

Sexual Behavior of Secondary School Students in Bangkok Metropolis

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Objective : To explore sexual behavior in terms of masturbation, homosexual contact and coitus in secondary school students in Bangkok.

Material and Method : This was a cross-sectional survey research from December, 2002 to January, 2003. 362 students were selected by the multistages simple random sampling technique. A self administered questionnaire was used to collect data on baseline characteristics and sexual behavior of the students.

Results : 197 male and 165 female students were enrolled in the present study. The mean age was 16.5 years, and 65.7 percent of the students were exposed to sexually explicit contents via the internet. 58.0 percent of the students used the internet for pornographic viewing. According to the sexual behavior of the students, 79.2 percent of the males and 9.1 percent of the females had experience in masturbation ($p < 0.05$). The male had a slightly higher in homosexual contact than the females (10.2% vs 9.1%) but coital experience of the males was markedly significance higher than the females (25.4% vs 7.9%) ($P < 0.05$).

Conclusion : It was concluded that sexual behavior in the internet era; males had more experience in all these categories than females. Sexual education via the internet should be improved in order to make adolescents understand appropriate sexual behavior and practice safer sex.

Keywords : Sexual behavior, Adolescence, Internet

J Med Assoc Thai 2004; 87(7): 755-9

Adolescence is the transitional period from childhood to adulthood including the peak development of the body, emotion and intelligence. During this period of life many biological, physical and psychological changes occur. It is a critical period in a person's life that influences his or her well-being later in life. One of that well-being is sexual behavior. Inappropriate sexual behavior may lead to the risk of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), HIV infection and unwanted pregnancies^(1,2). In the internet era, adolescents have a chance to get information about sex by themselves which they have never experienced before. It was found that sexual related web sites were often visited by adolescents. The internet has a powerful influence on adolescent sexual behavior in both good and harmful ways and also has an impact on their attitude towards sex.

Due to easy access to the internet for adolescents in Bangkok and the change in norms about sexuality such as a premarital sexual relationship together with a loosening of family control over the sexual behavior of adolescents, it has become necessary to know what influences the internet has on adolescents. The objective of this study was to explore sexual behavior in terms of masturbation, homosexual contact and coitus in secondary school students in Bangkok in order to understand the present sexual behavior of adolescents and to develop sexual education strategies to promote safer sex in the internet era.

Material and Method

This research was a cross - sectional survey designed secondary school students; Mathayom Suksa 4, 5 and 6 in Bangkok from December, 2002 to January, 2003. Three hundred and sixty two students were selected by the multistage simple random sampling technique from 100,957 students. Thirty

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classrooms in 10 schools were selected including Mathayom Suksa 4, 5 and 6 from each school. Students were selected from each classroom by simple random sampling and the number of selected students was related to the proportion of students in the classroom. All subjects were willing to take part in this study. A self administered questionnaire was used to collect data about baseline characteristics and sexual behavior of the students. Students were required to sit apart from each other when answering the questionnaire to preserve privacy and reduce shared responses. Researchers gave the information and explained the purpose of the study, the need for complete and honest responses. Researchers were also present at all times to answer the student' questions. Students were informed that their answers would be kept confidential. After completing the questionnaires, the students sealed the questionnaires and gave them to the researchers. Descriptive statistic analysis used percentage, range mean, median and standard deviation, Chi-square was used to test difference between Male vs Female significance level was at 0.05.

Results

Three hundred and sixty two Mathayom Suksa 4, 5 and 6 students were enrolled in this study. There were 197 male students and 165 female students. The number of males was slightly higher than females (54.4% vs 45.6%). 67.1 percent of the students belonged to the age group 16-17 years old with the mean age of 16.5 years old. 59.1 percent of the students received less than 3,000 bahts from their parents per month with the mean amount received being 3,801.85 bahts. 83.7 percent of the students stayed with their parents. Very few, only 4.2 percent, of the students stayed with their friends or lived alone (Table 1). 67.1 percent of the students had a computer at home that could link to the internet. 65.7 percent of the students were exposed to sexually explicit contents via the internet. Surprisingly, 58.0 percent of the students used the internet for pornographic viewing. 57.6 percent of the students used the internet at home when they wanted to know the sexual contents. 87.8 percent of the students used the internet less than 10 times per month and the time used each time was 30 to 60 minutes in 63 percent of the students with the mean time used being of 60.55 minutes (Table 2).

According to the sexual behavior of the students, 47.2 percent had experience in masturbation, 9.7 percent in homosexual contact and 17.4 percent in coitus. 49.7 percent of the students masturbated less

Table 1. Number and percentage of baseline characteristics

Baseline characteristics	No.	%
Gender		
Male	197	54.4
Female	165	45.6
Age (years)		
≤ 15	58	16.0
16	113	31.2
17	130	35.9
≥ 18	61	16.9
\bar{X} = 16.5; SD = 0.97		
Money received from parents per month (Baht)		
< 3000	214	59.1
3000-6000	123	34.0
> 6000	25	6.9
\bar{X} = 3801.85; SD = 6747.39		
Residence		
With parents	303	83.7
With relatives	44	12.1
With friends or alone	15	4.2
Total	362	100.0

Table 2. Number and percentage of internet used for sexual contents

Internet usage	No.	%
Internet available at home		
Yes	243	67.1
No	119	32.9
Exposed to sexually explicit		
Yes	238	65.7
No	124	34.3
Type of sexual contents		
Pornography	138	58.0
News or articles	60	25.2
Questions and answers	20	8.4
Chat about sexual experiences	20	8.4
Place		
At home	137	57.6
At a friend's home	45	18.9
At an internet cafe	32	13.4
At school	24	10.1
Frequency of exposure per month		
< 10	209	87.8
10-19	23	9.7
≥ 20	6	2.5
\bar{X} = 4.36; SD = 4.57 range		
Duration of exposure each time (minute)		
< 30	27	11.4
30-60	150	63.0
> 60	61	25.6
\bar{X} = 60.55; SD = 43.60 range		
Total	238	100.1

than 10 times per month. 6.6 percent of the students in the homosexual contact group and 19.7 percent in the coitus group had two or more sexual partners (Table 3). 32 out of 35 students (91.4 percent) had homosexual contact and 48 out of 63 students had coitus (76.2 percent) in the last 3 months before answering the questionnaire.

Comparing male and female students, 79.2 percent of the males and 9.1 percent of the females had experience in masturbation. The male students had slightly more homosexual contact than the female student (10.2% vs 9.1%), but in experience of coitus, male students was markedly more than female students (25.4% vs 7.9%).

Concerning to having two or more sexual partners, male students had more experience than female students in homosexual contact (8.7% vs 4.3%) and in coitus (16.3% vs 1.8%) (Table 3). In the present study the minimum age of voluntary homosexual contact was 10 years old and voluntary coitus was 11 years old.

Discussion

This was a cross-sectional survey research to study the sexual behavior of adolescents in

secondary schools in Bangkok. Sexual behaviors were categorized into 3 groups, firstly, autosexuality in terms of masturbation, secondly, in terms of homosexual contact and lastly, in terms of coitus. The population sample consisted of 362 male and female students who were selected from proportional multistage simple random sampling from 100,957 secondary school students. Thus, the sample size was appropriate for this study. The use of self administered questionnaires for collecting the data from students enhanced privacy and allowed students to feel free to answer personal questions that may not be admissible if the questions were asked by using the face to face interview technique.

The mean age of the students in the present study was 16.5 years old, which represented students in secondary schools. According to the sexual behavior of the students, the results of the present study showed that the male students had experienced sexual behavior in all categories more than the female students. Although masturbation can help adolescents to relieve their sexual tension without any effect to their health especially sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) or HIV infection and unwanted pregnancies, compared to other studies, the rate of

Table 3. Number and percentage of adolescents sexual behaviors

Sexual behavior	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Masturbation						
Yes	156	79.2	15	9.1	171	47.2
No	41	20.8	150	90.9	191	52.8
Frequency of masturbation per month						
< 10	73	46.8	12	80.0	85	49.7
10-19	38	24.4	2	13.3	40	23.4
≥ 20	45	28.8	1	6.7	46	26.9
Homosexual contact						
Yes	20	10.2	15	9.1	35	9.7
No	177	89.8	150	90.9	327	90.3
Number of homosexual partners						
0	177	89.8	150	90.9	327	90.3
1	3	1.5	8	4.8	11	3.0
≥ 2	17	8.7	7	4.3	24	6.7
Coitus						
Yes	50	25.4	13	7.9	63	17.4
No	147	74.6	152	92.1	299	82.6
Number of coital partners						
0	147	74.6	152	92.1	299	82.6
1	18	9.1	10	6.1	28	7.7
2	32	16.3	3	1.8	35	9.7
Total	197	100.0	165	100.0	362	100.0

masturbation was the same as studies in Thailand but lower than studies in western countries. Masturbation was less frequent in the present study which may be due to the social norms of Thai society having negative attitudes toward sex and viewing sex as dirty and rude. Concerning homosexual contact, the rate was about 10 percent which was the same as other studies^(3,4). In the present study, the male students had coitus 25.4 percent which was 3 times higher than the female students (7.9 percent) and also the number of coital partners of two or more was 16.3 percent which was very high which contributes to sexual promiscuity⁽⁵⁾. Although the sexual behavior of students may be affected by many factors, at the present time the revolution in information technology such as the internet exerts both a positive and negative impact on adolescents. The internet has a powerful influence because it is linked with business. From the present study the students used the internet for pornographic viewing up to 58.0 percent⁽⁶⁻⁸⁾. This high rate may be due to Thai adolescents becoming more liberated and more individualistic and also the change in norms about sexuality and the loosening of family control over the behavior of adolescents.

Concerning first homosexual contact and coitus, the age of the students was 10 and 11 years old which was considered rather young. The mean age of homosexual contact in the present study was 14.1 years old and coitus was 15.1 years old. The age of homosexual contact was slightly lower than coitus because adolescents tend to trust people person of the same sex and felt easy to share their ideas about sexual experience. The mean age of first coitus in the present study was the same as other studies, this may be due to adolescents having freedom to go out with the opposite sex and also a premarital sexual relationship was more accepted in their viewpoint⁽⁹⁻¹¹⁾. Due to the younger age group, adolescents are at high risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), HIV infection and unwanted pregnancies.

From the present study, it was concluded that sexual behavior of adolescents in the internet era in terms of masturbation, homosexual contact and coitus, the male students had more experience in all these categories than the female students. Because they are in a younger age group with lower maturity, adolescents are at a high risk of contracting sexually

transmitted diseases (STDs), HIV infection and unwanted pregnancies. Sexual education via the internet should be improved in order to make adolescents understand the appropriate sexual behavior and practice safer sex⁽¹²⁾.

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พฤติกรรมทางเพศของนักเรียนมัธยมศึกษาตอนปลายในกรุงเทพมหานคร

ประทักษ์ ไอบระเสริฐสวัสดิ์, สุกานฎา เพชรชุม

วัตถุประสงค์ : เพื่อศึกษาพฤติกรรมทางเพศในด้านการสำเร็จความใคร่ด้วยตนเอง การมีพฤติกรรมรักร่วมเพศ และการร่วมเพศ ของนักเรียนมัธยมศึกษาตอนปลายในกรุงเทพมหานคร

วิธีการ : เป็นการศึกษาเชิงสำรวจภาคตัดขวาง ระหว่างเดือนธันวาคม พ.ศ. 2545 ถึง มกราคม พ.ศ. 2546 กลุ่มตัวอย่างทั้งหมด 362 คน ได้จากการสุ่มหลายชั้นแบบง่าย ข้อมูลได้จากการให้นักเรียนตอบแบบสอบถามด้วยตนเอง เกี่ยวกับพฤติกรรมทางเพศ

ผลการศึกษา : มีนักเรียนชาย 197 คน และนักเรียนหญิง 165 คน เข้าร่วมการศึกษาโดยมีอายุเฉลี่ยของนักเรียนเท่ากับ 16.5 ปี ร้อยละ 65.7 ของนักเรียนใช้อินเทอร์เน็ตในการสืบค้นข้อมูลทางด้านเพศ ร้อยละ 58.0 ของนักเรียนใช้อินเทอร์เน็ตในการดูภาพโป๊-เปลือย ในส่วนที่เกี่ยวข้องกับพฤติกรรมทางเพศร้อยละ 79.2 ของนักเรียนชาย และร้อยละ 9.1 ของนักเรียนหญิงเคยสำเร็จความใคร่ด้วยตนเอง นักเรียนชายและนักเรียนหญิงมีพฤติกรรมรักร่วมเพศใกล้เคียงกัน ร้อยละ 10.2 และร้อยละ 9.1 ตามลำดับ ในส่วนของการร่วมเพศ นักเรียนชายมีการร่วมเพศมากกว่านักเรียนหญิงมาก (25.4% vs 7.9%)

สรุป : พฤติกรรมทางเพศของนักเรียนในยุคที่มีการใช้อินเทอร์เน็ตอย่างแพร่หลายนั้น นักเรียนชายจะมีพฤติกรรมทางเพศในทุกแบบมากกว่านักเรียนหญิง ดังนั้น การให้ความรู้ทางด้านเพศผ่านทางอินเทอร์เน็ตจะต้องมีการปรับปรุงให้นักเรียนเกิดการเรียนรู้เรื่องเพศอย่างถูกต้อง เหมาะสม และมีพฤติกรรมทางเพศอย่างปลอดภัย
