

Differences in Attitudes towards Premarital Sex:

The Impact of Some Demographic and Socio-Economic Factors in a Sample of Shiraz City Youth (Poster Session N°1403)

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Background

In Iran, strong social, cultural and religious norms prohibit premarital sexual contact between young unmarried men and women. Sexual behavior is limited to marriage. This taboo on sex is particularly more rigid for young women who are traditionally expected to maintain virgin until their first marriage and even to prove their virginity as a part of the marriage ceremony. There are legal and religious punishments on sexual behaviors out of married life. However, Due to new circumstances, higher age at first marriage, more contact with the opposite sex in the society, greater exposure to the worldwide ideas about sex, premarital relationships are becoming more inevitable.

Because of the above-mentioned barriers to the sexual information and behaviors in Iran, I could not find any research done in social and psychological fields of this topic, just a few on medical arenas.

The broad aim of this study is to determine some factors affecting attitudes towards premarital sex among youth in Shiraz city, Iran. It increases our knowledge on sexual experiences and attitudes that influence young person's life.

Methods

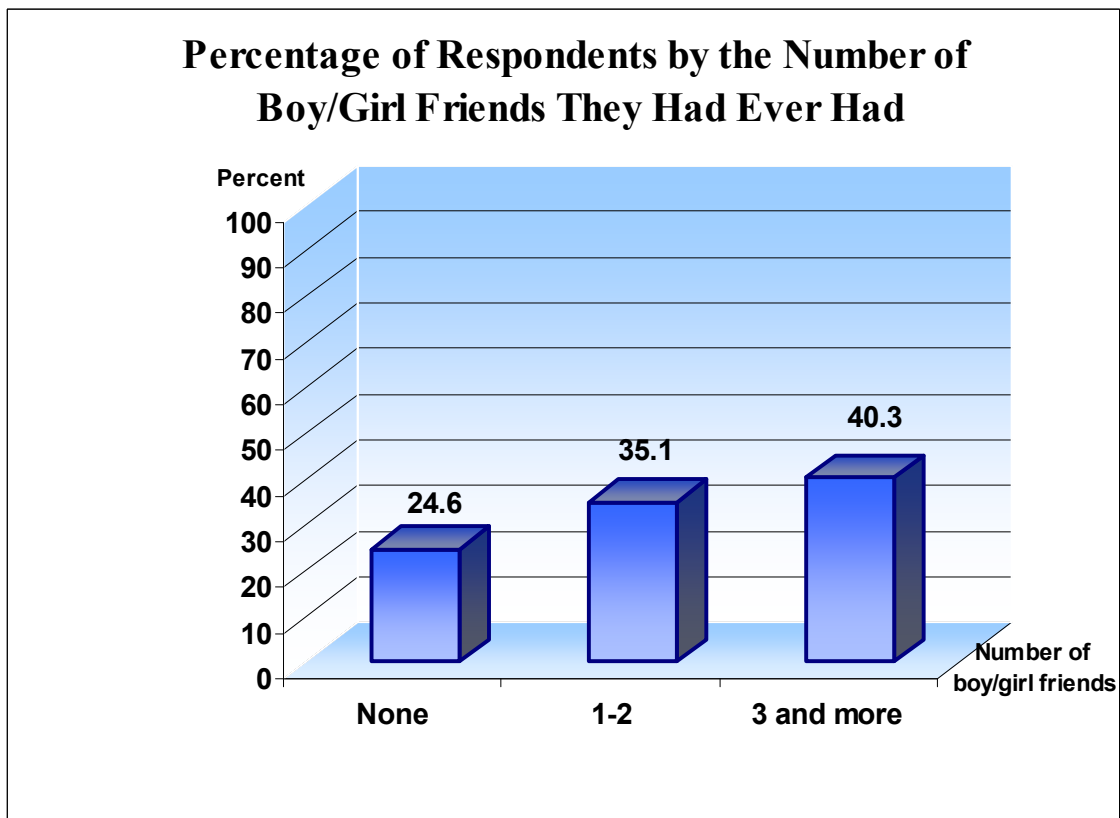
Type of study: This was a cross-sectional quantitative study, which was done through the survey method. The study has taken place in fall 2004. A randomly chosen sample of youth participated in the survey. A self-administered questionnaire was our instrument for this survey.

Population: Our population was all the never-married youth living in Shiraz, which are between the ages 18 and 29 years and of both Male and female sexes.

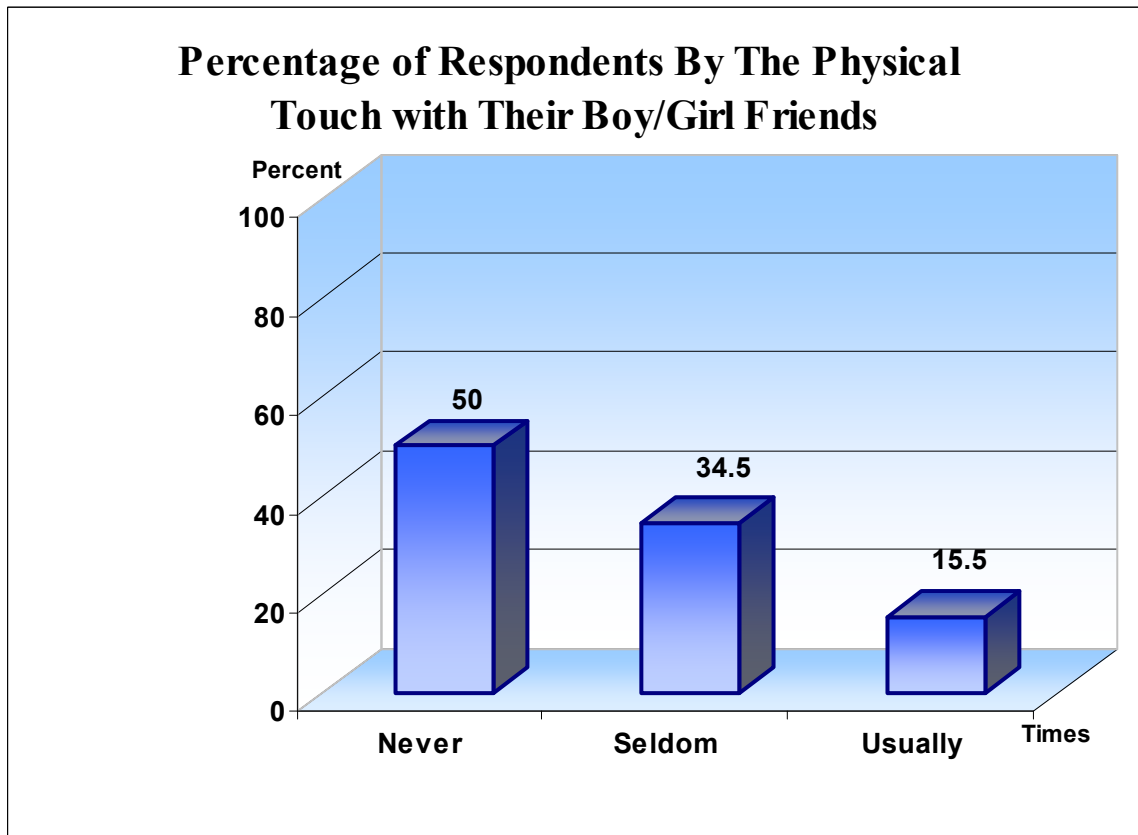
Sampling: The sampling method was simple random multi-stage sampling. The sample size was estimated based on the Cochran formula. The sample size was 384 persons in the age of 18-29. To give equal chances to both sexes, I divided the sample size according to the proportion of each group to 193 male and 191 female respondents. Due to the sensitive nature of the study, the assurance was given to the respondents that their identification and responses will be kept confidential.

Results

Most of the respondents had a boy/girl friend.

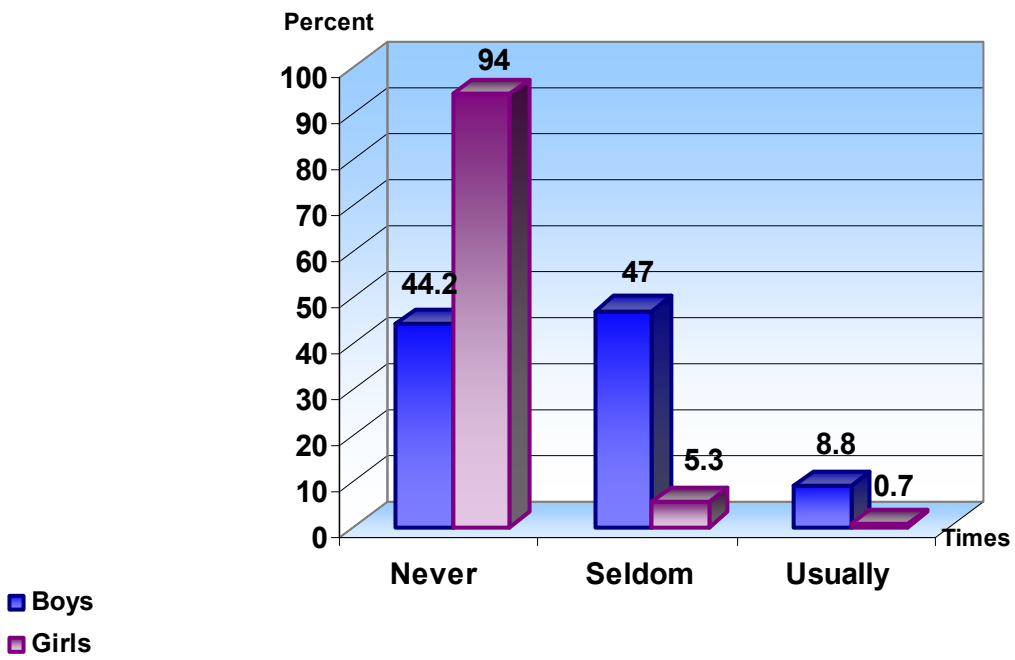


50 percent of the respondents had not touched, hugged or kissed their partners.

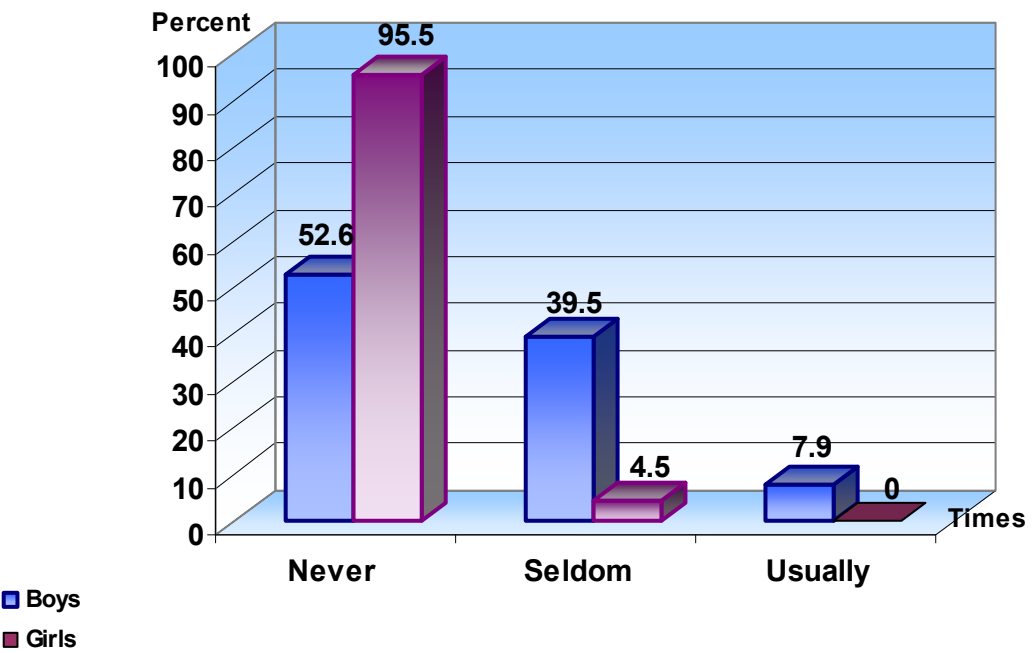


Since the negative consequences of premarital sex are more profound for young girls, the difference in the premarital sexual activity was great among the members of different genders. The premarital outercourse sex (not penetrative intercourse), which is more considerate which keeps the girl's virginity untouched was more accepted than penetrative intercourse by both sexes. It confirms the value of girl virginity in her first marriage.

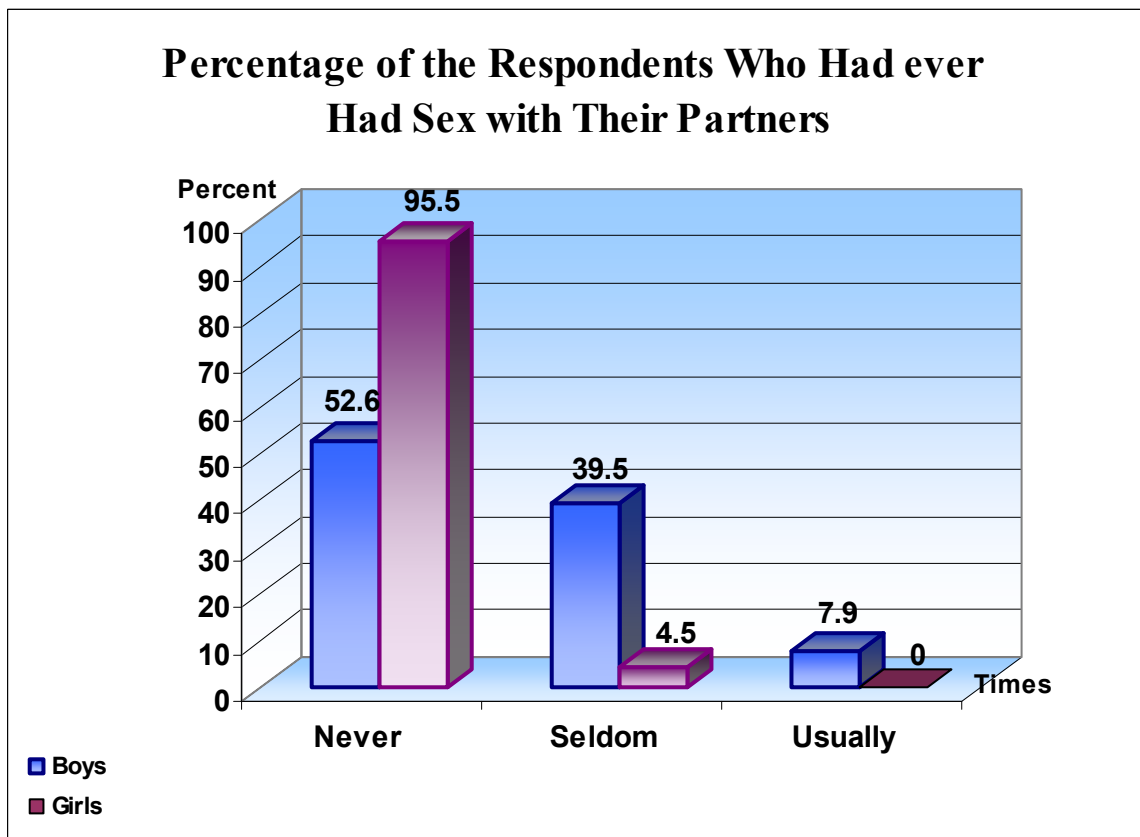
Percentage of Respondants Who Had Had Incompelet Sex with Their Partners



Percentage of the Respondents Who Had ever Had Sex with Their Partners

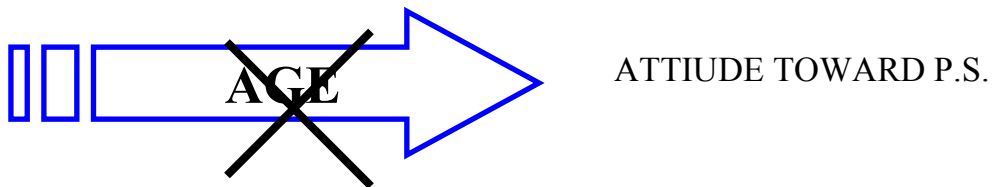


There was a difference between respondents' responses about themselves and their idea about their counterparts. 64.29 percent of the respondents believed that all boys experience premarital sex and 39.65 percent of the respondents believed on girls premarital sex.

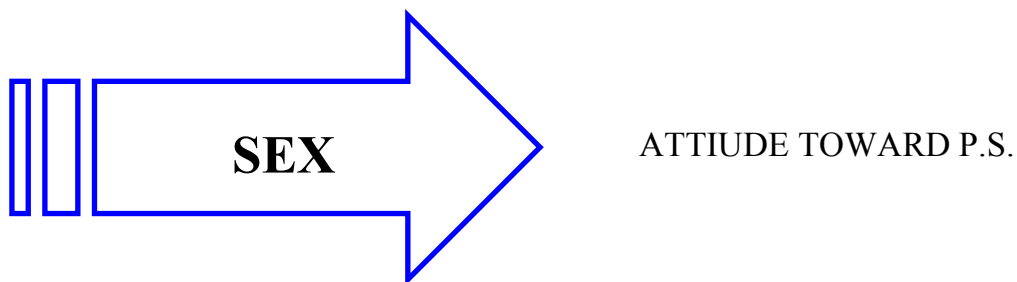


Three of five factors which were assumed to affect youth attitudes toward premarital sex were accepted.

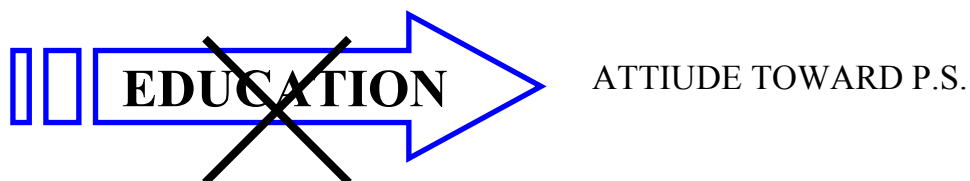
There was not a significant relationship between the respondents' age and their attitude toward premarital sex.



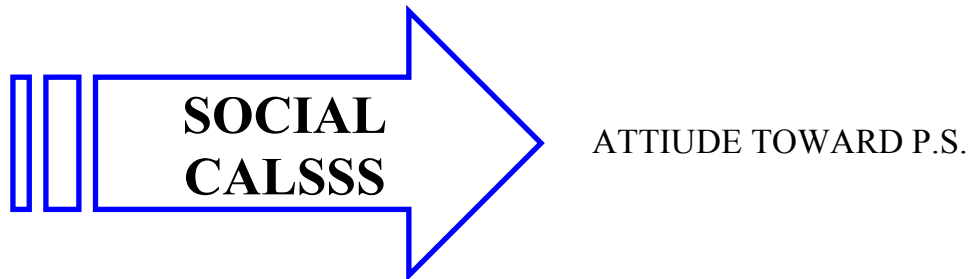
Girls had more negative attitudes toward premarital sex than boys.



It was hypothesized that highly educated youth are less likely to hold traditional attitudes towards the acceptability of premarital sex than less educated youths. But the hypothesis was rejected. There was not a significant relationship between level of education and attitude toward premarital sex.



Youths from poorer socio-economic families had more negative attitude toward premarital sexual activity.



Those respondents who were internet users or watch international TVs have less negative attitude toward premarital sex.



It seems that while dating and premarital relationship is approved by the youth, traditional norms toward premarital sex are still severe and rigid in Iran. Youths resolve this conflict in two ways; outcourse sex and sex with sex workers who have increased in the recent decade. Both these ways are dangerous for youth reproductive and sex health. Helping young people to develop healthy sexual behaviors are an investment for the society.

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Links:

- <http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/comm321/gwalker/influence.htm>
- http://www.ciadvertising.org/SA/fall_02/adv382j/kfarri1/attitude_measurement2.html
- <http://zimmer.csufresno.edu/~johnca/spch100/6-7-fishbein.htm>
- <http://www.gutmacher.org/pubs/journals/2507899.html>
- <http://www.nutrition.uio.no/ARHNe/new/Thesis-Dissertations/Kanyabumbare.PDF>
- <http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/comm321/gwalker/influence.htm>
- <http://zimmer.csufresno.edu/~johnca/spch100/6-7-fishbein.htm>
- <http://www.bestslavetraining.com/attitude.htm>