

Brief Research Report

Students Today Aren't Ready for Sex (STARS) Program

Prepared for

Office of Prevention and Transitional Benefits
Oregon Department of Human Services
Children, Adults & Families

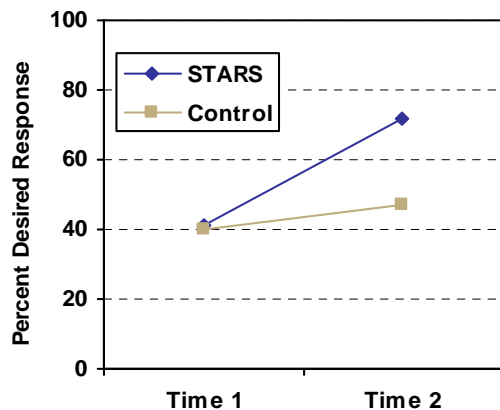
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The Students Today Aren't Ready for Sex (STARS) curriculum was designed to prevent the early onset of sexual behavior among middle school students by building awareness of media influences, correcting misconceptions about sexual behavior, and building refusal skills. In an evaluation conducted by the Oregon Department of Human Services and RMC Research Corporation, Oregon students who participated in the STARS program outperformed students in control schools on measures of knowledge about sexuality and attitudes towards sexual abstinence.

The STARS evaluation assessed the survey responses of students in Grade 6 at 2 points in time during the 2002–2003 school year. The responses of a random sample of schools that implemented the STARS program (treatment schools) were compared to a matched sample of schools that did not implement the program (control schools). The sample of STARS schools surveyed was selected to be representative of all students participating in STARS across Oregon. In treatment schools, a pretest survey was administered about 2 weeks before the first session and a posttest survey was administered 4 months after the pretest to assess short-term gains in knowledge of and attitudes toward sexual abstinence. The pretest and posttest surveys were linked for each student. There were no differences between the treatment and control students prior to STARS implementation.



Percentage of students who gave the desired response on the knowledge scale.

The results reveal that students who participated in STARS dramatically outperformed students in control schools on questions that assessed the students' knowledge of the potential consequences of sexual behavior, appropriate prevention measures, and the low prevalence of early sexual behavior. Furthermore, the results revealed more favorable attitudes about sexual abstinence among students participating in STARS.

The evaluation also showed statistically significant but very small gains on measures of (a) how the students might respond to peer pressure to have sex in the future and (b) their intentions to remain sexually

abstinent. Several factors, including limited exposure to pressure to have sex at this age and the relative short observation period, contributed to the small differences.

The evidence clearly indicates that participation in the STARS program had the intended short term impact on student knowledge and attitudes about sexual abstinence.

Excerpt from Deck, D.D. and Heaps, C. (2004). *Evaluation of the Students Aren't Ready for Sex (STARS) Program*. Portland, OR: RMC Research Corporation. For more information about the STARS program contact Ron Taylor at ronald.taylor@state.or.us or view the full report at <http://www.rmccorp.com/Project/Stars.htm>.