

Impact of Unwanted Sexual Intercourse

Unwanted sexual contact in adolescence has long-term implications for the health, well being, and future victimization of those who experience it.

Adolescents who have had unwanted intercourse are more likely to consider suicide, to have sex earlier, to have unprotected intercourse and to have been pregnant.

Several studies have linked unwanted sexual activity to psychological distress, alcohol and other drug use.

Researchers examined 1,040 adolescents aged 14-19 years in Monroe County, New York in 1998 – 2000, using a telephone survey (random-digit dial methods).

- 389 respondents were sexually active; among those, 20% of females and 7% of males reported unwanted sexual intercourse.
- For 37% of male and 17% of female adolescents, the survey was the first time they disclosed the incident.
- Among female adolescents reporting unwanted intercourse, 91% have a usual source of health care and 62% reported a well visit in the previous 6 months.
- Female adolescents reporting unwanted sex were more likely to have wanted contraceptives, but not gotten them because of fear their parents would find out (32% vs. 11%) and to have had sex without contraception (69% vs. 52%) than those who had not had unwanted sex.

The researchers underline, that although many adolescents have never told anyone about the unwanted intercourse, most had visited a primary care physician or clinician.

This circumstance offers a lot of intervention and prevention opportunities to health care personnel. Authors suggest that physicians and other clinicians should screen for a history of unwanted intercourse and provide needed referrals for counseling.

Wilson KM, Klien JD. Opportunities for appropriate care: Health care and contraceptive use among adolescents reporting unwanted sexual intercourse. Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine. 2002 April; 156 (4): 341-344.

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