



Research Week 2021

The Development and Pilot Evaluation of a Reproductive Health Decision Aid

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Abstract

Each year, over 9.5 million young people (18 – 24 years old) contract sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and report 2.8 million unintended pregnancies in the United States. Young people's perception of sexual risk is often misinformed, leading to risky decisions and behaviors. Over 62% of young women believe they are not at risk for STDs, and 61% of them report that they did not use a condom the last time they had sex. These other misconceptions may be partly due to a poor understanding of how one's sexual health behaviors impact contraceptive options' effectiveness. Current guidelines for contraceptive counseling do not meet young people's needs to understand their current contraceptive options (less than 72% of women are well informed of these options). This unmet need leads to less focus on assessing patient-reported sexual behaviors and preferences relating to their potential risk for other health outcomes and the overall impact on their reproductive health during contraceptive counseling visits.

We can leverage tools like patient decision aids to address the gap and improve counseling. Current educational tools only focus on contraceptive options and adherence without assessing or addressing patient's current sexual health behaviors, risks, and the potential for unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. Therefore, we propose to develop a reproductive health patient decision aid that addresses sexual health behaviors, risks, and presents contraceptive options in plain language and evaluate said decision aid using patient-reported and clinical outcomes.

Statement of Significance:

Current contraceptive decision aids do not provide women with sufficient information to make an informed decision about contraceptive choices. This novel online approach guides women in assessing their own risk and helps them identify contraceptive preferences prior to counseling.