Immigrant Status, Substance Use and Sexual Risk Among Afro-Caribbean Adolescents living in South Florida

Kim Jolly
Dissertation Committee

- Patricia Liehr, Ph.D., RN
- John Lowe, Ph.D., RN, FAAN
- Karen Dodge, Ph.D.
What brought me to this study

A nursing situation

Marie, a 16 y/o Afro-Caribbean student who came to the school clinic because she missed her period for 3 months.

Marie is undocumented, she cannot work or make plans for college and is concerned about her future.

Marie has a positive pregnancy test and a sexually transmitted infection.

Marie lives with her mother; unsupervised after school; mother is not aware Marie is sexually active; she is not using birth control methods, including condoms.
Nursing as Caring

• Boykin and Schoenhofer (2001) believe “the unique focus of nursing is nurturing persons living caring and growing in caring.

• Regardless of the circumstances, nurses are advocates of human caring by being in the moment for patients and their families.

• With further understanding of Afro-Caribbean adolescents and their experiences, nurses providing care will increase trust, along with a safe environments for their voices to be heard.
Adolescent voice is the power to express self through words and actions. Being heard enables understanding in relationship.
### Undocumented population living in the U.S.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Children in Florida schools</th>
<th>Adults with U.S. born children in Florida Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13 million</td>
<td>155,000</td>
<td>280,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Passel, Van Hook, and Bean (2006)
What we know about Caribbean adolescents risky behavior: The Literature

Epstein, Botvin, Baker and Diaz (1998) - Afro-Caribbean adolescents consumed more alcohol and got drunk more often than other adolescent groups.

Hunt et al. (2002) – many gang members are ethnic minorities including many who are undocumented.
Silverman, Decker and Raj’s (2007) - female immigrant adolescents experience physical and sexual dating violence in relation to immigrant status and language spoken in the home.

Sexually active Afro-Caribbean adolescents living in the Caribbean report sexual debut as early as 10 y/o; less than 3 out of 10 use birth control and very few use condoms (Blum et al., 2003; Correia & Cunningham, 2003; Halcon et al., 2003).
Purpose

Specific
Describe the co-occurrence of substance use and sexual activity among Afro-Caribbean adolescents with attention to legal status, socio-demographic factors and risk-taking attitudes and behaviors.

Overall
To access the voice of the hidden population of the Afro-Caribbean adolescents particularly those who are undocumented.
Methods

Sample and Recruitment

• Convenience sampling
• 106 Afro-Caribbean adolescents from community centers in South Florida
• Invitation flyers were distributed
• Parental consent and study information was available in English and Creole
• 7th through 12th grade Afro-Caribbean adolescents
• Five dollar gift card as an incentive
Descriptive exploratory Study

Describe socio-demographics, immigrant status and risk-taking of adolescents who have not been studied.

• Socio-Demographics (Parental presence; Language; Parental level of education)
• Immigrant status (Documented; Undocumented)
• Risky-taking (Sexual risk; Substance use)
Methods

Data Collection Protocol

• Parental consent

• Adolescent assent

• Adolescent Risk-Taking Instrument (ARTI) part I and II
Methods

ARTI Part I (44 item measure)

The ARTI is a 44 item measure with two subscales

- Risk-taking (sexual activity, substance use and violence) Reliability (Cronbach’s coefficient alpha was .77)
- Social adaptation (propensity for risk-taking) Reliability (Cronbach’s coefficient alpha was .80)

Part I used a four point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree
ARTI: Risk-taking examples (Questions)

- I like to watch violent TV shows and movies
- When I want to be a part of a gang, I drink or do drugs
- When I want some excitement, I have sex with someone new
ARTI: Social adaptation examples (Questions)

• I look forward to doing new things

• I know my parents are proud of me

• I make friends easily
ARTI Part II

• Afro-Caribbean background
• Language spoken in the home
• Length of time in the U.S.
• Adult presence before and after school
• Religion
• Style of discipline
• Blacks and Blunts
## Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>12-19</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>1.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of Sexual Initiation</td>
<td>5-18</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Security</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes (documented)</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No (undocumented)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes (documented)</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No (undocumented)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in the U.S</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research question #1

What percentages of documented and undocumented (social security number; yes; no) Afro-Caribbean adolescents are using substances and simultaneously engaging in sexual activity?

Analysis: Frequencies and Crosstabs
Results

Question One

Having sex and drinking alcohol

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Security Number</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Sometime</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2.4% (n=1)</td>
<td>12.2% (n=5)</td>
<td>85.4% (n=35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>40% (n=4)</td>
<td>60% (n=6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A larger % of undocumented adolescents reported simultaneous sexual activity and drinking
Results

Question One

Having Sex and Using Drugs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Security Number</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Sometime</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2.4% (n=1)</td>
<td>4.9% (n=5)</td>
<td>92.7% (n=38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>30% (n=3)</td>
<td>70% (n=7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A larger % of undocumented Afro-Caribbean adolescent reported simultaneous sexual activity and drug use.
Research Question #2

What are the socio-demographic factors (age; gender; parental presence; language spoken in the home; parent level of education) associated with substance use and simultaneously engaging in sexual activity for documented and undocumented Afro-Caribbean adolescents living in South Florida?

Analysis: Frequencies and Crosstabs
Results

Question Two

- Undocumented adolescents between 17-19 years were more likely to use substances and simultaneously engage in sexual activity.
- Fourteen % of documented and 20% of undocumented adolescents had adult presence after school.
- Creole was spoken more than English in the homes of both documented and undocumented adolescents.
- None of the undocumented adolescents’ mothers completed high school; 4.9% of the documented adolescents’ mothers completed high school.
- See hand out for more details.
Research question #3

- What are the differences in risk-taking attitudes and propensity for taking risks, as measured by the Adolescent Risk Taking Instrument (ARTI) for documented and undocumented Afro-Caribbean adolescents living in South Florida.

Analysis: Independent t-test
Results

Question Three
Risk-taking behaviors of Afro-Caribbean adolescents

There is no significant difference in risk-taking behaviors between documented and undocumented Afro-Caribbean adolescents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk-taking behaviors</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Security Number</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes (n=79)</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No (n=27)</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$t = 1.43, \ p = .156$

There is no significant difference in risk-taking behaviors between documented and undocumented Afro-Caribbean adolescents.
Results

Question Three

Social Adaptation (propensity for risk) of Afro-Caribbean adolescents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk-taking behaviors</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Security Number</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes (n=79)</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No (n=27)</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$t = 0.37$, $p = 0.712$

There is no significant difference in social adaptation between documented and undocumented Afro-Caribbean adolescents
Additional findings

- Seventy-nine % of the adolescents lived in the U.S. between 11-18 years
- Nearly 20% used Blacks
- Thirty five % used Alcohol
- Nearly 54% reported beatings as a form of discipline
- Forty-three % lived with single mothers
- Fifty-three % never talk about sex with parents
Limitations

• Generalizability of the results
  Convenience sampling from community centers
  Small sample size, particularly undocumented

• Accuracy of SSI # report

• Acculturation was not measured

• ARTI to access voice
Recommendation for Future Research

• Replicate in the school system and add an acculturation measure

• Conduct a qualitative study gathering the stories of Afro-Caribbean adolescents about risk-taking behaviors
Nursing Involvement in Policy Development

• Bring the voice of this population to the table of school systems

• Advocate for recording distinct cultural groups within the African-American community
Implications of Nursing Practice

- Use the lens of “Nursing as Caring”
  Nurses are called to set aside their preconceptions and develop a trusting relationship with this population.

- Culturally-sensitive adolescent-friendly programs focusing on complex factors related to risky behaviors.
What is the riskiest thing you have ever done?

- “held a gun
- “I tried to kill myself when I was 11 y/o”
- “going to a girl’s house to fight her”
- “around people shooting and stabbing”
- “drinking shots
- “having sex with a man I didn't know”
- “when I stabbed my friend”
- “steal and hold a gun”
- “smoked weed, took a puff from a blunt”
- “hit my little sister till she bleed”
A hidden voice

I can’t tell my father;
He would shoot me.
I can’t tell my mother;
She would throw me out of the house.
I can’t tell my sister;
She would rat on me.
I can’t tell Chris
He would offer to marry me.
I’m so afraid and scared;
There’s no one left to turn to.
This research is a first step in giving Afro-Caribbean adolescents a voice with caring nurses.

Questions