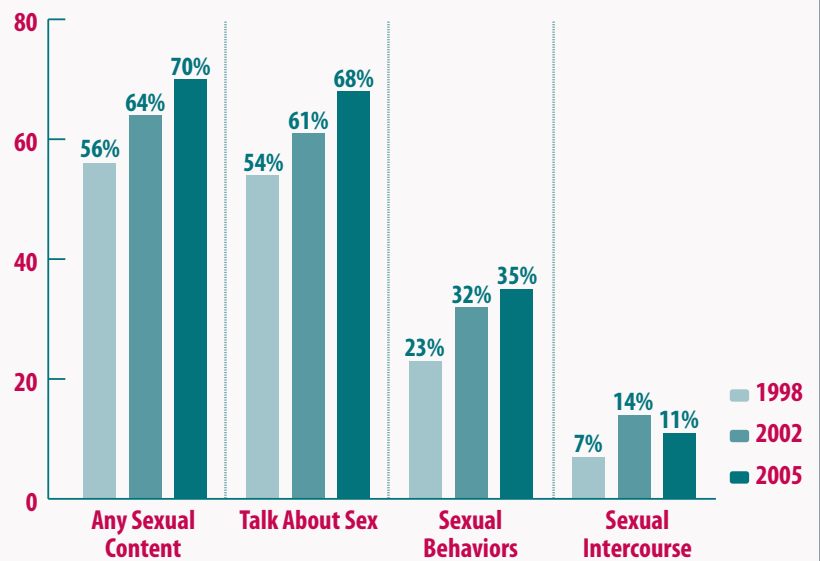
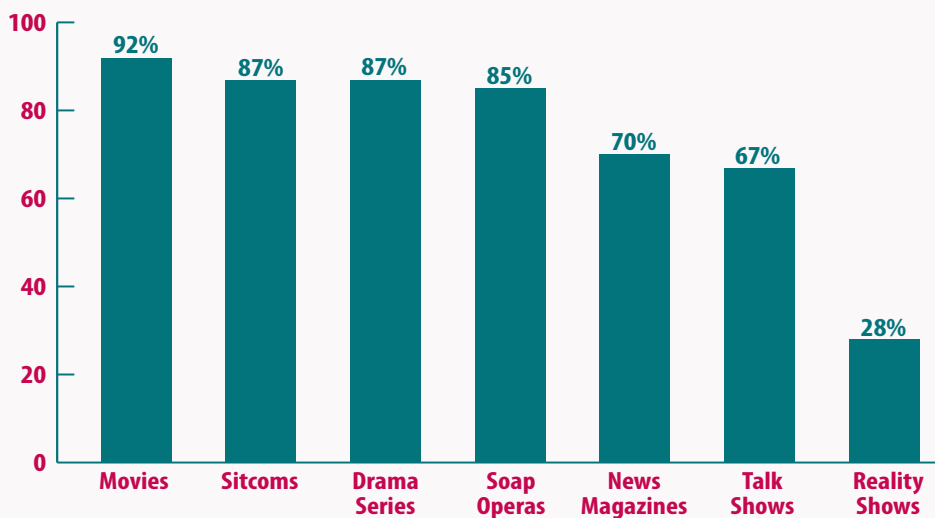


CHART 4: Percent of shows in 2005 with sexual content, by genre:



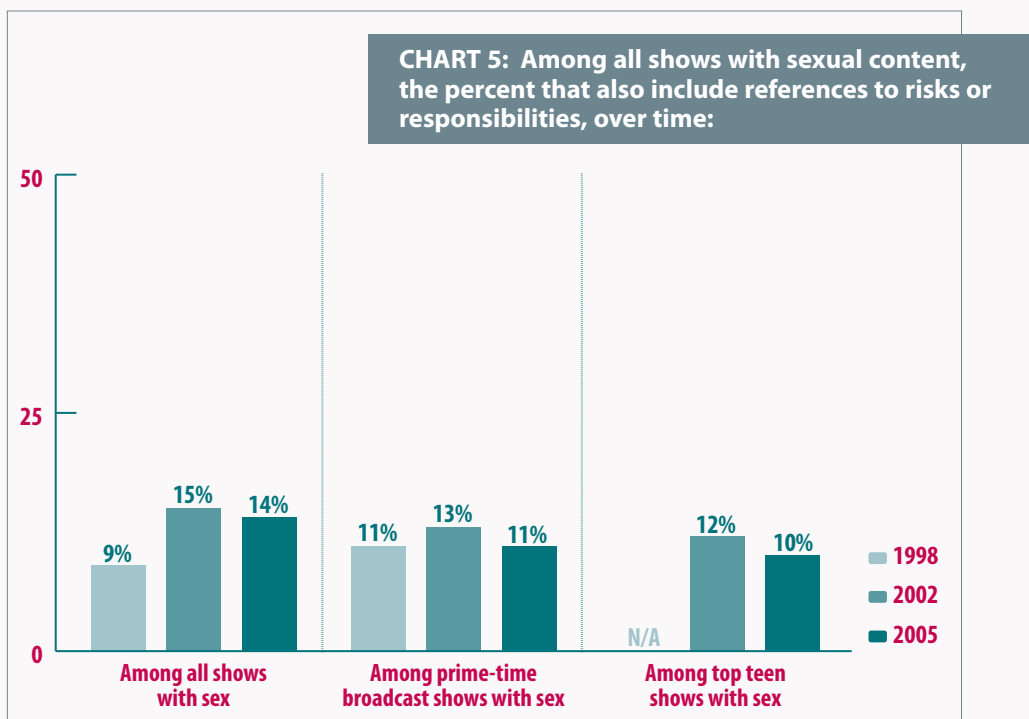
- **Reality shows are the only genre of programming studied in which less than two-thirds of shows include sexual content.** In this study, the “reality” category is a diverse mix that includes game shows, documentaries, and public affairs shows, along with shows such as *American Idol* or *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*.



KEY FINDINGS:

2. References to **safer sex** or **sexual risks** or **responsibilities** remain rare on TV. And following an increase in 2002, the proportion of shows including such references has leveled off.

The study looked at all shows with sexual content to determine how many included any reference to safer sex issues, such as abstinence, contraception, waiting to have sex, or the consequences of sex. These references could range from a conversation about condoms, to a character making a commitment to abstinence, to a pregnancy scare.

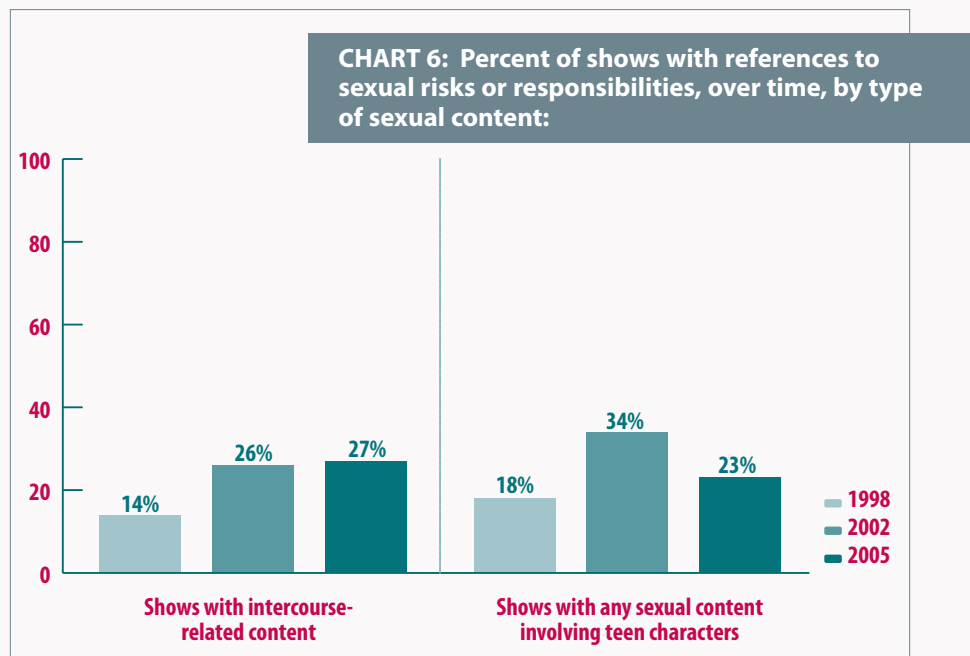


- Today 14% of all shows with any sexual content include at least one scene with a reference to sexual risks or responsibilities – up from 9% seven years ago, but roughly the same rate as in 2002 (15%).
- Two-thirds of all references to sexual risks or responsibilities on TV are “minor or inconsequential,” compared to one-third that are “substantial” or “primary” elements of the scene.
- Eleven percent of network prime-time shows with sex include a reference to risks or responsibilities somewhere in the show. This rate in prime-time has held relatively steady throughout the study, from 11% in 1998 to 13% in 2002, and back to 11% in the current sample.
- Among the 20 most highly rated shows for teen viewers, one in ten (10%) of those with sexual content include a reference to sexual risks or responsibilities at some point in the episode.
- Only 1% of all shows with sex have a primary thematic emphasis on sexual risks or responsibilities throughout the episode. This rate has remained consistent since the study began seven years ago.

KEY FINDINGS:

3. Some types of shows have been incorporating more risk and responsibility messages than others.

References to safer sex issues or to the risks and responsibilities of sexual activity are obviously not appropriate in every scene or every show with sexual content. The study found that shows where such references would appear to be most appropriate include them at a much higher rate than other shows.

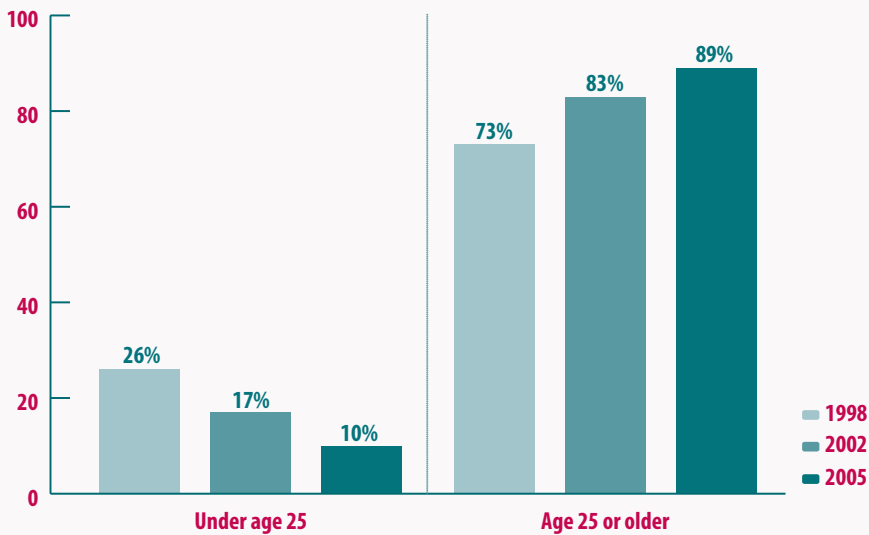


- **More than one in four (27%) shows with intercourse-related content (either talk about intercourse, or intercourse depicted or strongly implied) include a reference to safer sex or sexual risks or responsibilities somewhere in the show.** This is a much higher rate than when this study began in 1998, when just 14% of shows with intercourse-related content included such references, but this increase seems to have occurred around the 2002 season (when it went up to 26%) and the rate has remained steady since then.
- **Among shows with any sexual content involving *teen characters*, just under one in four (23%) include a reference to sexual risks or responsibilities.** This rate is not statistically different from that found in 1998 (18%) or 2002 (34%).

KEY FINDINGS:

4. When intercourse on TV is depicted or strongly implied, the **characters** involved are less likely than in the past to be under age 25, but are more likely to have just met.

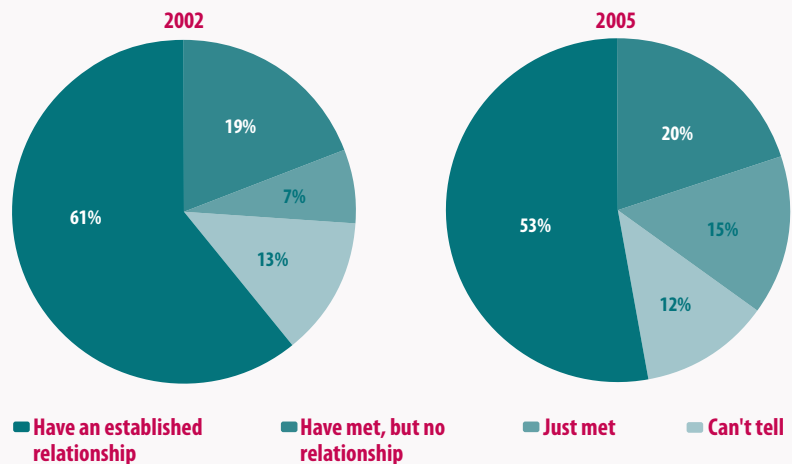
CHART 7: Age of characters involved in depictions of intercourse, over time:



- **The vast majority (89%) of characters on TV involved in sexual intercourse appear to be adults age 25 or older.** One in ten (10%) appear to be teens or young adults, down from one in four (26%) in 1998 and one in six (17%) in 2002.

- **About half of all scenes with intercourse (53%) involve characters who have an established relationship with one another.** One of every five scenes of intercourse (20%) involves characters who know one another but have not yet established a relationship, and another 15% of scenes present characters having sex when they have just met (compared to 7% in 2002).

Chart 8: Relationship of characters involved in depictions of intercourse, over time:



Examples: Types of sexual content

Talk about sex - talk toward sex:

Jack and his girlfriend, Missy, are two high school students with a budding romance. Missy's father has elicited a promise from Jack that he will not have sex with his daughter, but Missy seems to have other plans. As the two teenagers sit in the car on a date, Missy begins to make physical advances. Jack pulls her hand away as it slides up his leg. Missy rolls her eyes and asks, "Is this about that stupid virginity pledge oath again? Jack, the beautiful thing about Jesus is that he's really flexible." Jack questions the flexibility of Missy's father, but she counters, "If it's an act of love, how could it possibly be disrespectful?" Missy continues to push the situation, asking Jack if he loves her. He responds, "Yeah, sure, yeah, yeah, of course I love you." Then Missy states firmly, "Good, because I want you to be my first." Jack seems puzzled as Missy continues to outline her plan. "Tuesday," she says. "He [my dad] and my mom will be in St. Louis until Wednesday. We'll have the entire house to ourselves." (Jack & Bobby, WB)

Talk about sex - comments about own or others' sexual interests:

Lorelai and Rory Gilmore, a mother and her college-aged daughter, are out together shopping. At a café, they spot Rory's current boyfriend, Logan, with another girl. Lorelai and Rory watch from afar as Logan

flirts with the girl and kisses her on the neck. Lorelai is outraged, but Rory explains, "Mom, stop, it's fine . . . we're keeping things casual. We see each other, we see other people, and that's him over there seeing other people, so it's fine. We both agreed." Perplexed by Rory's explanation, Lorelai continues, "But aren't you guys sleeping together?" Rory replies, "Mom, it's college . . . we're both busy, you know, we have classes, we have friends, it's good to just keep things casual." Clearly displeased with her daughter's stance, Lorelai responds sarcastically, "Fun, sure, I get it. Friends with benefits. No problem, I watch Oprah. . . . Are you sure you're cool with this?" Rory provides a final assurance, quickly changes the subject, and starts to walk in the opposite direction. (Gilmore Girls, WB)

Sexual behavior - physical flirting:

Faith has just begun her first day as a receptionist for her brother-in-law Charlie, an orthodontist. In an attempt to add some spice to the office, she comes dressed in a nurse's costume complete with white hot pants, stiletto heels, sheer stockings, and a low-cut top. While staffing the front desk, Faith attempts to seduce a handsome divorced father of one of Charlie's young patients. Leaning over the reception desk, her black bra exposed,



Faith says, "Your divorce must have been so painful." She then leaps onto the desktop, crosses her legs, and leans toward the man saying, "Sometimes it's best just to jump into the arms of another woman, speaking as a medical professional." Surprised, the man asks, "So, how long do you think my son's going to be in there?" Ignoring the real focus of his question, Faith rubs her abdomen suggestively, and says, "Nine months starting from tonight." (Hope and Faith, ABC)

Sexual behavior - kissing:

Anne Marie, a surfer who pays the bills by working as a hotel maid, meets Matt, a quarterback staying at the hotel with his professional football team. After some coaxing, Anne Marie and her girlfriends agree to give Matt and some of his teammates surfing lessons. In this scene, Anne Marie and Matt have

just returned to the hotel after a full day of surfing lessons. Matt asks Anne Marie up to his room under the pretense of paying her for the lessons. But once inside, the two quickly move into each other's arms and start kissing. Matt pulls her shirt over her head, but just as he unties her bikini top, the phone rings and interrupts them. Matt answers and refers to his caller several times as "Sweetheart," which leads Anne Marie to put her bikini and shirt back on as he continues to talk on the phone. ("Blue Crush," USA)

Sexual behavior – oral sex:

As detectives Stabler and Benson seek to find the murderer of a 15-year-old female, they uncover a world where adolescent girls are performing sexual favors for men



in return for expensive clothes and accessories. The detectives speak repeatedly with the victim's best friend, Angela. By coincidence, they encounter Angela as she is performing oral sex on a middle-aged manager of an expensive clothing store in a back room. Back at the station, detective Benson confronts Angela, saying, "You're selling yourself for clothes." "No I'm not, Brian [the manager] just likes to buy me pretty things," she replies. She continues, "I do not have sex with him!" Detective Benson looks her directly in the eye and asks, "Then what do you call what you did to Brian?" Angela scoffs and retorts, "It's only oral." Detective Benson emphasizes, "Oral sex, Angela!" (Law & Order: Special Victims Unit, NBC)

Sexual behavior – intercourse implied:

Set on a yacht, this scene begins with Julie and her ex-husband Jimmy already naked under the bed's covers. Breathless, the two are kissing passionately with Julie on top of Jimmy. Julie mumbles between kisses, "It's been so long since we've done this," to which Jimmy replies "It's like . . . it's like rid-

ing a bike." The couple roll over to reverse places with Jimmy on top while the kissing continues. Having some second thoughts, Julie makes Jimmy stop and asks him, "It's just that, uh, does this count as adultery?" Kissing her chin, Jimmy

replies "What? Cheating on your husband with your ex-husband? Technically I think it does, yeah." Julie still seems undecided as she tries to justify her behavior, saying she hasn't been getting along with her husband. "He hasn't touched me in months. He's probably going to jail," she says. Jimmy asks, "What, do you want to stop?" After briefly contemplating the question, Julie responds firmly, "No." The couple return to kissing, the background music grows louder, and the camera view shifts to the outside of the boat to end the scene. (The OC, Fox)

Sexual behavior – intercourse depicted:

Sonny and Carly have recently reconciled their estranged marriage. They are drinking wine and embracing on the couch with a romantic fire burning in front of them. Sonny suspects a problem and asks, "What's happening here now?" Carly begins to kiss and touch him as her way of changing the subject. "Sonny, I don't want to think," she whispers. "We're no good when we think." The couple stop talking as the background

music takes over and accompanies an extended visual montage of discreetly photographed shots of the couple undressing, embracing, and making love. (General Hospital, ABC)

Examples: References to the possible risks or responsibilities of sex

Reference to emotional consequences:

Jonathan and Deborah are high school students who have a monogamous dating relationship. They have talked about having sex and have decided to go ahead and "do it." Having just returned from buying condoms, Jonathan and Deborah are sprawled out on the bed, kissing each other. As they begin to get undressed, Deborah asks shyly, "Can we please turn out the light?" Jonathan turns the light off, saying, "I mean, it is our first time you know?" With an air of awkwardness, Deborah says hesitantly, "Well, not exactly... I mean, it's our first time together, so it will feel like it's our first time, but it's not my first time." Hearing this, Jonathan turns the light back on, and asks, "Okay, I mean it's no big deal, I don't care, but seriously, who was it?" As Deborah divulges who it was, and how it happened, Jonathan becomes visibly upset. He puts his shirt back on and storms off in a huff, leaving Deborah distraught. (Life As We Know It, ABC)

Reference to physical consequences:

While investigating the murder of a 15-year-old schoolgirl named Lisa, detectives Stabler and Benson discover that she “hooked up” with numerous boys from her school and with men she met over the Internet. When the coroner, Dr. Warner, informs Stabler and Benson that Lisa was HIV positive, a serious conversation ensues. Dr. Warner advises the detectives that “a third of sexually active teens in this country have a sexually transmitted infection.” Thinking out loud, detective Stabler observes that, theoretically, any of Lisa’s hook-ups could have infected her as well as “every other girl they had sex with.” Detective Benson asserts, “That’s a lot of kids at risk!” “More than you can imagine,” Dr. Warner replies, as she shows the detectives how quickly HIV can spread with the help of a computer-aided model that tracks cases city-wide. “Once there are a certain number of carriers, which we call a critical mass, the disease begins to spread exponentially among those who don’t use condoms,” she explains. The computer screen fills with blinking red dots, each of which represents a newly infected victim. Detective Stabler observes with dismay, “You’re talking about an epidemic.” (Law & Order: Special Victims Unit, NBC)

Reference to contraception:

Peter, a college president, is talking with his friend Grace, about an incident involving his high school daughter, Courtney. “She’s seeing someone,” he explains, “a freshman here, two years older. And up until this morning I was totally supportive of the whole thing. He seems like a nice, responsible kid... Well, he seemed.” But that morning the Campus Health Center

notified him that Courtney had been in to request emergency contraceptives. Peter exclaimed, “The morning after pill! I don’t even know where to start with her. And I want to kill him... how could she be so irresponsible?... Why is my daughter having unprotected sex? She’s 16 years old!” (Jack & Bobby, WB)

Reference to sexual patience:

Two high school students, Joan and her boyfriend Adam, decide to attend a large music festival 100 miles away. Because the festival will finish late, the couple borrow a camper truck so they can spend the night in the parking lot and drive home the next morning. This scene opens with them in bed in the camper, fully clothed but under the covers. Adam starts to kiss Joan and says, “It’s sort of the perfect opportunity isn’t it?” Joan pauses and asks, “I mean, do you really want to?” Adam asks, “You don’t? You seemed like you did.” Still trying to convince Joan, he adds, “I brought protection.” But Joan, reminds Adam that they already agreed they were not ready to have sex. Adam responds “That was like a year ago. I mean, we’ve been going out a long time now. It’s sort of the next step, don’t you think?” With the outcome still unclear, the two begin to kiss again, but then Joan bolts upright and exclaims, “We’re in a truck. I don’t want my first time to be in a truck... I’m sorry.” Adam goes along, telling her, “Fine, you don’t want to; we won’t,” and turns away. Upset, Joan lies back down and stares blankly at the ceiling of the camper. (Joan of Arcadia, CBS)

Reference to consequences – program-length theme:

Simon Camden is the young adult son of a Protestant minister and the fourth born of seven children. Though his family has always stressed the importance of abstinence until

marriage, Simon is rebellious and has chosen to live a sexually active life. In this episode, Simon faces the possibility that he may have contracted an STD from a night of casual sex. The episode begins with Simon preparing breakfast for the female companion he had recently met and just slept with for the first time. Over eggs and toast, the young woman tries to broach a sensitive subject, saying, “You might not care about me if I told you something about me that I should have told you last night.” Simon doesn’t quite get it at first and asks what she means. She continues with her indirect approach, responding, “Well, surely you know when you’re with a woman, you’re with every man she’s ever been with?” Finally sensing where the conversation is heading, Simon looks her in the eye and tells her pointedly, “Say what you want to say.” The scene ends at this point, leaving the rest of the story to the viewer’s imagination.

Visibly shaken by the turn of events, Simon tries to reach his older brother Matt, a medical doctor. Unable to reach Matt and desperate for advice, Simon contacts his brother-in-law Kevin, and shares that “a condom was involved.” Kevin tells his wife Lucy, and soon Simon’s STD scare involves the entire family. Matt finally reaches Simon and tries to reassure him that he should be okay because of the precaution he took with the condom. But Matt’s frustration and anger come through as he tells his younger brother, “Now you get to go in and get tested and wait for the results and go through the miserable consequences of being involved with somebody you don’t even know and having casual sex!” The episode draws to a close as Simon begins to reveal to his father, Reverend Eric Camden, the nature of the problem he now faces. (7th Heaven, WB)

CONCLUSION

For all the changes we've seen in this world of new media and high technology, it is television that continues to dominate young people's media diets. Indeed, teenagers today are literally surrounded by television: most have a set in their bedroom and several more around the house, at least one of which is often left on most of the day. And an increasing number of young people watch TV in their homerooms at school, in their cars, and even on their cell phones. On average, children aged eight years and older spend three hours every day watching TV – or over 20 hours a week – more time than they spend in any other activity besides sleeping.

One of the most challenging parts of being an adolescent is developing a healthy approach to making decisions about sex. A host of factors contribute to how young people handle this critical stage of development: their relationship with their parents; the attitudes of their peers; their emotional stability; their ties to community organizations and religious institutions; and what they are or aren't taught in school, among others. But important research in recent years has indicated that television also plays a role in the sexual socialization of youth, contributing to their knowledge, beliefs, expectations, attitudes and even behaviors.

Because media's influence tends to be gradual and cumulative in nature, it is the overall pattern of messages across programs that is of primary interest. This study has tracked the broad outlines of sexual content on television since 1998. It indicates that the amount of sexual content on television has increased dramatically, and that the proportion of such content that includes any reference to sexual risks and responsibilities has leveled off after increasing markedly several years ago.

Both the proportion of shows that contain sexual content and the number of sexual scenes within those shows have increased. All told, there are nearly twice as many scenes with sex today as there were seven years ago in the same sample of television programming. One in every nine shows across the TV landscape – excluding daily news-casts, sports events and children's shows – includes scenes of sexual intercourse either depicted or strongly implied.

While they remain infrequent on the whole, messages about safer sex or about the risks and responsibilities of sexual activity are significantly more common today than they were seven years ago. These issues clearly receive much more attention in those programs where they are most relevant, such as shows with intercourse-related content or shows with sexual content involving teen characters. Nonetheless, the vast majority of shows – even those with intercourse-related content or teen characters – still don't include any reference to these issues; and in the minority that do, those references are usually minor or inconsequential elements of the show.

One clear and consistent shift that *has* occurred is that teens and young adults are less often shown engaging in intercourse on TV – and the characters having intercourse are increasingly likely to be older.

New research over the past several years has documented the powerful positive impact television can have on young people – whether it is learning about HIV from an episode of *Girlfriends* or about condom efficacy from an episode of *Friends*. Indeed, a major longitudinal study has found that for many young people, exposure to a higher proportion of shows referencing sexual risks or responsibilities can promote healthier sexual decision-making.

Many in Hollywood have incorporated such storylines into their shows in a way that enhances, instead of detracts from, the entertainment value of the show – that educates and informs *without* being preachy. But as a proportion of all shows with sex, the rate of such references has stalled in recent years.

At a time when half of all new HIV infections in this country are among young people, when one in four sexually active teens contracts an STD every year, and when one in three girls become pregnant before the end of their teen years, it is important to know that Hollywood has the potential to play a positive role. While many TV executives are already taking the initiative, Hollywood's full potential has not been realized.



METHODOLOGY

The *Sex on TV* study was designed and analyzed by Professors Dale Kunkel, Keren Eyal and their colleagues at the University of Arizona in consultation with researchers at the Kaiser Family Foundation. A complete description of the methodology can be found in the full report.

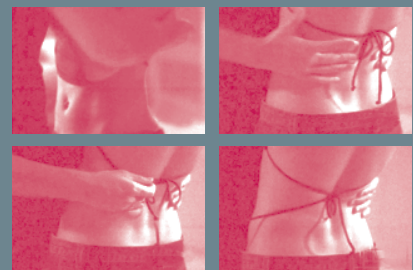
The study examined a representative sample of a week's worth of programming across a variety of cable and broadcast stations. A composite week sample of programs was collected from each channel, from 6 A.M. to 10 P.M. Mountain Standard Time (the equivalent of 7 A.M. to 11 P.M. Eastern or Pacific Time). All genres were included other than daily newscasts, sports events, and children's shows; morning news shows such as *Today*, and news magazines such as *20/20*, are included. In addition, an "over-sample" of three week's worth of prime-time programming from the four major broadcast networks was analyzed and reported on in a separate chapter. Finally, a sample of three episodes of each of the top 20 most-watched shows among teens was also separately analyzed and reported on.

A total of ten channels were included in the study, chosen to reflect the range of types of networks available. These include the four major commercial broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, Fox, NBC), one independent broadcast station that is a WB network affiliate, one public broadcasting station (PBS), three top-ranked basic cable channels (Lifetime, TNT, and USA Network), and one premium cable channel (HBO). Also included were any of the top 20 teen shows that aired on other networks.

Across the four studies conducted since 1998, a total of 4,742 television programs have been analyzed. For this report, a total of 1,154 programs were analyzed from the 2004-2005 television season. This includes 959 programs in the composite week sample, 261 in the prime-time broadcast over-sample, and 60 in the teen programming sample. Because of overlapping programs in these three samples, the numbers cannot be summed. Programs for each of these three samples were digitally recorded and then systematically evaluated using scientific content analysis procedures applied by trained coders.

For the purposes of this study, sexual content includes both talk about sex and depictions of sexual behavior. Sexual behavior includes depictions of sexual intercourse, scenes in which sexual intercourse is strongly implied, intimate touching, passionate kissing, and physical flirting. The study counted as "sexual behavior" only those scenes in which the behavior was a "primary" or "substantial" emphasis of the scene; it did not count any scenes in which the behavior was "minor" or "inconsequential." "Talk about sex" includes characters discussing their own or others' sexual actions or interests. Examples of each type of sexual content can be found in this executive summary; additional examples can be found throughout the full report.

All scenes containing sexual content were analyzed for any mention of issues concerning the possible risks or responsibilities of sexual activity, including any reference to contraception, condoms, safer sex, emotional consequences of sex, sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy, abortion, abstinence, or waiting to have sex. The study counted all such references and noted the proportion that were primary, substantial, minor or inconsequential.





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