



Increasing Protective Factors for Mexican-American Female Adolescents

A Formative Evaluation of the
FRIENDS FIRST
Quinceañera Program
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Overview

- Theoretical framework
- Research Questions
- Literature Review
- Methods
- Program Description
- Focus Groups
- Parent and Youth Survey
- Conclusions



Theoretical Framework

- Antecedents to youth decision making:

Understanding youths' knowledge and information sources are important to decision making.



Literature Review

What do we know about sources of information on sexuality and birth control for Hispanic youth?

- Multiple studies have found that Hispanic females report less parent-adolescent communication about sexuality, birth control, and basic reproduction than Hispanic males.
- This lack of information from a parent is a significant risk factor.
- Parental expectations are also related to youths' ability to delay the onset of sexual activity and permissive parental attitudes are related to early onset of sexual activity.
- Permissive attitudes can be prevented by open communication between mothers and daughters.
- Multiple studies have found that adolescents from families with strong Hispanic cultural norms for both generations were at lower risk of early initiation of sexual activity.



Research Questions

1. Does the quinceañera celebration protect Hispanic youth from early onset of sexual activity?
2. Can parent/child communication be improved if a culturally competent program is delivered to Mexican-American families as they prepare for the quinceañera celebration?



Methods

- Focus Groups
- Youth and Parent Survey
- Observation of Program
- Telephone Interviews with youth after 12 months



Focus Group Findings:

- Quinceañera has lost its meaning
- Gives permission for girls to have sex
- Variations on how its celebrated
- Mothers communicate with both genders about sexuality.
- Double standard for males and females regarding sexuality



Domain	Hispanic Professionals <i>n</i> = 7	Hispanic Parents <i>n</i> = 8	Hispanic Males, 14-17 <i>n</i> = 9	Hispanic Females, 14-17 <i>n</i> = 9
Rites of Passage	<p>Quinceañera lost its meaning</p> <p>Gives permission\ for girls to have sex</p> <p>Variations on how its celebrated</p> <p>Less important in Chicano culture</p> <p>Family Oriented</p> <p>For males, sometimes to have sex with prostitutes</p>	<p>Gives permission for girls to have sex</p> <p>Variations on how it's celebrated</p> <p>Open to a Program Promoting character and abstinence with Quinceañera</p> <p>Fathers only Communicate with sons about sex, Mothers Communicate with both genders Sons should have safe sex.</p>	<p>Passage into womanhood</p> <p>Family oriented</p> <p>Originated with boys</p> <p>Variations on how its celebrated</p> <p>Get sexuality information from mothers, cousins, brothers and girlfriends</p>	<p>Mothers decide whether or not to have a Quinceañera</p> <p>Lost its meaning</p> <p>Gives permission to have sex</p> <p>Variations on how its celebrated</p> <p>Receive information about sex from mothers, female friends, aunts, and sisters</p> <p>Double standard with males and females regarding sex</p>



Curriculum Intervention

- The curriculum included traditional symbols and delivered in a faith-based setting.
- Goal of the program is to increase protective factors
- 120 Parents and their daughters participated in 24 hours of this curriculum, 95% (N= 114) of these participants graduated from the program.
- Families were encouraged to participate by the priest of the church. Priests needed to see graduation certificate before they would give the quinceañera the “blessing” ceremony.
- Programs located in Colorado communities.



Protective Symbols in Quinceañera

- **Change of shoes from flats to heels/Last doll of childhood-** Symbolizes transition from adolescence to adult hood.
- **Community Service-** Transition to adulthood emphasizes service.
- **Father/Daughter Waltz-** Encourages connectedness between fathers and daughters.



Protective Symbols in Quinceañera

- **Family Participation-** The entire family has a role in the quinceañera celebration.
- **Court of Honor-** The quinceañera's closest friends participate in the celebration.
- **Tiara** – Symbolizes wisdom and inner beauty.



Formative Evaluation Design

- **Single group, pre and post test, mixed design**

1. Parent questionnaire 33 pretest, 35 post test questions.

Constructs: Comfort level talking about sexual abstinence, dating boundaries, knowledge about STDS and parental satisfaction.

2. Youth questionnaire 26 pretest, 28 post test questions.

Constructs: parental communication about the benefits of saving sex until marriage, feelings of closeness with parents, connectedness to community, comfort talking about sex with parents, self efficacy toward saving sex until marriage, importance of HS graduation

- **Data analysis:**

Percentage point increases from baseline to post test on target objectives.

- **Focus Groups conducted prior to curriculum development.**

- **12 month follow-up telephone interview**

Figured percentages on key questions.

Parent Participants

Percentage speaking mostly or only Spanish in the home	Percentage of program participants mothers	Percentage of program participants fathers	Percentage of incomes < \$10,000	Percentage of incomes between \$15,000 - \$39,000	Households ≥ 6	Percentage completing 12th grade
82%	70%	24%	29%	39%	73%	14.6%

Youth Participants

Percentage of Females	Percentage of Males	Age of Participants 15 - 17	Age of Participants 14	Age of Participants 13	Age of Participants 11 - 12	% Receiving Free and Reduced Lunch
85%	15%	14%	62%	12%	12%	59%



Formative Evaluation Results

Parent Component

- ***Rules and boundaries.*** This asset increased by 23.2% percentage points.
- ***Parents comfort talking about sexuality and abstinence.*** This asset increased 32.5% percentage points.
- ***Parents comfort talking about sexuality and abstinence.*** This asset increased by 32.5% percentage points.
- ***Positive communication.*** A cumulative increase from pre to post test was 32.4%.



Formative Evaluation Results

Youth Component

- ***Adolescent comfort talking about sex with parents.*** This asset increased by 24.3 percentage points.
- ***Frequency of conversations about sex.*** This asset increased by 29 percentage points.
- ***Communication with parents about saving sex for marriage.*** This asset increased by 15 percentage points.



Parent Responses:

- *I liked the classes much because they were useful for learning how to speak with my daughter. I hope to continue this program and to continue helping families with speaking about these very important issues.*
- *I want to tell you thank you. All of the people who developed these sessions are the first people to tell us a good way to talk with our children so they will receive it. I only want to say thank you.*
- *The program was fun. You made it comfortable to learn a lot. If only we can continue to have programs like this.*

Youth Responses:

- *I liked the classes and learned many things that help us now and in the future. Also, you helped me to have more confidence with my parents and share more things with them.*
- *I liked a lot because it is very educational and I believe it raises awareness of both the adults and young people.*



12 Month Follow- Up

1) Are you sexually abstinent now?

94% were still practicing sexual abstinence.

2) What has helped you stay sexually abstinent the most?

Parental communication and support	29%
Understanding consequences	26%
Promise to self and/or parents	16%
Class and activities	13%
Future orientation	11%
Avoiding situations	11%
Spiritual support	5%



12 Month Follow-Up Continued-

3 of 52 girls interviewed had transitioned into sexual activity over the previous 12 months. They were asked:

What influenced your decision to have sex the most?

- One participant indicated the reason she had sex was curiosity. She expressed an interest in getting support for remaining abstinent and expressed her regret for her choice.
- The other two participants were both friends. They reported the influence of their boyfriends as the main reason for choosing to have sex.



Youth Responses after 12 months

- *The program helped my family with better communication with my dad, mom, brothers, and sister, better communication overall, more connected as a family.*
- *Very good program! It helped me improve communication with my parents, share ideas with other quinceañeras. Parents helped us a lot!*
- *The program was fun. At the beginning, I did not like it, but I felt great at the end. I made a lot of friends.*
- *At first, I thought I was wasting my time, but after a while, I realized how valuable the lessons were.*



Answers to Research Questions

- **Does the quinceañera celebration protect Hispanic youth from early onset of sexual activity?**

The focus group evidence supports the conclusion that in its current form, the quinceañera celebration, in some cases, may increase the risk of adolescent sexual activity.

- **Can parent/child communication about abstinence and sexuality be improved if a culturally competent program is delivered to Mexican-American families as they prepare for the quinceañera celebration?**

When the *FRIENDS FIRST Quinceañera* program is conducted simultaneously with preparation for the quinceañera event, formative evaluation evidence suggests that parental communication about sexuality and abstinence increases from baseline, to post –test, and after 12 months.