Messages about Contraception and Condoms in Mother-adolescent Dyadic Conversations: Knowledge, Risks and Effectiveness

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Little is known about the content of parental discussions with young adolescents about reproductive health topics. We sought to characterize the messages mothers share about contraception and condoms. Recruitment occurred between January 2012 and May 2013. Mothers and their 12- to 14-year-old adolescent son or daughter were invited to participate in a semi-structured conversation about everyday issues and health topics, including reproductive health topics. Discussions were audio-recorded, transcribed and a grounded theory approach to content analysis performed. Content analysis was performed to characterize maternal messages regarding contraception and condoms. SETTING: Urban city in western Pennsylvania. PARTICIPANTS: Twenty-five dyads; 14 mother-daughter dyads and 11 mother-son dyads. INTERVENTIONS: None. MAIN OUTCOME MEASURES(S): Maternal reproductive health messages during conversations with early adolescent children. RESULTS: Four key themes emerged. Theme 1 focused on general facts about condoms and contraceptive methods, how each works, and how to obtain them. Theme 2 emphasized the consequences of sexual behaviors and the advantages of safe sex. Theme 3 conveyed the effectiveness of condoms and contraceptive methods for preventing pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. Theme 4 described where adolescents could get more information about condoms and contraception. CONCLUSIONS: Mothers convey a broad range of information about contraceptives and condoms to young adolescents.

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