

Sexual risks and capacities

Developing a peer-led educational resource to address sexual risks among young people

Survey Technical Notes

Background

This data was collected as part of an ESRC-funded Knowledge Exchange (KE) project, which was a joint activity between ARK - a joint initiative by Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster (www.ark.ac.uk) and Brook Northern Ireland (Brook NI) (ESRC Grant ID: ES/K005650/1). Brook is the only UK national voluntary sector provider of free and confidential sexual health advice and services specifically for young people under 25 years of age.

The main objective of this KE project was to facilitate sexual capacity and confidence building among young people in Northern Ireland who are at the start of their sexual careers, ie. who have not been sexually active or have only been sexually active for a short period of time. Apart from this survey, we also held seven interactive participatory group work sessions. These served to inform participants about the survey findings and to consult with young people on what kind of educational resource we should be developing on the issue of sexual risks. The main output of this project was a web resource and a poster campaign on sexual risks. All information about this project can be accessed on via the ARK website: www.ark.ac.uk/ylt/results/YLT-Brook-KE-project.html/

Links with other surveys

The academic basis of this KE project was the Young Life and Times (YLT) survey. The YLT survey is an annual postal survey of 16-year olds in Northern Ireland undertaken by ARK. In its current format, using the Child Benefit Register as a sampling frame, the YLT survey has been undertaken since 2003 (www.ark.ac.uk/ylt). This survey on sexual risks undertaken during this KE project is connected to the 2010 and 2011 YLT surveys. In 2010, YLT included questions on sexual grooming and sexual risks faced by young people. These questions were part of a larger Barnardo's-funded research programme on sexual risks for young people undertaken in Northern Ireland (Beckett (2010) *Not a World Away*, Belfast, Barnardo's). In 2011 the YLT survey included a question module on sex education and sexual experiences of 16-year olds. As Northern Ireland remains excluded from the British National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles (NATSAL), YLT provides the best available information on sexual behaviour of young people in Northern Ireland.

The survey for this KE project duplicated the questions on sexual risks and experiences asked in 2010 and 2011 YLT surveys in order to boost the data available, so the responses can be used to boost the number of responses in the two YLT surveys.

Sample and fieldwork

From May to June 2013, every client attending a Brook NI clinic in Belfast and Coleraine was invited to take part in this survey. Furthermore, partner organisations of Brook NI who also provide sexual health services and sexual health training to young people were approached to distribute the questionnaires among their clients. Surveys were self-completion paper questionnaires. Clients were encouraged to complete the survey during

their clinic visit. Brook NI and Information and Reception workers were trained about the survey and provided help to clients if this was required. Addressed return envelopes were provided for respondents to leave the completed questionnaires in, and a sealed box was available at the Brook NI reception desk for completed questionnaires. Stamps were available to any respondents who preferred to complete the survey at home. Pre-stamped and pre-addressed envelopes were provided to partner organisations that distributed questionnaires among clients.

The survey was also advertised on the Facebook page of Brook NI, and a link was provided to an online version of the survey.

The target sample for this booster survey was n=500, but 620 responses were received in the fieldwork period.

Survey content

The full survey questionnaire is available in the survey documentations, however, broadly speaking the survey focused on the following questions:

- whether or not respondents had had sex;
- whether or not they used contraception;
- how they felt about the timing of their first intercourse;
- whether they had ever been sexually groomed by an adult;
- whether they had ever been offered something in return for sex;
- whether had been taken advantage of sexually;
- whether they had ever spoken to somebody of authority if any of this has happened.

Background questions determined respondents' age, gender, their financial background, what they currently did, where they lived and their sexual identity.

Ethical approval

The study was ethically approved by the School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work's Ethics Committee at Queen's University Belfast.

Getting the data

The anonymised dataset is freely available for secondary analysis from ARK's YLT website (www.ark.ac.uk/ylt/datasets).

Using the data

This documentation is intended to provide background information to the survey and to the survey and sampling methodologies. However, if you require any further technical information, please contact us - see details below.

The data have been tested extensively, but if you find anything that looks like a mistake, please let us know as soon as you can.

Contact information

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Acknowledgements

This project was part-funded by the ESRC's Knowledge Exchange Programme.

We particularly appreciate the time and effort taken by all young people who responded to the survey. We are grateful to Shulie Eisen who worked as temporary Research Associate on this project and processed most of the survey data.