Sexually Transmitted Disease (STDs) In Teenagers Research:

An Annotated Bibliography


Summary: Watson states in her article that most teens don't know much about STDs until they get one. Half of all sexually active teens will catch chlamydia, herpes, or another STD by the time they turn 25. People can get an STD is by having unprotected vaginal sex, anal sex, or oral sex and not using a condom consistently and correctly. Watson emphasizes in one of the paragraphs that the only way you can tell that you have an STD is by going to see your health care provider and making sure your provider tests you. Watson recommends that sexually active teenage girls get tested for Chlamydia and Gonorrhea at least once a year because they tend to be the most common ones. She believes that abstinence is the first strategy for the best protection against STD’s. Vaccination is another way that you can prevent yourself from becoming infected. So far the only effective vaccines we have available are for hepatitis B and HPV. Watson continues: “We're recommending that teenage girls be vaccinated against HPV, because certain strains are associated with cervical cancer. It's so important to use a condom consistently and correctly, many teens don't know how.” She finishes her article by directing her readers to
Health care providers, teen clinics, and educational materials can provide information on how to use a condom properly.

**Evaluation:** Miss Watson has more than 10 years of experience as a freelance health writer and editor, Stephanie Watson has written or contributed to more than two dozen books on topics ranging from obesity to genetic disorders. She is also a regular contributor to several online and print publications, including *HowStuffWorks* and *Cancer Monthly*. Watson holds a bachelor's degree in mass communications from Boston University. The topics she has written on WebMD are all very interesting and educational. I got no reason to doubt her work.

**Reflection:** I didn’t have my parents or any adult in my household or school teach me about sexual education, let along the reality of contracting STD’s. All I heard from my parents was: “if you get pregnant I will kill you child!” so I just didn’t have sex. I also don’t remember people being so worry about STD’s during the 80’s and 90’s, they were more worried about unwanted pregnancies than contracting an STD; not because the infection wasn’t present or an issue but because of lack of information about the subject. Even until this day I don’t think people in undeveloped countries such as Venezuela are too worried about educating themselves and their kids about having unprotected sex and its consequences, the resources are few, and not very effective.


**Summary:** In this article Wilda Heard talks about how can a person contract a sexually transmitted disease (STD). She said: “ STD’s are infections that you can get from having sex
with someone who has the infection”. She continues saying that the causes of STDs are bacteria, parasites and viruses. Heard states that here are more than 20 types of STDs, including: Gonorrhea, Herpes Simplex, HIV/AIDS, HPV, Syphilis, Trichomoniasis. Statically speaking she said that from 1987 through 2001, chlamydia rates rose from 51 to 278 per 100,000 population in the United States, an increase attributed, at least partly, to improved screening and reporting, also the highest age-specific chlamydia rates occurred among women ages 15 to 19 and 20 to 24. Heard believes that peer pressure is a very strong influence in a teenager's life, popularly can cause the teenager to start being active at an early age. The article also talks about oral sex carrying risks for both HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases. HIV and some STDs are forever meaning they can't be cured. She also believes that sexuality education begins at home and not at the child’s school. According to Heard: “Parents and caregivers are—and ought to be—the primary sexuality educators of their children”. Based on an analysis of the NIH-supported National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health by Robert Rector and Kirk Johnson, researchers at the Heritage Foundation, abstinent teens are far more likely to attend and graduate from college than those who are sexually active. She finishes her article by giving her own feedback on this last stat: “Seems obvious: less distraction and more time to study.”

**Evaluation:** Dr. Wilda V. Heard, or “Dr. Wilda,” has a J.D. from Yale Law School and a doctorate in Education Leadership from Seattle University. She has been a volunteer at Legal Voice, formerly the Northwest Women's Law Center. Currently she volunteers at the Open Door Legal Clinic of the Union Gospel Mission. Dr. Wilda writes about schools, education reform, and the effect the culture has on education, children, and families. I find her writing style very interesting and refreshing. The way explains her viewpoints are very persuasive and easy to relate.
Reflection: I am not sure what should be the right approach to teach our children about sexual education and the risk of contracting an STD’s if they start being sexually active at a really young age. We definitely need to be a little bit more aggressive about the way we approach sexual education in our homes and school by making the child or teenager aware of this issue and making them accountable for their own choices, instead of excusing them, feeling sorry, or what could be worse punish them because they caved in to peer pressure.


Summary: In her article Gillette states that among developed countries, the United States ranks highest in numbers of teen pregnancy and STD cases. Gillette goes on saying that sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are a major concern among teens in the United States, and one out of four sexually active teens will contract an STD within the next 12 months. She finishes her article by stating: “statistics indicate teenagers receiving sexual education are 50 percent less likely to become pregnant than teenagers who are only instructed on abstinence.

Evaluation: First of all I believe this website is pretty legit. It was created by Emilio Sanchez and Salomon Melgen in 2001, in order to create content for Latino individuals whose dominant language is English. The website it is now recognize and respected in the Latino journalism community. On the other hand, journalist Hope Gillette is an award winning author who specializes in health and education topics. She is all over the internet, wrote the book: ‘Journey Through Travelers’ Tower. However I couldn’t find any information about her credentials, where she got her degree in health and education so I am not sure if her information is completely accurate.
Reflection: I personally believe that abstinence is the best way to prevent STD’s and unwanted pregnancy, however that is not always what teenagers want to hear… hell! Even me at age 32 don’t like to hear that. But even though sex could be pleasurable and exciting for human beings of any age, sexual transmitted diseases are still a huge problem in our country and we need to step up and talk more about it with our kids and explain the severity of this topic.


Summary: In this article the Salt Lake Tribune interviewed Heather Bush who is an STD-prevention specialist for the state health department. Bush tells to locked-up teens that abstinence is the best way to avoid disease. But, she also added that having fewer sexual partners and using protection are good choices, too. "I'm trying to empower them to make their own decisions," she says. She also stated in her interview that the infection rate among Utah Latinos is three times higher than the white rate because Latinas tend to engage in relationship with man that are 4 or more years older than them. She also said that teenager in the Glendale and Rose Park areas have the highest rates of chlamydia and births in the state. Glendale's STD rate is 32 times higher than the state's lowest rate in Provo, according to data provided by the Utah Department of Health. Poorer neighborhoods are "associated with a breakdown in social relations, with fewer effective sanctions and social controls to regulate behavior," according to a similar 2004 study of teens with STDs. The course taken in Utah public schools, which restrict what health educators can say about preventing disease. State law says they can't encourage condom use and many fear even mentioning contraception. Bush avoids going to public schools, instead she educates at
college campuses, at community events and in lock-up, where the teens can debate the pros and cons of condoms. "We can be more honest and open" in the centers, Bush says. She ends her interview by discussing once again how abstinence is the best way to prevent STD’s, but doesn't push for waiting for marriage, the emphasis that would be required in schools.

**Evaluation:** Heather Bush graduated at the Westminster College in Salt Lake City. She has an extensive amount of experience in the field. She currently works for the Utah Department of Health as their HIV Prevention Coordinator. Bush is also a member of the HIV Prevention Program, Community Health Specialist, Education and Training Coordinator and HIV Prevention Specialist Spokesperson. I got no reason to doubt her words, she is actually being very open in her interview about how Utah laws work and considering she works directly with the teens who reside in the Salt Lake County, I know she got the right statistics and facts about the subject.

**Reflection:** There are so many different opinions out there about whether or not we should talk to our kids about other ways to prevent STD’s besides telling them to practice abstinence until they get married. I believed this was the ONLY right way to do things, God’s way if you are a good Christian. Well tell that to the hormones when they start messing with your body, or when you are with boy you think you are madly in love with; whatever the reasons are, I strongly believe that both parents and educators need to start being a little bit more open minded about this topic, and stop sheltering our kids so much about the reality of sex and its consequences.