

POSTER OF DISTINCTION

Oman, R., Aspy, C., Vesely, S., & Tolma, E.: Mapping youth assets, environmental conditions, and youth sexual risk behavior.

ABSTRACT

Purpose: Map relationships among environmental factors, youth assets and youth sexual behavior using geographic information system technology (GIS). Methods: Data were collected as part of a longitudinal study involving 1117 youth/parent pairs living in 20 randomly-selected census tracts in a city with a population of approximately 500,000. Asset and sexual risk behavior data were collected via in-person interviewing and self-administered data collection protocols and environmental data (assessed at the census tract level) were collected via trained raters. Results: Youth mean age was 14.3 years, 53% of the sample was female; and youth race/ethnicity was 39% white, 28% Hispanic, 23% black, 4% Native American, and 10% other. The percentage of youth in each tract reporting sexual activity ranged from 6% to 41% and the percentage of youth with 10 or more assets (of 17 assets) ranged from 67% to 90%. Environmental condition scores ranged from zero (poor quality environment) to seven (good quality environment). GIS analyses generally indicated that youth with substantial numbers of assets and who lived in areas with poorer environmental conditions also had a lower prevalence of youth sexual activity. In contrast, youth with fewer assets had higher rates of sexual activity regardless of the environmental condition. For example, two census tracts with higher levels of youth sexual activity (41%, 33%) also had youth with fewer assets, but environmental condition scores that diverged (zero vs. seven).