

A Review of Parental Role on Risky Sexual Behaviour of Adolescents

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Abstract

Adolescence is a phase in human life which is characterized as the growing desire for sexual intercourse. Furthermore, the lack of knowledge on sexual health during this phase may result in risky sexual practices. So, parental monitoring is essential for this group of people. On this basis, I have conducted a review on parental monitoring of risky sexual behaviour of adolescents. While reviewing, accessible and eligible resources are consulted from PubMed, Hinari, Research Gate, etc up to November 2018. This review primarily focuses on how the parents monitor the probable risky sexual practices of their adolescent children. On the basis of existing literature, this review attempts to explore the growing risky practices of sexual behaviour among children without parental guidance.

Keywords: Adolescents, parental monitoring, premarital sex, risky sex, sexual desire

Introduction

Risky sexual behaviour incorporates sexual malpractices such as sexual harassment, homosexuality, animal sex, group sex, use of artificial devices, sexual abuse, etc. (Sharma, 2018). These malpractices have been more common to adolescents these days so, parental monitoring and counseling on the physical changes in this period have been felt required (Coley, Votruba-Drzal, & Schindler, 2009). Otherwise, they are prone to sexual abuse and unsafe sexual practices resulting in human immunodeficiency virus [HIV]/ acquired immunodeficiency syndrome [AIDS]/sexually transmitted infections [STIs] and other social and mental health problems (Coley et al., 2009). The consequences of these acts may expose teenagers to reproductive health problems like teenage pregnancy, undesired pregnancy and abortion (Arnett, 2007).

Adolescents are the most relevant and potential age group likely to be exposed to reproductive health hazards (Greenberg, Magder, & Aral, 1992). At this stage of life, adolescents are more fascinated with sex and sexual activities (Kar, Choudhury, & Singh, 2015; Markham et al., 2010). Physical and biological changes in the body increase their sexual desires. On one hand, they are sexually active but on the other, they are not aware of the reality of life and the possible consequences of risky sexual practices (Adhikari & Tamang, 2009; Malacane & Beckmeyer, 2016).

Sexual behavior at first intercourse is associated with a curiosity that carries the chance of pregnancy (Sharma, 2018). Because of the lack of awareness on contraceptives, most such relations may result in physical and emotional hazards (Kar et al., 2015). The first intercourse may also carry the risk of sexually transmitted diseases (Greenberg et al., 1992). So, it calls for

the policy review that the concerned authorities should launch an awareness campaign against the premature sexual practice and risky sexual behaviour.

Most of the adults tend to be the parents during the early decades of the twenty-first century which can be marked as the departure from the earlier century in social, cultural, and other lively hoods (Aral, 2001; Heatherington & Lavner, 2008). So, the newborn children of this early century will entertain certain changes in social, cultural and other aspects. In this new scenario, the role of parents may be divided into three main categories: support in education, making home a good place for learning, and helping with homework (Early Childhood Stakeholders Advisory Committee [ECSAC], 2001).

Some studies point out that peer groups have an influence on the sexual behaviour of adolescents (Racz & McMahon, 2011). However, it is one of the rigorously researched topics in Nepal. To bridge the gap, it is thus essential to study the factors surrounding premarital sex in the context of Nepal in order to inform policy makers and planners and to develop appropriate and timely intervention programs to prevent the high risk of sexual behaviour. The study is required to analyze sexual behaviour especially focusing on the parental role to prevent risky sexual behaviour among adolescents.

Methods

This study reviews the role of parents on the risky sexual behaviour of adolescents. It complies with the pre-planned methods to identify all available peer-reviewed journals. The search is done using the following terms; “risky sex”, “adolescents”, “parental role”, and “risky sexual behaviour”. The population, interest and context terms are combined using pertaining terms OR (within columns) AND (between columns) and are searched as title/abstract except headings. Online databases are searched from inception for literature. Likewise, Hinari, PubMed, Research gate, Google scholar, etc. are accessed on the basis of their requirement. All published articles up to 2018 from Hinari have been included in the review. The reference lists of identified articles are searched for additional studies and tracked citations of key studies.

Study Selection

The review found a total of 845 published articles. Among them, 225 full texts online are found and only 147 articles are accessed. There are only 119 articles since 5 years back are included and 17 repeated articles are excluded after screening. From the remaining 102 articles, 47 abstract articles are removed. A total of 55 full-text articles are screened for eligibility. From this, 32 articles are excluded since they fail to fulfill the expected result or quality criteria. After that, from the remaining 23 articles, 17 articles are found not related to the parental role. Finally, 6 studies have been included in this analysis.

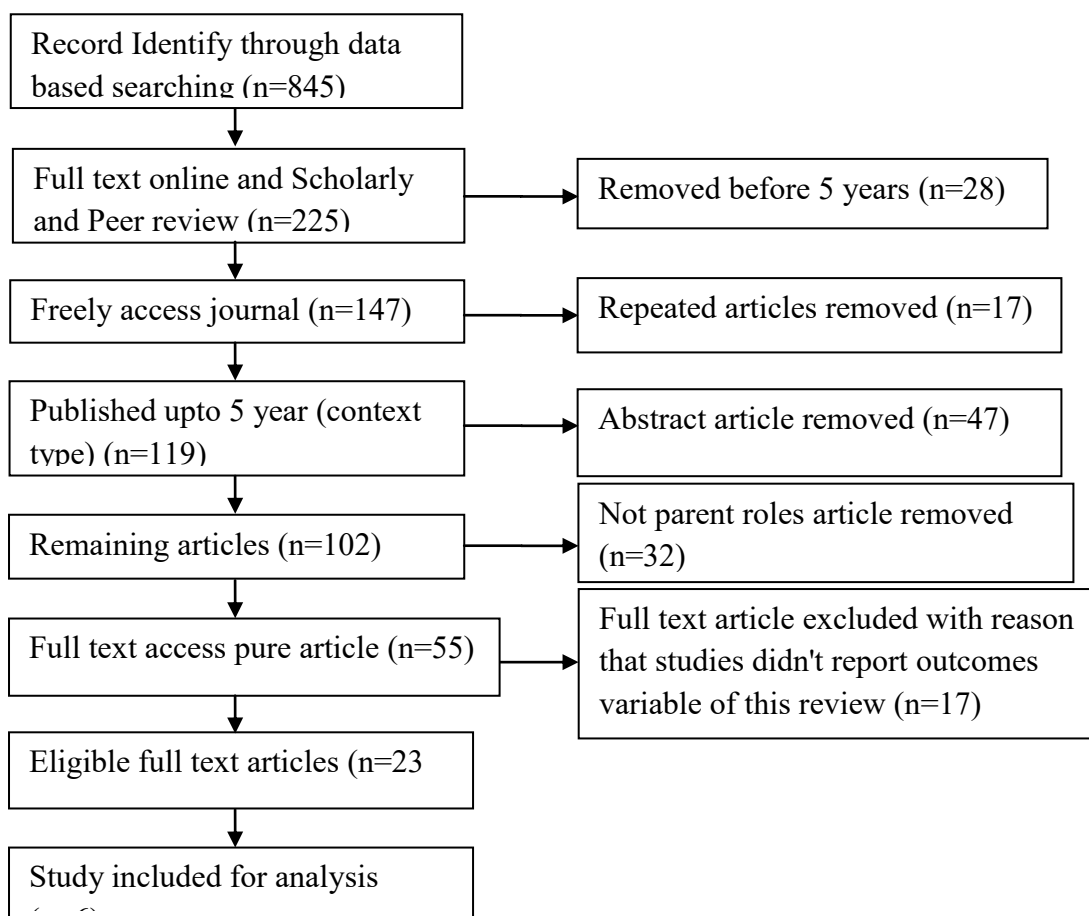


Figure 1. Flow diagram of the studies included in the analysis

Results

This study helps us to see whether our results are over-focused in one area. For each theme or area, we should discuss how the results help to answer our study. Finally, we need to check whether the results are consistent with our expectations and the literature.

This study is to determine whether parental monitoring and parent-adolescent communication about sex are associated with sexual behaviours. Parental monitoring, communication and counseling about sex, parent-adolescent relationship, cohabitation, age, and sexual orientation are associated to determine the sexual behavior of adolescents.

Table 1: The general characters of study in the systematic analysis :

Author/Year	Country	Study design	Data sources	Sample size	Adjusted confounding	Conclusion
Asamoah & Agardh, 2018	Sweden	Cross-sectional assessment	Survey used a questionnaire with pre-validated questions.	Out of 7000 from 18-29 year randomly selected 2968	Risky Sexual Behavior Among Young Adults 18-30 Years of Age, Residing in Skane, Sweden	Sexual behaviors such as having sexual intercourse with unfamiliar partner and multiple sexual partners have relation with individual and family status. Age during sexual debut is solely found to be associated with family level predictors.
Grossman, Jenkins, & Richer, 2018	Spain	Longitudinal study	Self-administered interview schedule	Researchers interviewed participants twice: once when teens are in seventh grade and again when teens are in tenth grade. 24 Schools and 177 parents are selected.	Teenage child and their parent's role in risky sex.	Communication can provide a protective tool to improve public health outcomes by reducing teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.
Muhwezi, Katahoire, Banura, Mugooda, Kwesiga, Bastien, & Klepp, 2015	Uganda	Exploratory and Qualitative study	Focus group discussions and KII	There are 4 FGDs of male students, with a total of 56 participants. Female students are 4 with a total of 63. And male parents are 2 (1 with 5 & another with 7) and 1 FGD of female parents with 8.	Sexual and reproductive health, Communication between parents and children	Peers, schools and mass media should be creatively harnessed to improve parent-adolescent communication about sexuality.
Wang, B, Stanton, B, Deveaux, L., Li, X., & Lunn, 2015	Bahamas (Caribbean Country)	Experimental/ Survey	Baseline survey/ Questionnaire	770(3-17) Adolescents	Peer risk involvement and Adolescent sexual risk behavior	Reciprocal relationships between parental monitoring, peer influence and adolescent sexual risk behavior.
Dessie, Berhane, & Worku, 2014	Sub-Saharan Africa	Cross Sectional	Structured questionnaire and interview	The study is conducted on 13-18 adolescents aged. From 4559 adolescents who were interviewed, 641 who reported sexual initiation were included from March to July 2012.	Parental monitoring prevents adolescents from risky sexual practices.	High parental monitoring decreases the likelihood of risky sexual practices.
Thoma & Huebner, 2014	United States: Indianapolis, Boston, Philadelphia & Oakland	Cross-sectional assessment	Audio Computer Assisted Self-interview (ACASI) program and questionnaire	257(14-19) Adolescents	YMSM, adolescent sexual risk, parental monitoring, communication about sex,	Lack of parental monitoring and rare communication are associated with greater risk.

Researches on Swedish-born youths show that parental educational level plays key role in determining sexual behavior. A youth whose parents have a higher level of education has a low risk of early sexual debut compared to their peers (Asamoah & Agardh, 2018). But, they are prone to having sex on the first night with an unknown person. The use of condom is not associated with any family-level factor. In comparison to females, males are relatively at a higher risk of malpractices in sexual activities (Asamoah & Agardh, 2018).

Parents often have a different opinion about the parent-child consultations on sexual behavior. They come up with different logic why they prefer to talk with their children or why they prefer to remain silent on this regard. While interviewing for the first time, 78 percent of the parents among 23 respondents, responded on the reason why they like to discuss with their teens about sexual behavior while on the second interview only 65 percent of the respondents responded on it (Grossman et al., 2018). Here, parents express satisfaction on the benefits of effective communication with their children. Comfort on talking about sexual behaviour is described more by parents of females (82%) than that of males (50%) (Grossman et al., 2018). In the first interview with parents (70%, 16/23) and in the second interview 65 percent of the parents (15/23) described the ways their teens displayed positive engagement in talking with them about sex. (Grossman et al., 2018). Similarly, on dating and relationship affairs, 91 percent of the parents (21/23) in the first interview and 96 percent of the parents (22/23) in the second interview reported of their interactions with their teens (Grossman et al., 2018).

Regarding to teen pregnancy, on the first interview, 96 percent of the parents (22/23) and all parents at second interview reported that they talked with their teens about this topic often emphasizing teen pregnancy and parenting, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and protection methods (Grossman et al., 2018).

For a healthy relationship between parents and children, communication plays a vital role. In this regard, children are more open and close to mothers rather than fathers. They could speak and consult with mothers on sexual diseases, physical changes and sexual health issues with her. However, discussions of dating with adolescents are rare. Common discussions with female adolescents are often menstruation and perceived abortion in the neighborhood (Muhwezi et al., 2015).

Mutual relationship is found among children, their peer and parental monitoring regarding the determination of sexual behavior of a teen. The risk of peer involvement in sexual activities and so on is prevalent among males and female children. For males, greater sexual risk behavior can be predicted to lower parental monitoring. Parental monitoring can be predicted as a result of decreased sexual risk behavior. Likewise, a higher initial level and a higher growth rate of peer risk involvement can be predicted to increased sexual risk behavior (Wang et al., 2015).

In research conducted in Ethiopia, it is found that 301 of 633 adolescents experience one or more risky sexual practices. High parental monitoring decreases the chance of engaging in risky sexual practices by 28 percent. A satisfactory level of sexual and reproductive health communications with their parents reduces risky sexual practices (Dessie et al., 2014).

In the sexual behavior of children, parental monitoring and parent-child communication is found as a panacea in protecting their children from sexual hazards. Sexual orientation-specific stressors, including “coming out” to parents, complicate the family context of young men who have sex with men (Thoma & Huebner, 2014). Sincere monitoring of parents and interaction with children can be predicted to protect these children from sexual hazards.

Discussion

The engagement of an adolescent is determined by his/her relation with peers, parents and the mutual relationship among them. It suggests that peer plays a vital role in risky sexual behaviours in girl students (Wang et al., 2015). Authors present the longitudinal data, and the application of structural equation modeling and latent growth curve modeling for the examination of the concurrent, reciprocal and prospective relationships of parental monitoring, peer influence and adolescent sexual risk engagement are the prime concern for the study. The authors opine that the reciprocal relationship between parenting, peer influence and adolescent sexual risk involvement contributes to the understanding of the causes of risky sexual practices. They suggest that the reduction of risky sexual practices can result in interventions with a positive role from friends and parents.

Parental acceptance of children is the foundation for healthy adolescent-parent communication. Girls tend to communicate with mothers in an open and frequent manner than fathers and they have better relationships with mothers. Fathers are perceived by adolescents to be strict, intimidating, unapproachable and unavailable (Muhwezi et al., 2015). While adolescents tend to discuss sexual issues with mothers, male adolescents communicate less with other people on sex and such affairs. Much of the parent-adolescent communication is perceived to focus on sexually transmitted infections and bodily changes (Muhwezi et al., 2015; Wang, 2015). Discussions on sex and dating among adolescents are perceived to be rare. Common discussions among female adolescents are menstruation and abortion cases in the neighborhood (Muhwezi et al., 2015). Authors opine, the fear among male adolescents to discuss sexual affairs is perceived to be triggered by parental suspicion. Moreover, peers at school and mass media are perceived to be the main sources of information on sexuality.

Parental monitoring, commonly thought to be protective against sexual hazards, may not function. We identified no protective benefit of parental monitoring within the current sample, and our data suggest that monitoring is related to minimizing risk (Thoma & Huebner, 2014). Research on heterosexual adolescents has shown that adolescents, who perceive their parents as disapproving of activities they engage in, are more likely to lie. It may inhibit that they avoid the disclosure or lie to parents about the personal aspects if they perceive their parents reject their sexual orientation (Thoma & Huebner, 2014). If a parent does not know about her son’s sexual orientation, he/she may not take corrective actions against this children's malpractice.

Parental influences on adolescent sexual behaviours and increased parental monitoring work as the protective measure against sexual behaviours; early involvement in sexual practices, failure to use condoms, increased sex frequency and multiple sex partners (Dessie et al., 2014). They suggest that parental role is associated with minimizing the risk of STIs. Furthermore, parental information on their child and their activities is an important component of parental role to

minimize the practice of risky sexual behaviour. Although parental knowledge is associated with the prevention of sexual risk of their children, the literature indicates that parent supervision and communication are most influential with respect to reducing adolescent sexual risk-taking behaviors (Muhwezi et al., 2015).

One of the important factors which could confound the relationship between the adolescent and the family is the sound relationship among the family members (Wang et al., 2015). Similarly, They opine parental monitoring and parent-adolescent communication about sex is likely to reduce the negative consequences resulting in the proper monitoring of the adolescents. Likewise, parents with quality relationships with their teens are more likely to have healthy discussions about sexual topics (Dessie et al., 2014). Adolescents are more likely to reveal their sexual orientation to a parent when they perceive a strong attachment with them (Wang et al., 2015). In this research, a healthy relationship between parents and children is examined as a potential covariate for the present analysis.

Information on sexual activity relies on adolescents' self-reports and thus risky sexual behaviours may be misreported or underreported because of the fear of social constraints and recall bias. Second, in developing the composite score of risky sexual involvement, we followed the literature in assigning the same weight to all risky sexual behaviours. Although, some behaviours may be associated with a higher risk of infection with human immune deficiency virus [HIV] or other STIs family and peer factors can contribute to minimizing the possible risks (Grossman et al., 2018). However, previous research on peer influence suggests that perceived peer behaviour is more important than actual peer behaviour in predicting adolescent risky behaviour. Authors reveal that the strengths of this study include the use of longitudinal data, and the application of structural equation modeling and latent-growth-curve modeling for the examination of the concurrent, reciprocal and prospective relationships among parental monitoring, peer influence and adolescent sexual risk engagement.

Many parents face different kinds of challenges in talking effectively with their teens about the affairs of sexuality. But sometimes lack of accurate information regarding sexual health and discomfort to talk about sex comes as a barrier to the parents. However, perceptions of children not ready to talk about sex is also another barrier (Grossman et al., 2018). There are studies which found that among sexually active teens, parents of 55 percent children incorrectly reported that their teens do not have sexual relation which may relate to social norms or parental beliefs against teen sex. It suggests implications that if parents' messages about sexuality do not match teens' needs and developmental phases, it may be difficult to maintain a harmonious relationship. Inaccurate perceptions of teens' sexual experience may prevent parents from providing key guidance to their teens on sexual issues (Grossmann & Grossmann, 2019). According to the authors, parents' focus on delayed sex can be health-promoting for teens that do not have sexual relations. Besides, the preventive measures and harmonious relationship with parents may save from undesired pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.

Parental monitoring decreased the likelihood of their engagement in risky sexual practices (Dessie et al., 2014). Authors indicate that adolescents potentially act responsibly against risky

sexual practices when there is high parental monitoring due to the fact that parental monitoring enhances the self-esteem of young people. Moreover, the authors opine that parental monitoring can indirectly protect them from other risky behaviours. Finally, this illuminates that parental monitoring may be an important perspective to be considered in an effort to improve adolescents' sexual and reproductive health.

Adolescents who are in high parental monitoring are less likely to engage in a higher number of risky sexual practices. Those who had a satisfactory level of sexual reproductive communication is less likely to report a higher number of risky sexual practices (Dessie et al., 2014).

As young people explore different aspects of sexuality, their sexual engagements and outcomes may be influenced by the context in which they grow up and their immediate family environment. This environment could create opportunities for improving the sexual and reproductive health of young people by mitigating risks associated with sexual behavior (Asamoah & Agardh, 2018). It facilitates a positive approach to sexuality and sexual relationships and the experience of safer sex. Moreover, the authors suggest that the male gender is related to a higher risk of engaging in sexual risk-taking behaviours. As well as, parental education level is significantly associated with the awareness of sexual intercourse on the 'first night' and early sexual debut solely among youth.

Conclusion

This study stresses on the parental role to prevent adolescents from risky sexual practices. A proper parental role can be protective of adolescents to prevent him/her against wrong sexual orientation. Interventions from families and friends may benefit from the prevention of risky sexual practices. With risky sexual practices, they are prone to various health hazards like undesired pregnancy, STI/HIV/AIDS, psychological, and other social health problems. Parental monitoring in this regard reduces the chance of sexual malpractices. Furthermore, to minimize the risk, communications and interactions between parents and adolescents can play considerable roles. Besides, monitoring from the school and the workplace also plays a crucial role in this regard.

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