A Campaign to Motivate College-Aged, Catholic Women to Get Tested for STIs at the University of Dayton

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A Campaign to Motivate College-Aged, Catholic Women to Get Tested for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

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Background

• Young people aged 15-24 account for half of the 20 million new sexually transmitted infections that occur each year.¹
• In 2017, women aged 20-24 had the highest rate of chlamydia cases among any age group for men or women.²
• Less than half of college students who engaged in vaginal intercourse in the past 30 days reported using a condom or other protective barrier.³
• Catholic women are more likely to have “hooked up” while in college than women with no religious affiliation.⁴

Theory

This research utilizes the Theory of Planned Behavior.

Methods

• 12 female, heterosexual Catholic UD students completed an online survey.
• The survey asked open-ended questions about:
  • participants attitudes
  • subjective norms
  • perceived control towards STI testing
• and close-ended questions about:
  • participant STI knowledge
  • self-efficacy

Results

Have you been sexually active in the past 6 months?
- Yes (4)
- No (8)

Are you aware that the UD Health Center offers STI testing?
- I was aware (3)
- I was not aware (17)

Have you been tested for STIs before?
- Yes (11)
- No (11)

Attitudes about STI testing:
Benefits:
+ Knowing if you have an STI (n = 9, 75%)
+ Preventing the spread of STIs to partners (n = 8, 67%)

Negative Effects:
- Social judgement from others (n = 6, 50%)
- Fear of having an STI (n = 6, 50%)

STI tests are... Good, Beneficial, Normal But... Unpleasant, Unenjoyable, Embarrassing

Subjective Norms about STI testing:
Who would support?
+ Friends (n = 8, 67%)
+ Partner(s) (n = 6, 50%)

Who would be against?
- No one (n = 6, 50%)
- Family members (n = 5, 42%)

Perceived Control in STI testing:
What makes it easy?
+ Accessibility of testing facilities (n = 8, 67%)
+ Social support (n = 2, 17%)

What makes it difficult?
- Cost and uncertainty of insurance coverage (n = 2, 17%)
- Social support (n = 2, 17%)

Results, cont.

Knowledge about STIs:
It is dangerous to leave an STI untreated.
STIs can only be spread through vaginal intercourse.
All genders are at risk for STIs.
If you get an STI, you will have it for the rest of your life.
All STIs can be treated with medication.

Discussion and Recommendations

Participants understand the practicality of STI tests, find them beneficial, and feel confident in their ability to be tested. However, these students are fearful of being tested due to their lack of knowledge about STI testing and treatment and the social judgement they feel would follow. I recommend a campaign that:
• Focuses on STI knowledge and correcting misinformation (two-sided refutational)
• Demonstrates social support for testing
• Utilizes a gain frame to emphasize benefits

I recommend a transmedia approach including:
• Informational posters
• A short module about STI accessibility and information for incoming freshmen
• A physical campaign that shows peer support (e.g. sign a “I support STI testing” poster in KU)

Select References