Sex Education and Teen Pregnancy Prevention in the UK:
Lessons from Across the Pond

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Study Abroad Program 2015: Academics...
• Offered 6 hours graduate & undergraduate credits in HWP classes
• Designed individual class projects & reports
• Required daily reflection papers
• Made final oral presentations

Study Abroad Program 2015: Design...
• Three class meetings in US prior to departure
• One class meeting in US following return
• Two weeks in London & one week in Manchester
• Daily site visits scheduled in UK at sexual health, youth-serving organizations/clinics
• Navigation around London part of experience
Gillick Competency

"...whether or not a child is capable of giving the necessary consent will depend on the child’s maturity and understanding and the nature of the consent required. The child must be capable of making a reasonable assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of the treatment proposed, so the consent, if given, can be properly and fairly described as true consent." (Gillick v West Norfolk, 1984)


Fraser Guidelines...

• that the girl (although under the age of 16 years of age) will understand his advice;
• that he cannot persuade her to inform her parents or to allow him to inform the parents that she is seeking contraceptive advice;
• that she is very likely to continue having sexual intercourse with or without contraceptive treatment;


Fraser Guidelines...

• that unless she receives contraceptive advice or treatment her physical or mental health or both are likely to suffer;
• that her best interests require him to give her contraceptive advice, treatment or both without the parental consent. (Gillick v West Norfolk, 1985)

Implications for Child Protection

- Balance children's rights and wishes with responsibility to keep children safe from harm
- Underage sexual activity should always be seen as a possible indicator of child sexual exploitation
- Sexual activity with a child under 13 is a criminal offense and should always result in a referral

Condom Sampler Pack from Terrence Higgins Trust

Educational Materials in Condom Starter Pack
Normalising the Conversation

Condom Awareness Activity @ Youth Program in Manchester

Condom Poster @ Youth Program in Manchester
Educational Posters in London Subway (Tube)

Condom Poster in London Subway (Tube)

Presentation @ Family Planning Association
Preparing for AIDS Walk in London

• UK still has the highest rate of teen pregnancies in Western Europe, despite 25% fall in the last decade
• Study shows 19.7 births per 1,000 women aged 15–19 in the UK in 2012
• Figure is much higher than the EU average of only 12.6 births per 1,000
• Worldwide figures show Switzerland had the lowest rate at 3.4 births per 1,000

Key Sexual Health Initiatives in UK

• PSHE becoming statutory
• National Chlamydia screening program
• Reducing child sexual exploitation (CSE)

Key Differences: UK and US Youth Sexual Health

• Wishes of young person vs wishes of parents
• Ultimate confidentiality
• National Health Service (i.e. access to services)
• Condom education and use are normalized
• Sexual health messages are pervasive
• Schools cooperate/facilitate messaging

What Needs to Happen in the U.S.

• Quit spending precious resources trying to eliminate a natural urge
• Acknowledge that sexual health is a normal and expected part of human development
• Normalize discussion about condoms
• Improve condom/contraceptive access
• Use evidence-based/evidence-informed curricula
• Find and train the best teachers to deliver curricula
• Increase partnerships between educators and providers
• Make sexual health a public health (not moral) priority
• U.S. Classes: June 6-9, 2016
• London Classes: June 13-July 1, 2016
• U.S. Classes: July 28-29, 2016
• 9 Students Enrolled

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