Gender, contraception and sexual choices

Petra Boynton
Division of Medical Education, University College London
www.drpetra.co.uk
info@drpetra.co.uk
@drpetra

Agony Aunt’s perspective

What do young people ask Agony Aunts about contraception?

“Where can I get contraception from?”
“Do you have to pay?”
“Will they tell my mum?”
“The clinic’s not open when I need to go”
“Do I have to talk about sex?”
“Can I take my boyfriend?”
“How old do you have to be to get the pill?”
Side effects
Contraception = the pill or condoms

Things we may be missing

- Contraception choices for bi youth
- Questions about contraception and sexual choices for young people with disabilities

Sex educator's perspective

Feedback from Young People and Educators/Practitioners

Educators:

Uncertainty over policy/practice

"I'd love to use evidence, but who has the time to read everything?"

Young people:

"I'm really scared of getting pregnant. You can get medicine for STDs (sic)"

Contraception explained in abstract way, not about what suits lifestyle

Choices – division between *"what I want"*, and *"what I feel I can do"*

“I don’t use condoms as I’m on the pill. I have regular sexual health MOTs instead”

Young women: Sexually literate? Confident?

Naturally not sexual? Objectified victims?

Smart girls carry condoms….

“I can’t look at his cock when I put on a condom”

“Do I have to do all that foreplay stuff. Can’t we just cut to the sex? Just him inside”

“He’ll think I’m a slapper if I talk about condoms”

“What happens if he won’t use a condom?”

“She’s clean. It’s okay”

Young men: Hyper masculine? Coercive?

Innately knowing? Sexually driven?

Lacking in confidence?

The academic’s perspective

Sexualisation, pornification, sexting…

… how to be a “critical friend” to young people

- Range of responses/experiences
- Diversity and access to services/information
- Understanding/representing bravado and misinformation
- Balancing protection/safeguarding with empowerment/sex positivity
- Working with ideas that seem instinctively “right” and can feel uncomfortable to challenge

Thanks for your attention!

Petra Boynton
Division of Medical Education, University College London
www.drpetra.co.uk
info@drpetra.co.uk
@drpetra