

Awareness of Contraceptive Availability at Valparaiso University

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Despite contradictory perspectives, college students are having sex. College-age students engage in high-risk sexual behavior despite their relatively higher rates of both sexually transmitted infections and unintended pregnancy compared to other age groups. Several studies suggest that the majority of college students rely on campus health clinics or condom distribution programs for obtaining contraceptives. Because of the prevalence in college students, this study was targeted toward full-time, sexually-active Valparaiso University students (aged 18-24). The researchers hypothesized that sexually-active students at Valparaiso University who were unaware of campus availability of contraceptives participated in unprotected sex more often than sexually-active students who were aware of availability on campus. Based on the findings of this study, education and advertisement for contraceptives is likely inadequate. Since contraceptive use decreases the occurrence of both sexually transmitted infections and unintended pregnancy, it is beneficial that students be made aware of the availability on campus.

Information about the Authors:

The interest for this study came about through the personal observations and experiences of the researchers. First, researchers Katherine Cole, Charlotte Johnson, and Megan Marimen are female college students who are intrigued by policies affecting Valparaiso University, especially comparing Valparaiso University's policies to that of other higher education institutions. Second, while the risks of sexually transmitted diseases affect men and women equally, women are the sole population to be greatly impacted by the risk of unplanned pregnancy. It is the researchers' belief that students at Valparaiso University would benefit from and/or be interested in the availability of contraceptives on campus. The findings of this study could bring about change to Valparaiso University's policies regarding contraceptives. At the very least, it is the researchers' opinion that through the presence of this study, individuals will be more likely to discuss the important topic of availability of contraceptives on campus.

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