

# Stakeholder Participation in Planning of Adolescent Sexual Health Research Translation



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## Introduction

It is an ethical imperative of the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children Ireland (HBSC) study to disseminate research findings to as wide an audience as possible, including academics, practitioners, policy-makers and non-specialists. Optimally, findings should be disseminated in a manner that is useable, understandable and appropriate for specific stakeholder groups. A qualitative exploration was carried out to identify suitable methods for disseminating research findings on the sexual health behaviours of adolescents in Ireland to a range of stakeholder groups and to collate feedback on existing resources.

## Methodology

Participants were recruited from the stakeholder groups of young people, parents, youth workers and teachers. Convenience sampling was used to engage a diverse range of participants. Eleven focus groups and two discussion groups were conducted with 39 young people, 15 youth workers, 13 parents and 14 teachers. Using a semi-structured format, the discussions covered responses to current dissemination formats, information needs, and current and preferred sources and formats of information.



## Results

**Young people** were interested in the behaviours of other young people and agreed that this information would lessen peer pressure among adolescents. They requested information in a concise format with a small amount text and focussing on visual aspects such as colour and images. They favoured social media (Facebook, YouTube) and short video clips made by young people as a method of disseminating research.

*"You don't really look for yourself – it just pops up and you look at it" (YP)*

*"Videos are best because if it's just in writing nobody wants to read it" (YP)*

**Parents** found the research interesting and felt it was good for them to know the realities of adolescent life but were more eager that their children have the information. Parents recommended distribution of research findings in schools and libraries and links with existing resources such as newspapers and websites.

*"That would be important to get out to them" (P)*

*"It's very useful for parents in fairness because we don't know what the other half are doing – what anyone is doing – you think you know but you haven't a clue" (P)*

**Youth workers** were interested in the research and said it would be useful to have information presented in a way that was relevant to their own work. They were particularly interested in local or regional level data. Their chief recommendations were to link in with the established youth worker forums/databases and to involve young people in the dissemination process.

*"Sometimes there's a perception that they know everything – but they don't – it's quite surprising" (YW)*

*"It brings it home to the people working with young people, you know, - Jesus that's the reality – we need to invest in young people because of what the trends are showing us" (YW)*

**Teachers** considered the research to be valuable and useful for a range of school subjects. Participants suggested that information should target specific teachers and subject areas and that it should be presented in a classroom-ready format such as a PowerPoint or easy to photocopy materials.

*"That's really important .....(they know) it isn't everybody but me" (T)*

*"Graphical representation is important, d'you know, because you can see at a glance what you're looking at" (T)*

## Conclusions

This study elicited a range of opinions about the dissemination of adolescent sexual health behaviour research data with distinct differences between the individual stakeholder groups. The consultation provided valuable and constructive insights into suitable approaches to the distribution of research findings to a variety of audiences. These will improve the dissemination of existing and future research in the area of adolescent health. Correctly adopted, this information has the potential to expand the reaches of the HBSC survey and other research findings thereby extending knowledge on adolescent health behaviours to a broader audience.

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