

Teen sex problem essay sample

[Health & Medicine](#), [Sex](#)



INTRODUCTION

Roses are red, my love, violets are blue

Sugar is sweet, but not as sweet as you..

So sang Jim Reeves from the perspective of a teenager in 1960s, as there was romance in the air. Gone are those days and now the type of songs makes rounds in teen lips is,

“ I take you to candy shop / I’ll let you lick the lollipop

Go ‘ head girl, don’t you stop / Keep goin’ til you hit the spot”

The messages of the lyric reflects the ambience of modern times – the teens are now more into physical act, which has filled the air with fear, if the reports of terrible consequences are something to go by. The issue of teen sex has become far more complicated in this era of globalization and open communication, where the force of commerce is ruling over social values, thereby making it difficult to guard today’s teens from harmful lifestyle. There is an incessant flow of insinuating TV programs, joined by the porno-world of WWW and computer games with sexual messages, which are working in tandem to vitiate the pristine minds of teens. Consequently, a good many of them are getting exposed to an array of health problems, ranging from teen pregnancy to HIV. Therefore this essay focuses on the health hazards associated with teen sex and seeks solution for it by reviewing the pertinent points and experts’ views, and before coming into its own conclusion.

A Brief Take on Teen Sex

Pregnancy: It is not that teen sex is an absolutely new problem suddenly surfaced on earth – it is the rising magnitude of it and mounting health problems in teens that has pushed this issue up in the agenda of social concern. According to an estimation of The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, \$1. 9 billion in public funding was spent on teenage childbearing in 2004 alone, where the pregnancy rate for young teenagers of 15-17 years stood as 42 cases out of 1000 teens. And this is even 38% lower than the peak that was recorded in 1990. However, this doesn't indicate that the rate of teen sex has declined – as it is being considered as the outcome of increased use of condoms (Ventura et al., 2008).

Abortion: When there is so much of unwanted pregnancy, can abortion be behind? The report speaks about 214, 750 abortions among 15-19-year-olds in 2002, which is about 29% of the total pregnancy and which is about 21% among the total cases of abortion in that year (Facts, 2006).

Figure – 1 [*Adopted from “ Facts on American Teens’ Sexual and Reproductive Health” (2006).*

[http://www. guttmacher. org/pubs/fb_ATSRH. html](http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb_ATSRH.html)]

Current Trend: However, another set of data collected from a large governmental survey has found some “ disturbing hints that teen sexual activity may have begun creeping up and that condom use among high school students might be edging downward”, and accordingly it linked this

trend with its another finding like “ one in four teenage girls has a sexually transmitted disease and the teen birth rate has increased for the first time in 15 years” (Stein, 2008).

The Agony List: The fact list prepared in 2006 shows that nearly 46% of teens (15-19 years) of America have had sex at least for once, where seven out of 10 turns sexually active at the age of 19, while most of the girls do not marry till they reach mid or late twenties, and that trait makes a huge number of young adults vulnerable to unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STI) for almost a decade.

Figure – 2 [*Adopted from “ Facts on American Teens’ Sexual and Reproductive Health” (2006).*

http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb_ATSRH.html]

It is understood that most of the teenage pregnancy or STIs occur due to unprotected sex. Though ninety percent of publicly funded clinics deal with teen issues like abstinence from sex or keeping parents informed about any instance of the same, yet the staggering number of pregnancies and abortions speak of its inadequacy to effectively cover the situation. Equally agonizing is the rate of STIs, where 48% out of an average 18. 9 million cases of STI occur in the 15-24 years’ age group, in spite of the fact that this age group represents only 25% of the sexually active population! Added to the woe, 50% of these young adults are found to be the victims of Human Papilloma virus (HPV), of which certain types can lead to cervical cancer, if left untreated. (Facts, 2006). This certainly is a dangerous situation,

especially when it is not uncommon among teens to suppress their sexual escapades from their parents.

The above report carries other statistics too that can serve pointers to the gravity of the situation, like 11% of all U. S. births are the outcome of teen pregnancy and this rate is almost double than that of U. K. or Canada, and no less than eight times higher in comparison to the same instances of Japan or Netherlands. The report (Fact, 2006) virtually carries endless issues that command immediate attention – like the issues involved with education of pregnant teens or teen mothers. It has been found that seven percent of teen mothers suffer from either delayed or non-existent prenatal care!

Sexual Behavioral Pattern in Teens: Researchers chose Midwestern town as a model area for learning about how sexually transmitted diseases (STD) spread among teens. That 18-month long project was a part of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, where the targeted subjects were high school students and some startling findings add more to the social concern. Around 68% of 832 students were found to be involved in at least one relationship where the majority of the relationships included exchange of fluids – i. e., close physical contact and 32% of them were found to be engaged in serial relationship, thereby were at risk of contracting STDs from that network of sexual relationship. This state of affairs, according to the researchers, is “ the worst one for potential disease diffusion” (Wallis, 2005).

That was only one side of the situation. An analysis on the data collected from “ 2002 National Survey of Family Growth” (NSFG) by Guttmacher Institute on the nature of physical intimacy shows that teens are now

engaging more in intercourse than oral sex, thereby exploding the myth that majority teens usually avoid intercourse either for fear of complication or to remain virgin technically and thus mostly opt for oral sex. In the process, researchers have found that 50% of the 2, 271 teens in the age group 15-19 were having vaginal sex, while 11% having anal sex and 55% having heterosexual oral sex, which are clear indications that they are trying all possible sexual acts (Stacy, 2008).

Together these findings corroborate the fact that teens are acting much in the mold of full-grown adults, though oblivious of its consequence. As for example, oral or anal sex makes them vulnerable to STIs, or even HIV, as it is evident from the fact that one out of four teenage girls are found to be infected with one or the other STI.

DISCUSSION

Catalysts Stem From Social Situations

Instead of engaging into any blame game, if one looks at the issue with rationality, one would find that social problems like teen sex generates from social situations itself – there cannot be any alien conspiracy in changing teens behavior. The avenues to teen sex can be many, and in some cases strange, yet there are some common items that can influence them towards having it. Social situation is a broad-based term and anything and everything that touches teen lives falls within its ambit, be it television watching or other issues like Peer-pressure, Isolation, Provocative Literature, Parental behavior, Family Melancholy, or Sibling's Lifestyle – anything could serve as

a catalyst to teen sex, while some might even force them in it. As for example, peer pressure has a “ much greater impact on adolescent behavior than any other factor” and it “ tends to have more of an effect on children with low self-esteem” (Peer Pressure, 2007). It starts influencing the human beings right from their most important formative years, when s/he is also most vulnerable on many grounds – as the whole world gradually unfurls its bag before him/her at that period.

According to a teen survey conducted by Kaiser family Foundation (Teens Report, 2006), “ one in three boys ages 15-17 say they feel pressure to have sex while 23% of girls belonging to the same age second that situation”. And there is more – “ more than eight in 10 teens say that they drink or use drugs before having sex, while seven in 10 said their peers don’t use condoms when they are drinking or using the drugs”.

Therefore, it would be better to focus on the woods instead of one or two trees if one wants to solve a burning issue like teen sex. The best approach towards finding its solution would be to probe what propels teens to resort to nonconformity, of which teen sex is just one streak of reflection.

A study by the University of Georgia’s Institute For Social Research, there is a “ Strong link between nonconformity and peer pressure among teenagers and young adults” (Nonconformity, 1998). It was commissioned in 1995 to examine the growing trend of nonconformity among 13- to 21-year-olds, and it revealed this fact after a three-year study that “ 85 percent of U. S. youths actively defy standard societal norms—adopting “ alternative” modes of

language, behavior and dress—as a means of winning the acceptance and approval of their peers”.

This clearly shows that teen sex is not exactly a separate issue – as there could be many hidden elements that can play catalyst to initiate a teen into sex. The discussion below would explain it further.

Stress: the dreaded menace . The most dangerous part of stress is that it doesn't show up till it permeates into the mental fabric of a human being. As for children, it's far more difficult to identify its attack or its source, as children go through various tunnels of adaptation and change towards adulthood. A study on 1000 kids belonging to the age group of 9-13 conducted by ' KidsHealth' (KidsPoll, 2008) identifies some common sources of worry and stress among children and they are:

1. Homework
2. Getting good grade
3. Changing Schools
4. Being left out in a group
5. Being odd in physical size or shape than peers
6. Personal harm
7. Health problem
8. Separation from the family
9. Worry related to war, money, disaster and dying.

It's a big package of assaults on teen mind, and this records some proven facts on the effect of stress and worry on the teens:

1. Worrying is a common phenomenon in normal children aged 8-13 years
2. Stress percentage among children ranges from 5 – 10 percent.
3. Stress among children is estimated to have increased 45% over the past 30 years.
4. The most frequent worry in children involves grades, peers and parents.
5. One in four children worry about missing out quality time with their parents.
6. War, financial crunch and disaster hit them hard (What, 2008).

Altogether it substantiates the fact that there has to be something missing in the lives of the teens, which could tackle this rise of worry and stress in them. On the other hand, there is something that is heavily bugging them too – and its name is, Information Age!

Bettie Youngs, author of the book “ Stress and your Child; Helping Kids Cope with the Strains and Pressures of Life”, highlights the impact of Information Age in the lives of modern children, where it is almost reshaping their childhood according to its whims and fancy. “ By high school graduation the average American kid will have spent more time in front of the television than in the classroom”, Youngs says, while emphasizing that children are constantly served stress elements through all possible channels of media (Youngs, 1995).

One observation by another researcher, Ondine Brooks Kuraoka provides a real food for thought. “ Teaching children the difference between things they

can and can't control is a cornerstone in guiding them in the path of a less worried life", Kuraoka says, while referring to the ways of guiding the children away from stress and worry. (Kuraoka, 2004).

These valued observations points at an overall negligence in guiding the teens when they need it the most, thereby compelling them to try for themselves to "fit in" to the system, rather than system trying to be befitting for them. In the process of which, they are getting no scope to weigh and value their own abilities and consequently becoming victims of wrong decisions, of which teen sex is only one example.

Julia Bateman, a teacher, finds teen problems like ganging or peer pressure exist everywhere, irrespective of economic, cultural, environmental or regional diversities. "Every high school in the United States has some form of gang, clique, or peer pressure problems no matter the state, town, or socioeconomic status of the community" – she says, while pointing out an underlying issue with the help of poignant words from Allen-Carey Webb's book, 'Literature and Lives' –

"What is truly unfortunate about the lives of these young people is that their anti-social behavior is often a desperate if misdirected attempt to secure their most basic human needs, to establish for themselves safety, respect, and belonging. Therefore, we as teachers need to address this cry and answer it in our classrooms. Gangs, cliques, and peer pressure are not only dangerous on the streets, but also tear up the classroom environment. Under these pressures and stresses, students are left feeling afraid, different, and

often abandoned. Ignoring these problems in the classroom will only make these tensions grow” (Webb, 2001).

This statement clearly underlines a void in the social system, for which the society is somehow failing to cater the emotional or maybe temporal needs of the young minds, and for which they are undertaking self-ventures through every possible streets, where their zest is ruling over rationale and eventually a good many of them ending up in the middle or at the end of the wrong streets of this cruel world!

“ Violence has been at its peak in the past few years”, writes Julia, while referring to the soaring statistics of serious, violent crimes committed by the students in USA, where even in 1997 it recorded 202, 000 students from the age of 12 to 18 as serious offenders (Bateman, 2002)!

From the above, it is evident that danger and crime are reining elements in the children’s world as they are stemming out of confused minds of teens. Therefore, teen sex is not an isolated problem, but a part of the whole problem in teen world if such crises are to be lessened, then the core problems should first be addressed.

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

While the good news is that six out of 10 minors go for abortions with the knowledge of at least one of their parents and get support from them (Henshaw and Kost, 1992), the haplessness of the modern-day parents are mostly lies in the fact that they cannot prevent such instances due to their professional engagements. Consequently, “ today’s teens are growing up in

a world more connected, more competitive and more complex than the one their parents had to navigate as kids”, says researcher Gibbs, besides quoting Ann Frank that “ Parents can only advise their children or point them in the right direction, ultimately people shape their own character” (Gibbs, 2005).

Thus there is an urgent need for a module that can help the teens to learn more about consequences of unprotected and untimely sex, instead of advices like abstaining from it. The researchers too suggest the same, as Stacy quotes Linda Lindberg, a senior research associate at Guttmacher Institute – “ Counseling and education should take into account total STI risk by addressing the full range of behaviors that teens engage in, including oral and anal sex. It is crucial that teens receive evidence-based education and counseling about STI risks and protective behaviors for all types of sexual activity” (Stacy, 2008).

But that are supposed to be the part of governmental endeavor. How can parents help their teen children? Psychologist and author Michael Thompson presents a flash guideline for them:

1. Have faith in child development. (You were teen once, and you survived).
2. Don't take their self-absorption personally. It's not a plot to hurt you. Their brains, hormones and interests have changed. You're not central anymore.

3. Don't ask them intrusive questions or read their diaries, but when you are seriously worried about them, do tell them directly in a serious way. Don't let them blow you off with a defensive remark.
4. Keep up the family rituals that have always sustained you all: family dinners, church, camping, skiing and watching the same dumb TV shows. Thirteen-year-olds need to feel that they can touch their own childhood frequently and be nourished by traditions they know well. (Thompson, 2005).

CONCLUSION

The gravity of the situation commands a total focus on teens to identify and address the core problems like stress, peer pressure, etc., besides a calculated thrust on teen counseling and education regarding teen sex. Such counseling should be comprehensive enough to cover every issue involved in it. It is about time the society accepts the fact that the traditional education of teaching teens to stay away from sex is not at all working, especially amid the provocative ambience created by decreased amount of parenting and increased state of commercialism through open channels of communication.

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