

## Cross-Sectional Analysis of Partner Support and Contraceptive Use in Adolescent Females

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**Abstract :** In the U.S., annually, there are over 1 million pregnancies in teenagers and most (85%) are unintended. The need for proactive prevention measures is imperative to support adolescents with their pregnancy prevention and family planning goals. To date, there is limited research examining the extent to which support from a sexual partner(s) influences contraceptive use. To address this gap, this study assessed the relationship between sexually active adolescents, sex-assigned birth as female, and their perceived support from their sexual partner(s) about their contraceptive use in the last three months. Baseline data from sexually active adolescent females, between 13-19 years who were not currently using a long-acting contraceptive device, were recruited from 32 school-based health centers (SBHCs) in seven states in the U.S. as part of a larger study to evaluate Health-E You/ Salud iTu™, a web-based contraceptive decision support tool. Fisher's exact test assessed the cross-sectional association between perceived sexual partner support of contraceptive use in the past three months (felt no support, felt little support, and felt a lot of support), and current use of non-barrier contraception. A total of 91 sexually active adolescent females were eligible and completed the baseline survey. The mean age was 16.7 and nearly half (49.3%) were Hispanic/Latina. Most (85.9%) indicated it was very important to avoid becoming pregnant. A total of 60 participants (65.9%) reported use of non-barrier contraception. Of these, most used birth control pills (n=26), followed by Depo-Provera injection (n=12), patch (n=1), and ring (n=1). Most of the participants (80.2%) indicated that they perceived a lot of support from their partners and 19.8% reported no or little support. Among those reporting a lot of support, 69.9% (51/73) reported current use of non-barrier contraception compared to 50% (9/18) who felt no/little support and reported contraceptive use. This difference approached but did not reach statistical significance (p=0.096). Results from this preliminary data indicate that many adolescents who are coming in for care at SBHCs are at risk of unintended pregnancy. Many participants also reported a lot of support from their sexual partner(s) to use contraception. While the associations only approached significance, this is likely due to the small sample size. This and future research can better understand this association to inform interventions aimed at sexual partners to strengthen education and social support, increase healthcare accessibility, and ultimately reduce rates of unintended pregnancy.

**Keywords :** adolescents, contraception, pregnancy, SBHCs, sexual partners

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