Sexual Health Behaviors among High School Students with Disabilities

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Acknowledgements

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Background

• Sexuality of people with disabilities has historically been repressed or ignored
• Oregon youth with developmental disabilities have reported substantial unmet needs for sexual health information
• Very little is known about sexual behaviors among youth with disabilities
• Information about current practices and risk behaviors is key to informing education and sexual health promotion efforts
Objectives

• Describe sexual activity and sexual risk behaviors of youth with disabilities in Oregon
• Compare sexual activity and sexual risk behaviors of Oregon youth with and without disabilities
Data Source

• Oregon Healthy Teens survey
  – Monitors health and well-being of adolescents
  – Administered in alternate years through schools to 8th and 11th graders statewide
  – Anonymous and voluntary

• 2015 and 2017 surveys included six disability identifiers in the survey for 11th graders
Disability Questions

1. Are you deaf or do you have serious difficulty hearing?
2. Are you blind or do you have serious difficulty seeing, even when wearing glasses?
3. Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, do you have serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions?
Disability Questions

4. Do you have serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs?

5. Do you have difficulty dressing or bathing?

6. Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, do you have difficulty doing errands alone such as visiting a physician’s office or shopping?
Sexual Behaviors

- Ever had intercourse
- Age at which first had intercourse
- Number of sexual partners in last 3 months
- Used alcohol at last intercourse
- Used condom at last intercourse
Analyses

• Survey weighted analyses using Stata 15
• Cross tabulations of proportions, with chi-square tests
• Multivariable logistic regression analyses controlling for:
  – Gender
  – Race/ethnicity
  – Sexual Orientation
  – SES (measured by Family Affluence Scale)
Disability Prevalence

• Any disability: 29.7%
  • Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing: 2.2%
  • Blind/Low Vision: 4.9%
  • Cognitive: 22.5%
  • Mobility: 2.6%
  • Self-care: 0.9%
  • Independent Living: 7.9%
### Demographic Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Disability</th>
<th>No Disability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>59.6%</td>
<td>45.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGB</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>60.5%</td>
<td>64.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low family affluence</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ever Had Intercourse

The bar chart shows the percentage of people who have ever had intercourse, categorized by disability type. The categories include No Disability, Any Disability, Deaf, Blind, Cognitive, Mobility, Self-Care, and Independent Living. The percentages range from 37.9% to 49.4%.
Intercourse Before Age 15

![Bar chart showing the percentage of individuals who had intercourse before age 15 by disability category.]

- **NO DISABILITY**: 23.9%
- **ANY DISABILITY**: 32.5%
- **DEAF**: 37.9%
- **BLIND**: 33.7%
- **COGNITIVE**: 29.3%
- **MOBILITY**: 36.1%
- **SELF-CARE**: 50.4%
- **INDEP. LIVING**: 30.5%
Partners in Last 3 Months

- 51.5 NO DISABILITY
- 59.2 ANY DISABILITY
- 61.9 DEAF
- 57.7 BLIND
- 59.3 COGNITIVE
- 58.7 MOBILITY
- 64.6 SELF-CARE
- 50.2 INDEP. LIVING

2 or More Partners
Alcohol Use at Last Intercourse

- **NO DISABILITY**: 14.6%
- **ANY DISABILITY**: 19.3%
- **DEAF**: 22.3%
- **BLIND**: 12.0%
- **COGNITIVE**: 18.6%
- **MOBILITY**: 16.7%
- **SELF-CARE**: 40.1%
- **INDEP. LIVING**: 15.7%
Condom Use at Last Intercourse

No Condom at Last Intercourse

- NO DISABILITY
- ANY DISABILITY
- DEAF
- BLIND
- COGNITIVE
- MOBILITY
- MOBILITY
- SELF-CARE
- INDEPENDENT LIVING
# Behaviors Stratified by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>No Disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercourse</td>
<td>49.3%</td>
<td>37.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercourse before age 15</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥2 partners in last 3 mo.</td>
<td>57.4%</td>
<td>49.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol with intercourse</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condomless intercourse</td>
<td>47.3%</td>
<td>39.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Stratified by Sexual Orientation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Straight</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>LGB</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>No Disability</td>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>No Disability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercourse</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
<td>43.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercourse before age 15</td>
<td>29.9%</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
<td>40.1%</td>
<td>33.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥2 partners in last 3 mo.</td>
<td>55.3%</td>
<td>50.7%</td>
<td>67.2%</td>
<td>59.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol with intercourse</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condomless intercourse</td>
<td>42.6%</td>
<td>35.2%</td>
<td>51.7%</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Stratified by Race/Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>White, Non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Other Race/Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>No Disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercourse</td>
<td>49.7%</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercourse before age 15</td>
<td>29.8%</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥2 partners in last 3 mo.</td>
<td>57.5%</td>
<td>49.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alcohol with intercourse</td>
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<td>13.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condomless intercourse</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
<td>37.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Stratified by SES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th></th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th></th>
<th>High</th>
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<td>Disability</td>
<td>No Disability</td>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>No Disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercourse</td>
<td>51.3%</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
<td>49.5%</td>
<td>40.6%</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>35.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercourse before age 15</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
<td>33.0%</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥2 partners in last 3 mo.</td>
<td>65.7%</td>
<td>53.8%</td>
<td>57.2%</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
<td>48.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol with intercourse</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condomless intercourse</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
<td>41.5%</td>
<td>45.7%</td>
<td>38.4%</td>
<td>43.6%</td>
<td>33.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Adjusted Odds of Behaviors

- Intercourse ever: OR=1.45, 95% CI=1.27-1.65
- Early intercourse: OR=1.70, 95% CI=1.36-2.13
- Multiple partners: OR=1.31, 95% CI=1.09-1.56
- Alcohol at last intercourse: OR=1.36, 95% CI=1.01-1.83
- Condomless intercourse: OR=1.34, 95% CI=1.08-1.66
Limitations

• Data collection may have excluded some youth with disabilities
  – Survey typically not administered in special education classes
  – No routine provision of accommodations

• No data on duration of disability. Some cognitive challenges could be precipitated by sexual abuse early in life.

• Limited power for examining differences by type of disability
Conclusions

- Youth with disabilities are having sex
- Youth with disabilities had significantly elevated odds of engaging in every sexual health risk behavior examined
- Clear need for risk reduction and sexual health promotion efforts targeting youth with disabilities
Thank You