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Maternal Correlates of Adolescent Sexual and Contraceptive Behavior

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Maternal disapproval of premarital sex, maternal discussions about birth control and the quality of the parent-child relationship may have an important influence on adolescents' sexual activity and the consistency of their contraceptive use. Findings from a survey of 751 black youths showed that adolescent perceptions of maternal disapproval of premarital sex and satisfaction with the mother-child relationship were significantly related to abstinence from adolescent sexual activity and to less-frequent sexual intercourse and more consistent use of contraceptives among sexually active youths. Teenagers who reported a low level of satisfaction with their mother were more than twice as likely as those highly satisfied with their relationship to be having sexual intercourse. Discussions about birth control were associated with an increased likelihood that adolescents were sexually active. Such discussions were not significantly related to consistent contraceptive use for female adolescents, but were associated with increased contraceptive use for male teenagers.

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