

TITLE: Parental and Peer Sexual Socialization: the Effects on Sexual Self-Efficacy in College Freshman

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Introduction: According to Cecil and Pinkerton (1998), sexual-efficacy is the ability to say “no” to risky sexual behaviors, questioning potential sexual partners and condom usage. Previous research has shown that parental sexual socialization plays an important role in sexual self-efficacy in adolescence (Parkes, Henderson, Wight, & Nixon, 2011; Shtarkshall, Santell, and Hirsch, 2007). However, there is a little research that informs whether or not this pattern of increased sexual self-efficacy continues into young adulthood, specifically among college freshman. Another potential factor effecting sexual self-efficacy in college freshman is peer sexual socialization. Voisin, Hotton, Tan, and DiClemente (2013) found that peers effect the decisions of adolescence. The purpose of this study is to better understand the relationship between sexual socialization (parental and peer) and sexual self-efficacy in college freshmen. It is hypothesized that less permissive parental sexual socialization will be associated with more sexual self-efficacy. It is also hypothesized that less permissive peer sexual socialization will be associated with more sexual self-efficacy.

Method: The sample for this study was taken from a larger study about self-identified college freshmen’s sexual and general health behaviors. The sample included 128 freshman students of whom 21.9% were male and 78.1% were female. These students ranged in age from 17 to 43 ($M = 20.02$ years of age, $SD = 4.78$). The data for this study was collected via an online survey.

Results: Parental sexual socialization was found to be significantly predictive of questioning potential sexual partners. Peer sexual socialization was not found to be predictive of sexual-self efficacy.

Discussion/conclusion: Descriptive analysis did show a relationship between parental sexual socialization and some aspects of sexual self-efficacy. Peer sexual socialization was not associated with sexual self-efficacy. These findings provide insight to protective factors associated with sexual self-efficacy in college freshman. Next steps for this research are to examine other protective factors, such as cultural factors, that may influence sexual self-efficacy.