

Parent-Adolescent Sex Communication in Hong Kong: The Role of Gender and Parental Gatekeeping

Abstract

Differences between gender dyads (i.e. mother-daughter, mother-son, father-daughter and father-son dyads) during parent-adolescent sex communication, as well as the moderating effects of perceived parental gatekeeping by spouse were examined in 110 pairs of parent-adolescent dyads with adolescents aged 12 to 18. Results showed that fathers generally have more frequent sex communication with adolescents and mothers might experience more difficulties communicating with daughters about sex. As compared to sex-positive topics, messages about sexual risk were more frequently covered in local families, and especially towards daughters, indicating a gendered content in sex communication. While mothers appeared to be more vulnerable and negatively affected by social expectation and hence experience more barriers initiating sex communication, evidences also suggested influencing factors other than parental and adolescent gender. Perceived parental gatekeeping by spouse, more specifically, the encouragement and discouragement factors are moderating factors of sex communication frequency between parent or adolescent. That is to say, increase in co-parenting atmosphere and practice might facilitate parents', especially mothers' engagement in communicating with their adolescent children about sex.