Predictors of premarital sex among Bangladesh male adolescents

Nan Li, Marc Boulay

OBJECTIVE

To identify risky and protective factors within Kotchick's multilevel framework: self, familial, extra-familial system for premarital sex among male adolescents in Bangladesh

METHODOLOGY

Data source

The 2004 Adolescent Reproductive Health Communication Midline Survey (2004 ARHCMS) provided the data for present study. This survey used a two-stage cluster sample design to obtain a representative sample of adolescents between the ages of 10 and 19 years living in Bangladesh. Overall, 11,944 households were selected and 81 percent of these households had at least one member between the ages of 10-19 years. This analysis was limited to the 1,048 unmarried males between ages of 15 and 19 years, excluding the 27 married male adolescents to avoid confusing premarital and postmarital sex and the 1,250 males between the ages of 10 and 14 years due to the limited number of sexually active males between these ages.

Study variables

The outcome variable for this analysis measured respondent's self-reported ever having sexual intercourse. All respondents were first asked whether they had ever heard of sexual intercourse and those respondents aware of sexual intercourse were asked whether they had ever practiced sexual intercourse. The 79 unmarried male adolescents

between the ages of 15 and 19 that were unaware of sexual intercourse were considered to have never practiced sexual intercourse.

Data analysis

In analysis, first, we compared background characteristics of our sample with 2004 DHS data by cross tabulation. Next we conducted simple logistic regression to explore the relationship between our independent variables and premarital sex among male adolescents. Multiple logistic regression analyses was used to control other confounding factors, explore the interaction and assess whether our interesting factors can predict premarital sex among Bangladeshi male adolescent well. Finally Hosmer-Lemeshow goodness-of-fit test was used to identify the model of best fit.

RESULT

Description of the sample

The mean age of respondents in present study is 16.7 years old. About one half (48%) of respondents were currently in school. More than half respondents have secondary or above education. The majority of respondents was resided in rural area and identified themselves as Islam.

The data used in the present study is from 2004 ARHCMS which was designed to obtain a representative sample of adolescents in Bangladesh. Table 1 presents the result of the comparison between our survey and 2004 Demographic Health Survey (DHS). It suggests that the distributions of some background characteristics are consistent between two data sets but some are not. Since the topic on sexuality has largely remained a taboo subject and social custom discourage premarital sexual relationships in Bangladeshi society, the self-reported data may subject to under-reporting here. However, the

prevalence of premarital sex in our study is consistent with the report of DHS in 2004 (Table 1).

Multivariate analysis

The results of the multivariate analyses of risk and protective factors for the premarital sex among respondents are presented in Table 4. In term of self system variables, after controlling for age, respondents who believed a girl can get pregnant only has sex once were about two times more likely to have premarital sex than their counterparts. Consistent with previous study, having plan to study in the future was associated with a lower likelihood of engaging in premarital sex among respondents.

In term of family system, respecting for parents' values and beliefs about sex was associated with lower odds of engaging in premarital sex. Our results revealed that discussion with the parents about the sex related issues was associated with 70 percent decrease in the risk of having premarital sex. However it is marginally significant due to the small number of respondents who ever discussed sex related issues with their parents.

Peer is an important factor in extra-familial system. Our results showed that young males who discussed sex related issues with their friends had almost 90 percent increase in the probability of having premarital sex. One point increase in peer influence score was associated with one quarter increase in the risk of having premarital sex among respondents in our study.

Among background characteristics, being Islam associated with a lower likelihood of having had premarital sex; listening to the radio was associated with higher odds of engaging in premarital sex.

Table 1 Percentage of distribution of background characteristics of respondents

	Study Sample (%)	2004 DHS[§]	p-value
Age			
15-17	694 (66.2)	354 (60.4)	0.001
18-19	354 (33.8)	232 (39.6)	0.019
Residence			
Urban	300 (28.6)	119 (23.3)	
Rural	748 (71.4)	387 (76.7)	0.020
Religion			
Islam	924 (88.2)	532 (90.5)	
Other	124 (11.8)	53 (9.5)	0.154
Highest level of education			
No school	96 (9.2)	63 (10.8)	
Primary	333 (31.8)	194 (33.1)	0.590
Secondary or above	619 (59.0)	329 (56.1)	0.239
Listen to radio			
Almost every day	163 (15.6)	159 (27.1)	
At least once a week	377 (35.9)	183 (31.2)	0.037
Less than once a week	31 (3.0)	41 (7.0)	0.000
Not at all	477 (45.5)	203 (34.6)	0.000
Sexually active			
Yes	134 (12.8)	81 (13.4)	
No	914 (87.2)	505 (86.6)	0.73

[§] Source : Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey 2004
* : p-value<0.05

Table 4 Results of multiple logistic regression of premarital sex among respondents

	OR	SE	*p*-value	95% CI
Age	1.10	0.08	0.220	0.95-1.27
Islam	0.57	0.16	0.042	0.33-0.98*
Listening to radio	1.25	0.16	0.073	0.98-1.60
Plan to study in the future	0.36	0.08	0.000	0.23-0.54*
A girl can get pregnant if she has sex only once	1.94	0.40	0.001	1.31-2.90*
Ever talked with parents about sex related issues	0.29	0.19	0.064	0.08-1.07
Respect for parents' values and beliefs about sex	0.40	0.08	0.000	0.27-0.59*
Ever talked with friends about sex related issues	1.88	0.29	0.000	1.39-2.55*
Peer influence score	1.24	0.07	0.000	1.11-1.39*

*: *p*-values< 0.05

†: R^2= 0.1448, the goodness-fit-test chi2 = 10.86, *p*-values=0.2095