

Music linked to teen sex habits

Listening to music with degrading sexual lyrics could prompt teenagers to start having sex at an earlier age, a US study suggests.

Researchers from Pittsburgh University quizzed 711 teenagers about their sex lives and music listening habits.

They found those who regularly listened to music with explicit and aggressive sexual phrases were twice as likely to be having sex.

But experts said it was too simplistic to link music directly to behaviour.

The team classed degrading sexual lyrics as songs which described sex as a physical rather than loving act and also where it was linked to power, the American Journal of Preventative Medicine reported.

" Parents should be talking to their children about sex and putting these sorts of lyrics in context "

Dr Brian Primack, lead researcher

Researchers refused to name which songs would fall into the degrading category, but cited phrases such as "I'm gonna beat that pussy up" as the kind of lyrics that were being used.

They split the 13 to 18-year-olds into three groups - those who listened to such music regularly, sometimes and not often.

Regularly was classed as anything over 17.6 hours a week, whereas not often was under 2.7 hours.

They found 45% of regular listeners had had sex, compared to just 21% of infrequent listeners.

Lead researcher Dr Brian Primack said: "There certainly seems to be a link, but it is hard to say whether listening to music is directly contributing to having sex earlier.

"However, I think parents should consider this. It is tempting to say music is just 'teenage stuff'.

"I am not saying parents should try to ban such music, that is unlikely to help.

"But they should be talking to their children about sex and putting these sorts of lyrics in context."

But UK experts were sceptical about the extent of the role played by such music.

Too simplistic

A spokeswoman for Brook, the sexual health charity for young people, said: "Obviously the cultural environment plays a part, but that is not to say there is a causal link.

"It is far too simplistic to say just because someone listens to this music they have sex. There are a variety of factors that influence decisions."

And Rebecca Findlay, of the fpa, formerly the Family Planning Association, agreed that sexual behaviour "could not be put down to one factor alone".

"I think what this does show is the importance of good sex education to address these issues."

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<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/health/7906613.stm>

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