



SUBJECTIVE NORM AND RISKY SEXUAL BEHAVIORS IN ADOLESCENCE

Blanca Flor Fernández¹, Castellanos Contreras², Graciela López Orozco³, María del Carmen Sandoval Sánchez⁴, Javier Salazar Mendoza⁵, María de Jesús Contreras Miranda⁶, Maribel Sepúlveda Covarrubias⁷ and Ma. Del Carmen Cruz Velazquez⁸

¹Licenciada en Enfermería, con Maestría en Investigación Educativa y Doctorado en Educación. Profesora de Tiempo Completo Titular "C", en la Facultad de Enfermería, Región Veracruz de la Universidad Veracruzana, con reconocimiento al perfil deseable PRODEP, integrante del Cuerpo Académico Desarrollo Humano-Veracruz (UV-CA/275), de la Red de Cuerpos Académicos e Investigadores para el Desarrollo Humano Sustentable y Coordinadora de Investigación de la Facultad de Enfermería Región Veracruz de la Universidad Veracruzana

²Académica de Tiempo Completo, Facultad de Enfermería Región Veracruz UV, Licenciada en Enfermería UV, Maestra en Ciencias en Enfermería UANL, Doctorado en Ciencias Políticas Administrativas y de la Educación

³Licenciada en Enfermería, con Maestría en Ciencias de la Enfermería y Doctorado en Educación. Profesora de Tiempo Completo Titular "C", en la Facultad de Enfermería Región Veracruz de la Universidad Veracruzana, con reconocimiento al perfil deseable PRODEP, integrante del Cuerpo Académico Desarrollo Humano-Veracruz (UV-CA/275), de la Red de Cuerpos Académicos e Investigadores para el Desarrollo Humano Sustentable

⁴Licenciada en Enfermería, con Maestría en Enfermería. Profesora por Tiempo Completo por "Interinato", en la Facultad de Enfermería Región Veracruz de la Universidad Veracruzana, colaboradora del Cuerpo Académico Desarrollo Humano-Veracruz (UV-CA/275), de la Red de Cuerpos Académicos e Investigadores para el Desarrollo Humano Sustentable y Coordinadora de Investigación de la Facultad de Enfermería Región Veracruz de la Universidad Veracruzana

⁵Licenciado en enfermería, maestría en enfermería y Doctorado en Ciencias Jurídicas Administrativas y de la educación, perfil PRODEP colaborador del Cuerpo Académico Desarrollo Humano-Veracruz (UV-CA/275),

⁶Licenciada en enfermería, con maestría y doctorado en ciencias de enfermería, perfil PRODEP, integrante del Cuerpo Académico Desarrollo Humano-Veracruz (UV-CA/275), y de la Red de Cuerpos Académicos e investigadores para el desarrollo humano sustentable

⁷Profesor de Tiempo Completo, Integrante del Comité Científico de la Red ENSI nodo Mexico, coordinadora del CA. Enfermería y salud reproductiva de la UAGro-162, Miembro del Padrón Estatal de Investigadores, Perfil PRODEP

⁸Profesor de Tiempo Completo, Integrante de la Red ENSI nodo Mexico, miembro del CA. Enfermería y salud reproductiva de la UAGro-162, Miembro del Padrón Estatal de Investigadores, Perfil PRODEP

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ABSTRACT

Objective: Describe the subjective norm and risky sexual behavior of adolescents in higher secondary education. **Methodology:** The research was quantitative and a non-experimental, typical descriptive and cross-sectional design was used. The study population was made up of a total of 90 students aged 15 to 19, from different semesters of a public institution of a higher middle level. The type of sampling was not probabilistic for convenience. The total sample was 77 adolescents aged 15 to 19 years of both sexes. Data were captured and processed through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) statistical program and descriptive statistics were used as measures of central tendency, mean, median, mode, minimum, maximum, standard deviation, in addition to making tables of frequencies and percentages for the description of the data. **Results:** Regarding the subjective norm, of 77 adolescents 5 (6.5%) perceive that people important to them would approve of having sex in the next three months, 35 (41.6%) indicated that they would neither approve nor disapprove, 23 (29.9%) consider that would disapprove and only 17 (22.1%) that would disapprove a lot. As for the sexual partner, the majority 34 (44.2%) find that they would approve the conduct of having sexual relations and only 3 (3.9%) would disapprove a lot, about the mother, 27 (35.1%) consider that they would disapprove a lot, 28 (36.4%) that would disapprove and only 1 (1.3%) that would approve a lot, with respect to the father the most significant data is of much disapproval with 25 (27.8%), 42 (54.5%) of the subjects indicated that their friendships would neither approve nor disapprove the behavior, of same as their church or religious group 26 (33.8%). **Conclusions:** According to Ajzen and Fishbein, the subjective norm is the belief that an individual has in this case, the adolescent, about certain behavior in relation to the approving or disapproving opinions of their important persons, their sexual partner, their mother, their father, their friends and their religious group. On the other hand, a risky sexual behavior is a behavior that endangers the sexual health of the adolescent. This includes sexual activity without a condom, having more than one sexual partner, exposure to an unwanted pregnancy and starting sexual life before 18 years without protection.

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INTRODUCTION

The group of adolescents constitute a population with priority for sexual and reproductive health at a global level, since their biological, psychological and social characteristics place them at risk.

In Mexico, the population aged 12 to 19 represents 15.6% of the total population according to the last population and housing census of 2010 (Campero, Atienzo, Suárez, Hernández y Villalobos, 2013).

Throughout time in Mexico the fertility of women has decreased (from 3.3 children between 1989-1991 to 2.2 in 2006-2008), in adolescents this is still high, since the fertility rate in women of 35-39 years is 41 children per 1,000 women,

*Corresponding author: Blanca Flor Fernández

Licenciada en Enfermería, con Maestría en Investigación Educativa y Doctorado en Educación. Profesora de Tiempo Completo Titular "C", en la Facultad de Enfermería, Región Veracruz de la Universidad Veracruzana, con reconocimiento al perfil deseable PRODEP, integrante del Cuerpo Académico Desarrollo Humano-Veracruz (UV-CA/275), de la Red de Cuerpos Académicos e Investigadores para el Desarrollo Humano Sustentable y Coordinadora de Investigación de la Facultad de Enfermería Región Veracruz de la Universidad Veracruzana

while in teenagers 15-19 it is 70 (Campero, Atienzo, Suárez, Hernández y Villalobos, 2013).

It has been recorded that 40% of women who become pregnant during adolescence did not plan or desire that pregnancy and it is known that during the first sexual intercourse the use of contraceptive methods is minimal.

But responsible sexuality does not end only in contraception, it is important to understand the risks involved in having sex, one of them is the transmission of sexually transmitted infections, in Mexico STIs are among the top ten causes of general morbidity in the group of 15-44 years (Campero, Atienzo, Suárez, Hernández y Villalobos, 2013).

Parents, friends and partners (significant people), being a model of young people's behaviors, also become fundamental pillars in the formation of their attitudes, values and beliefs about sexuality (The impulse, 2013), therefore, is It is important to consider the subjective norm of adolescents.

The subjective norm is a normative reasoning that manifests the social pressure perceived by the adolescent towards the execution or not of said behavior; It is the result of the evaluation made in this case by the adolescent, about whether the significant others want him to conduct the behavior and the motivation to please them (Alonso, García, Guzmán y Rodríguez, 2013).

If the young person perceives that his friends expect or think that he will perform some behavior, his decision will tend to lean towards it. In relation to this, the belief (right or wrong) that a behavior is accepted in its reference groups, will influence the intention to carry it out (Alonso, García, Guzmán y Rodríguez, 2013).

METHODOLOGY

The research was quantitative and a non-experimental, typical descriptive and transversal design was used, since it focuses on the analysis of the variables that occur naturally in the environment, transversal because it implies obtaining the data at a given time, and descriptive because it identifies, measures and describes the subjective norm variables of adolescents and their sexual behaviors (Burns, Gray & Grove, 2016).

The study population was made up of a total of 90 students aged 15 to 19, from different semesters of a public institution of a higher middle level. The type of sampling was not probabilistic for convenience. The total sample was 77 adolescents aged 15 to 19 years of both sexes.

Instruments

For the purpose of this investigation two instruments were used, the first one contains elements of ICSP012 (Fernández, B. 2013, Pérez de la Barrera, 2006). It consists of 18 questions divided into three sections, the first is where the identification data of adolescents such as age, sex and marital status are acquired, with multiple choice type response. The second section identifies the background of sexual life, conforms to dichotomous and multiple-choice questions, the last part collects data from their current sexual life, this section has dichotomous and multiple-choice questions.

On the other hand, the instrument that was used for the subjective norms is the Subjective Norms of Jemmott, Jemmott and Villarruel (1999) in its Spanish-translated version

of Villarruel, Jemmott and Jemmott (2002). This instrument was obtained through Dr. Raquel Benavides Torres who has previously worked on this instrument and was contacted via email. It measures in adolescents their perception about the approval of their important people such as their parents, friends, church and partner in relation to their sexual behavior; such as sexual intercourse, condom and contraceptive use.

This instrument is made up of 18 reagents with a likert response option ranging from 1 = would disapprove a lot, 2 = would disapprove, 3 = would not approve or disapprove, 4 = would approve and 5 = would approve a lot. An example of a question is: Would your father approve or disapprove if you had sex in the next 3 months?

According to Benavides (2007) the score is between 18 and 90 where the higher the score, the adolescent will have a greater perception of others' approval of their sexual behavior. The answers are related to what people who are important to the adolescent would think such as: their sexual partner, their mother, their father, their friends or their church or religious group about having sex, that they will use a contraceptive method and / or that they will use the condom. The reliability coefficients for internal consistency that the instrument has reported are greater than .68 according to Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Benavides, 2007; Villarruel, Jemmott, Jemmott, & Ronis, 2004).

Process

The school where the instruments were applied was selected, an appointment was agreed with the campus principal in which a previously managed trade was delivered, where his authorization to apply the instruments was requested, in addition to explaining the purpose of the investigation.

Upon being authorized by the campus director, the study subjects were selected for availability, the reason for the investigation was explained, doubts were clarified and informed consent was given to the adolescents.

Before the application of the instrument, the informed consent of the adolescent's parent or guardian was obtained, as well as the informed consent of the adolescent, and the reason for the investigation and what the instrument consists of was clearly explained, as well as the answering instructions, the instruments were subsequently applied, the person in charge of the investigation answered any questions that arose during the application of the instrument, at the end of the day, the participation in this investigation was appreciated.

Analysis Strategies

Data were captured and processed through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) statistical program and descriptive statistics were used as measures of central tendency, mean, median, mode, minimum, maximum, standard deviation, in addition to making tables of frequencies and percentages for the description of the data.

RESULTS

77 adolescents who have started their sexual life are in an age range of 12 to 18 years, the 36.4% group began their sexual life at 15 years being the most significant data, followed by 14 years with 26.0%, ages with less frequencies were those of 12 and 13 years with 3.9% and 5.2% respectively. Regarding the number of sexual partners 40.3% have only had one partner,

37.7% have had between 2 and 4 and 17 adolescents 22.1% have had more than 4 sexual partners, it is noted that the use of contraceptive method in the first sexual relationship only 55.8% used preventive measures.

Table 1 Characteristics of the sexually active sample population

Age of beginning of sexual life	fr	%
12	3	3.9
13	4	5.2
14	20	26.0
15	28	36.4
16	15	19.5
17	4	5.2
18	3	3.9
Total	77	100.0%
Number of sexual partners		
Only 1	31	40.3
Between 2 and 4	29	37.7
More than 4	17	22.1
Total	77	100.0%
Use of contraceptive method in the first sexual intercourse		
Yes	43	55.8
No	34	44.2
Total	77	100.0%

Source: Direct n=77

Regarding the subjective norm, of 77 adolescents 6.5% perceive that people important to them would approve of having sex in the next three months, 41.6% indicated that they would neither approve nor disapprove, 29.9% consider that they would disapprove and only 22.1% that they would disapprove a lot, As for the sexual partner, the majority 44.2% find that they would approve the conduct of having sexual relations and only 3.9% would disapprove a lot, about the mother, 35.1% consider that they would disapprove a lot, 36.4% that they would disapprove and only 1.3% that they would approve much, With respect to the father, the most significant data is of much disapproval with 27.8%, 54.5% of the subjects indicated that their friendships would neither approve nor disapprove of the conduct, in the same way as their church or religious group 33.8%.

Table 2 Subjective norms of adolescents to have sexual relations in the next three months

Subjective Norm	Would Disapprove A Lot		Disapprove		Neither Approve Nor Disapprove		Approve		Approve Much	
	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%
	Most people who are important to you	17	22.1	23	29.9	35	41.6	5	6.5	0
Your sexual partner	3	3.9	5	6.5	7	9.1	34	44.2	28	36.4
Your mother	27	35.1	28	36.4	21	27.3	0	0	1	1.3
Your father	25	27.8	20	26.0	23	29.9	8	10.4	1	1.3
Your friendships	1	1.3	4	5.2	42	54.5	20	26.0	10	13.0
Your church or religious group	22	26.6	25	32.5	26	33.8	2	2.6	2	2.6

Source: Direct n=77

In Table 6, it is shown that in order to use some contraceptive method in their sexual relations, adolescents perceive that most of their important people 41.6% would approve and only 2.6% would disapprove a lot, As for their sexual partner 48.1% indicate that they would approve this being the most significant data and only 1.3% would disapprove a lot, 46.8% find that their mother would approve that they use any method if they have sex in the next three months, in the same way as their father but less frequently 29 (37.7%), regarding friendships and the church and religious group 54.5% and 29

37.7% adolescents respectively perceive that they would neither approve nor disapprove.

Table 3 Subjective norms of adolescents towards using some contraceptive method if they have sexual relations in the next three months

Subjective Norm	Would Disapprove A Lot		Disapprove		Neither Approve Nor Disapprove		Approve		Approve Much	
	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%
	Most people who are important to you	2	2.6	5	6.5	25	32.5	32	41.6	13
Your sexual partner	1	1.3	5	6.5	22	28.6	37	48.1	12	15.6
Your mother	2	2.6	7	9.1	20	26.0	36	46.8	12	15.6
Your father	3	3.9	7	9.1	25	32.5	29	37.7	13	16.9
Your friendships	1	1.3	3	3.9	42	54.5	20	26.0	11	14.3
Your church or religious group	6	7.8	21	27.3	29	37.7	13	16.9	8	10.4

Source: Direct n=77

Regarding the condom use of the 77 students, 42.9% perceive that the majority of people important to them would approve to use it in their next sexual relations, followed by 40.3% who would neither approve nor disapprove and only 3.9% would disapprove, about the sexual partner 40.3% indicated that they would approve the one who used a condom and 35.1% perceived that they would not approve or disapprove, as for the mother 53.2% receive approval for the use of the condom in the same way as with the father 44.2%, on the part of Friendships 51.9% of adolescents perceive that they would neither approve nor disapprove of using a condom in the same way as their church or religious group with 44.2%.

Table 4 Subjective norms of adolescents towards using condoms in their sexual relations in the next three months

Subjective Norm	Would Disapprove A Lot		Disapprove		Neither Approve Nor Disapprove		Approve		Approve Much	
	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%	fr	%
	Most people who are important to you	0	0	3	3.9	31	40.3	33	42.9	10
Your sexual partner	1	1.3	8	10.4	27	35.1	31	40.3	10	13.0
Your mother	3	3.9	5	6.5	18	23.4	41	53.2	10	13.0
Your father	4	5.2	7	9.1	24	31.2	34	44.2	8	10.4
Your friendships	1	1.3	4	5.2	40	51.9	25	32.5	7	9.1
Your church or religious group	7	9.1	14	18.2	34	44.2	15	19.5	7	9.1

Source: Direct n=77

DISCUSSION

In the results found of the 77 adolescent students of secondary education, it was identified that regarding the sex it is the feminine one that predominates being this 62.2% of the population, similar to the result obtained by Forcada *et al.* (2012) in which 66.6% of its sample was female in their study on risky sexual behavior in university students: risk factors and protection.

Regarding the age range of adolescents in this study, it was found between 14 and 19 years of age, similar to that obtained by Chávez (2012) in his study, psychosocial factors associated with sexual risk behavior in adolescents in which he was 12 to 19 years old, in relation to the average age of the adolescents surveyed for this research was 16.64 and in the study moral norm, subjective social norm and attitudes as predictors of the intention to initiate sexual relations in the adolescence of Sanabria, González, Paredes & Moreno (2013) it was found that the average was 15.33.

Regarding the use of the condom, it was found that 42.9% used it in their first sexual relationship, 28.6% used it with their regular partner and 33.8% with their occasional partner data that exceeds what was documented by Forcada *et al.* (2012), which records that 62.22% of its population in the study on risky sexual behavior in university students have had sexual relations without using barrier methods, specifically the condom.

According to Forcada *et al.* in its study on risky sexual behavior in university students (2012), 46.75% agree to have resorted to natural methods to prevent pregnancy, Contrary to what was found in the population of this study that only 1.3% used it in their first sexual relationship, 9.1% with their regular sexual partner and 2.6% with their casual partner.

59.7% of adolescents in the present investigation claim to have had an occasional sexual partner, higher than that reported by Forcada *et al.* (2012) in its study on sexual risk behavior in university students: risk factors and protection where it is documented that 41.17% accept having practiced casual sex.

According to Forcada *et al.* (2012) in the study on risky sexual behavior in university students, their data suggest that the individual's religiosity is related to risky sexual behavior, which is consistent with what was found with this study since the adolescents perceived disapproval of the religion or religious group towards using contraceptive methods among them the condom.

Forcada *et al.* (2012) indicated that family communication was associated with a lower frequency of risky sexual behaviors in students, which is related to what was obtained in this research where 48.8% of adolescents perceive their mother's approval for using contraceptive methods and 53.2% of using condoms in their sexual relations, which leads them to an intention to perform protective behavior.

Similar to that found by Jiménez (2012), the study shows a weak relationship for behavioral beliefs, moderate for normative and strong for control beliefs, while in this study, adolescents perceive in their parents a high percentage of approval in the use of condoms, which may indicate that in relation to the subjective norm this is favored when there is communication from parents to children about sexual issues.

The data obtained in this study about having sex in the next three months are; that 44.2% of adolescents receive approval from their sexual partner and 36.4% receive a lot of approval, which is related to the results reported in the study of sexual risk behavior in university students of Forcada *et al.* (2012), who indicate that the subject's perception of the sexual behavior of their closest friends could modulate their own sexual behavior, With what can be said that in the present investigation the percentage of adolescents who receive approval from their sexual partner to the conduct of having sexual relations are more likely to have them.

Sanabria, González, Paredes & Moreno (2013), in their study of prediction of the intention of adolescents to initiate sexual relations shows that the subjective social norm of friends is decisive in the intention of men, while for Women is the subjective social norm of parents. In relation to the subjective norm in this study, it was found that adolescents perceive a lot of disapproval of having sexual relations on the part of the parents, they also perceive that friends would neither approve nor disapprove the behavior of initiating sexual relations.

According to Chavez (2012), in his study psychosocial factors associated with sexual risk behavior in adolescents, there are two main aspects that occur because of having risky sexual behaviors; unprotected sex and unwanted pregnancy, which coincides with the data obtained in this investigation where it is reported that 44.2% did not use protection in their first sexual relationship, so this behavior is considered risky.

CONCLUSIONS

According to Ajzen and Fishbein, the subjective norm is the belief that an individual has in this case, the adolescent, about certain behavior in relation to the approving or disapproving opinions of their important persons, their sexual partner, their mother, their father, their friendships and their religious group, On the other hand, a risky sexual behavior is a behavior that endangers the harm of the adolescent's sexual health. This includes sexual activity without a condom, have more than one sexual partner, exposure to an unwanted pregnancy, have more than one sexual partner and start sexual life before the age of 18 without protection.

In relation to the data obtained, it is concluded that most of the adolescents studied practice risky sexual behaviors; 96.1% of adolescents begin their sexual life from the age of 12 and more frequently at 15, first situation that puts their health at risk, since they are not prepared either physiologically or psychologically for sexual intercourse, so it is considered risky sexual behavior to start sexual life before the age of 18.

On the other hand, only 44.2% used a contraceptive method in their first sexual intercourse, a situation that can directly affect the future of adolescents when exposed to an unwanted pregnancy at very early ages and is considered another sexual behavior of risk.

It is alarming that 59.8% of adolescents have already had 2 to more than 4 sexual partners, this considering that they began their sexual life since age 12, which leads to infer that when he is a young adult he will have had the double sexual partners, placing this situation as another risky sexual behavior, in addition to more than half of the population have or have had an occasional sexual partner of which only 49.35% used barrier methods such as condoms, evidencing that they are at a risk of being carriers of a STI, for not using condoms and for having an occasional partner.

The theories of planned behavior and reasoned action of Ajzen and Fishbein set a standard for knowing how the adolescents are influenced by people important to them, in relation to this and according to the data obtained, it is inferred that the subjective norm for approval towards having sexual relations is found in the sexual partner and for disapproval is found in the mother.

On the other hand, it is found that adolescents perceive approval from the sexual partner, and from parents using a contraceptive method among them the condom, but when analyzing the use of contraceptive methods, they show a low incidence which leads to infer that these important people for adolescents are not encouraging their use.

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