

Comparing Different Types of Abstinence Education Programs – and Different Methods of Comparisons

I have been the evaluator for different abstinence education programs and have used some of the same research questions and data collection tools across programs. For this conference, if my proposal is accepted, I will compare these three different types of abstinence education programs using traditional multivariate statistics, linear and logistic regression, with models including types of abstinence education programs and gender. In addition, a newer method, hierarchical linear modeling (HLM), with youth nested in programs, will be used to assess program effects.

Research Questions: (a) Are different types of abstinence education programs, specifically Stop and Think of Oregon (STO), the **East Texas Abstinence Education** (ETAP)-Program/ESTEEM, and the Oregon Youth Solutions (OYS), associated with different results on pre- and post-intervention measures of attitudes and behaviors related to sexual abstinence before marriage? (b) Are results obtained when the programs are compared using HLM different from results obtained using traditional multivariate regression analyses?

Data sources are questions from the Youth Solutions questionnaire that were used in the evaluation of all three programs. This questionnaire originally was a modified version of the *Survey of Youth*, which was used in an evaluation of *Teen-Aid* and in previous evaluations of OYS by Dr. Stan Weed and others. The Youth Solutions questionnaire functioned as a sensitive measure in evaluations abstinence education programs. For the scales, the Cronbach Coefficient Alphas consistently were in an acceptably high range, year after year.

Methods of data analysis for pre- and post-intervention comparisons included comparisons of means and analyzing the percentages of youth who improved on repeated measures. Originally, this was done separately for each of the three programs. Statistical significance ($p < .05$) was calculated using the McNemar-Bowker and/or Sign Tests (for percentages) and repeated measures analysis of variance or t-tests (for means). Multivariate statistics, linear and logistic regression, with models including types of abstinence education programs and gender, will be used to compare programs. Hierarchical linear modeling, with youth nested in programs, is another method that will be used for comparing across programs.

The project is relevant to the conference themes of abstinence education and of methods of evaluation and research. All three programs primarily served middle school students. *Youth Solutions* was funded by the Office of Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention (OAPP). The other two programs were originally Special Project of Regional and National Significance grant recipients and became Community-Based Abstinence Education programs under the Administration for Children and Families. The purpose of all three programs was to reduce pregnancy among unmarried adolescents. The teen pregnancy rate was considerably higher across the nation when these programs originally were funded than it is today. The OAPP and the *Stop and Think* projects were completed in June of 2007. The East Texas Abstinence Education project will continue until September of 2008.

The results to be reported in this presentation, data from comparisons across the three different programs, has not previously been published or presented although data for the individual programs, separately, has been reported in evaluation reports and/or at conferences.

Dr. Tobin is a Research Associate and faculty member at the University of Oregon where she teaches undergraduate and graduate level courses on the education of students with behavioral disorders. She has evaluated programs for the Office of Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention, the Bureau of Maternal and Child Health, and the Administration for Children and Families. Dr. Tobin directed field initiated research and personnel preparation grants from the Office of Special Education Programs, and drop out prevention research funded by the Oregon Department of Education. Dr. Tobin presents at national conferences (e.g., Association for Positive Behavior Support, Abstinence Education Evaluation Conference) and has written for both researchers and practitioners in refereed journals (e.g., *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*, *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, *Preventing School Failure*). She is affiliated with professional organizations such as the American Evaluation Association, the Society for Prevention Research, and the American Educational Research Association.