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Parent and Peer Communication Effects on AIDS-Related Behavior Among U.S. High School Students

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Data from a 1989 national probability sample of 8,098 high school students in the United States indicate that young people's discussions about the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) with parents and with peers are highly correlated and have opposite effects on behavior: Students who discussed HIV with their parents were less likely than those who did not to have had multiple sex partners, to have had unprotected sexual intercourse and to have ever injected drugs; on the other hand, students who discussed HIV with their peers were more likely than those who did not to have had multiple partners and to have had unprotected sexual intercourse. Subgroup analyses show that young women were influenced more by HIV discussions with parents, while young men were influenced more by discussions with peers; some communication effects differed by race and ethnicity. Students who received HIV instruction in school were more likely to have talked about HIV with both parents and peers.

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