

15 Scientific Evaluations on the Effectiveness of Abstinence Education

Author(s)	Abstinence Program	Publication Information	Peer Reviewed	Program Population	Evaluation Design*	Statistically Significant Findings# **	Summary
Doniger et al. (2001)	<i>Not Me, Not Now</i>	<i>Journal of Health Communication</i>	Yes	Middle school and high school students in Monroe County, New York.	Quasi-experimental	Onset of sexual activity*** by age 15: ↓ Pregnancy rate of 15-to 17-year-olds: ↓	The sexual activity rate of 15-year-olds across the county dropped by a statistically significant amount from 46.6 percent to 31.6 percent. The teen pregnancy rate fell more rapidly in Monroe County (from 63.4 pregnancies per 1,000 girls to 49.5 pregnancies per 1,000) than in comparison countries and in upstate New York in general.
Borawski et al. (2001)	<i>Operation Keepsake</i>	Report to Cuyahoga County Department of Health		7 th and 8 th grade students in Cuyahoga County, OH. About three-quarters of the students surveyed were African American or Hispanic.	Quasi-experimental	Onset of sexual activity: ↓+ Current sexual activity among youths with prior sexual experience: ↓++	The program reduced the rate of onset of sexual activity (loss of virginity) by roughly two-thirds. The program reduced about one-fifth the rate of current sexual activity among those with prior experience.
Weed (2001)	<i>Abstinence by Choice</i>	Report to Arkansas Department of Health		7 th through 9 th grade students in Little Rock, AR.	Quasi-experimental	Onset of sexual activity among 8 th grade girls: ↓ Onset of sexual activity among 8 th grade boys: ↓	The program reduced the sexual activity rates of girls by approximately 40 percent (from 10.2 percent to 5.9 percent) and the rate for boys by approximately 30 percent (from 22.8 percent to 15.8 percent).
Weed (1992)	<i>Teen Aid and Sex Respect</i>	Report to U.S. Department of HHS and Utah Department of Education		7 th and 10 th grade students in Murray and Jordan Districts, Utah.	Quasi-experimental	Onset of sexual activity among at-risk high school students: ↓	The programs together were shown to reduce the rate of initiation of sexual activity among at-risk high school students by over a third. Sex Respect was show to reduce the rate of initiation of sexual activity among at-risk students by 25 percent.
Weed (1994)	Family Accountability Communicating Teen Sexuality (FACTS)	Report to the Office Adolescent Pregnancy Programs		12- to 17-year-olds	Quasi-experimental	Onset of sexual activity: ↓	Student participants in FACTS were 30 percent to 50 percent less likely to commence sexual activity.

Howard, McCabe (1990)	<i>Postponing Sexual Involvement (PSI)</i>	<i>Family Planning Perspectives</i>	Yes	8 th grade students in Atlanta, GA, from a low socio-economic background.	Quasi-experimental	Onset of sexual activity during 8 th grade: ↓ Onset of sexual activity at one-year follow-up, 9 th grade: ↓ Sexual activity among sexually active youths: ↓	PSI reduced the rate of initiation of sexual activity during the 8 th grade by 60 percent boys and over 95 percent for girls. By the end of 9 th grade, boys and girls who had participated in PSI were still some 35 percent less likely to have commenced sexual activity.
Jorgensen et al. (1993)	<i>Project Taking Charge</i>	<i>Family Relations</i>	Yes	7 th grade students in Wilmington, DE and West Point, MS, from a low socio-economic background.	Experimental	Onset of sexual activity: ↓	The program was shown to reduce the rate of onset of sexual activity by 50 percent (note: small sample).
Weed (1992)	<i>Teen Aid Family Life Education Project</i>	Report to the Office of Adolescent Pregnancy Program		Middle school and high school students in CA, ID, OR, MS, WA, MT and UT.	Quasi-experimental	Onset of sexual activity among at risk high school students: ↓	Among at-risk high school students who participated in the program, the rate of initiation of sexual activity was cut by more than one-fourth, from 37 percent to 27 percent.
St. Pierre et al. (1995)	<i>Stay SMART</i>	<i>Family Relations</i>	Yes	Boys & Girls Club participants across the nation.	Quasi-experimental	Sexual activity among sexually active youths: ↓	Among students who had become sexually active, those who participated in the program reported reduced levels of sexual activity at the 27-month follow-up of the evaluation.
Lerner (2005)	<i>Best Friends</i>	<i>Adolescent & Family Health</i>	Yes	6 th through 8 th grade female students in Washington, DC, from a low socio-economic background.	Quasi-experimental	Onset of sexual activity: ↓	Compared to peers who did not participate in the Best Friends program, those who did were nearly four to six times more likely have abstained.
Weed et al. (2006)	<i>Heritage Keepers</i>	Paper presented at a HHS-OPA sponsored conference in 2005.	Yes	7 th through 9 th grade students in South Carolina, from mixed demographic and geographic backgrounds.	Quasi-experimental	Onset of sexual activity: ↓	Among students who have not engaged in sex activity, those who participated in the program were one-half as likely to become sexually active, after controlling for school grade level, race and other mediating factors.

Boraskwi et al. (2005)	<i>For Keeps</i>	<i>American Journal of Health Behavior</i>	Yes	Students from the Midwest.	Quasi-experimental	Frequency of sexual activity among sexually active students: ↓ Number of sexual partners among sexually active students: ↓	Among students who were sexually active, program participants reported fewer episodes of sexual encounters and fewer sexual partners, indicating a reduction in the amount of casual sexual activity.
Resnick et al. (1997)	Virginity Pledging	<i>Journal of American Medical Association</i>	Yes	Nationally representative sample of 7th-12th graders from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health ("Add Health")	Non-experimental	Onset of sexual activity: ↓	Sexual activity among students who had taken a formal pledge of virginity was one-fourth the level of that of their peers who had not taken a pledge.
Bearman & Bruckner (2001)	Virginity Pledging	<i>The American Journal of Sociology</i>	Yes	Nationally representative sample of 7th-12th graders from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health ("Add Health").	Non-experimental	Onset of sexual activity: ↓	Taking a virginity pledge reduces by one-third the probability that an adolescent will begin sexual activity compared to other adolescents, after controlling for demographic and background characteristics.
Rector et al. (2005)	Virginity Pledging	Paper presented at the 8 th Annual National Welfare Research and Evaluation Conference, sponsored by the U.S. Dept. of HHS-ACF		Nationally representative sample of 19 to 25 year olds in 2001, from Wave III of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health ("Add Health")	Non-experimental	Incidence of STDs among young adults: ↓	In general, young adults who made a virginity pledge during their teenage years showed a 25 percent reduction in STDs compared to non-pledgers.

#This chart presents only findings on behavioral changes; most of these evaluations also found statistically significant changes in students' attitude toward sexual activity as well as their knowledge of STDs and teen pregnancy.

*An experiment randomly assigns subjects to the treatment (i.e. abstinence program) or control group; a quasi-experiment does not have random assignment.

**Findings were statistically significant the 95 percent confidence level and above (p<0.05) unless otherwise indicated.

***The term "onset of sexual activity," or "sexual onset," is sometime referred to as "lost of virginity," "sexual initiation," "sexual debut," or "first sex."

+ Finding was statistically significant at the 94 percent confidence level and above.

** Finding was statistically significant at the 93 percent confidence level and above.