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Sexual lyrics in songs ups underage sex

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Teenagers who prefer popular songs with degrading sexual references are more likely to engage in intercourse or in pre-coital activities, according to a new study.

"This study demonstrates that, among this sample of young adolescents, high exposure to lyrics describing degrading sex in popular music was independently associated with higher levels of sexual behaviour," Brian A. Primack, MD, EdM, MS, Center for Research on Health Care at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, said.

"In fact, exposure to lyrics describing degrading sex was one of the strongest associations with sexual activity...These results provide further support for the need for additional research and educational intervention in this area," Primack added.

Surveys were completed by 711 ninth-grade students at three large urban high schools. These participants were exposed to over 14 hours each week of lyrics describing degrading sex. About one third had previously been sexually active.

The researchers found that compared to those with the least exposure to lyrics describing degrading sex, those with the most exposure were more than twice as likely to have had sexual intercourse.

The relationship between exposure to lyrics describing degrading sex and sexual experience held equally for both young men and women.

Similarly, among those who had not had sexual intercourse, those in the highest third of exposure to lyrics describing degrading sex were nearly twice as likely to have progressed along a non-coital sexual continuum compared to those in the lowest third.

Finally, the relationships between exposure to lyrics describing non-degrading sex and sexual outcomes were not significant.

Primack concluded that these findings build on those of previous studies suggesting that exposure to sex in media messages may be a risk factor for early sexual progression.

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