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In the U.S., young people (ages 15-24 years) are significantly affected by HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Storytelling through comic books has shown to be a useful method for HIV and STD education and prevention. The increasing popularity of comic related media and advances in computerized graphics have created new ways of using comics to reach and help youth adopt lifelong attitudes and behaviors that support overall health and well-being—including behaviors that can reduce their risk for HIV and STDs.

HHS Innovates Finalist Research Brief - September 2014

Comics, technology, and health communication to educate youth about HIV/STD

Purpose: This brief provides highlights of communication outcome evaluation research with intended audiences, and is currently under review to be published in the *Journal of Health Communication*.

Method

We recruited young men and women 15-24 years of age, of diverse race and ethnicity, in 2012 to review the motion comic. We conducted 15 focus groups (n=144) coupled with surveys, and analyzed quantitative and qualitative data.

Results

Overall Satisfaction. Participants expressed high levels of satisfaction with the story's elements, an average of **74% of participants responded favorably** to story elements: the dialogue, plots, story settings, tone of humor and drama, and realism portrayed in the storyline.

Engagement with story. Regarding the story, 89% found the story interesting, 51% related to the characters, and 78% indicated interest in seeing additional episodes. Respondents displayed interest in seeing the story continue, typified by the statement made by one respondent: "You have got to tell us what happens next....It was wrong of you to not tell us!" Most participants requested to be notified of new episodes so they could find out what happens.

Acceptability. Eighty-five percent of participants responded that a motion comic was a good method of reaching young people like themselves, 75% indicated their friends would be at least somewhat interested in watching the series, and **73% indicated they would share or recommend the motion comic to their friends.**

Outcome Measures. Comparison of the pre- and post-viewing metrics of key indicators revealed **the intervention was associated with a statistically significant decrease in HIV stigma** (p<0.001). The intervention was not associated with statistically significant changes in condom attitudes and knowledge or attitudes toward HIV testing. However, the intervention was also associated with statistically significant **increases in the participants' intentions to engage in HIV/STD protective behaviors** (e.g. condom use, abstinence) (p=0.002) and HIV knowledge (p=0.002).

For more information, contact: MoCom@cdc.gov.

Resources for HIV and STD Prevention among Young Persons

Innovative approaches to HIV and STD education and prevention such as KABI Chronicles may prove effective in encouraging healthy behavior change among youth. When used in conjunction with information and resources tailored to youth, outcomes may be even more promising. Below is a list of CDC-identified resources to connect teens to information promoting healthy sexual behaviors and decision-making.

- > Adolescents and STDs Fact Sheet
- > Let's talk about sexual health video
- > STD facts
- ➤ The Right Way to Use a Male Condom
- > HIV Basics
- > PrEP
- ➤ Get Tested HIV and STD testing near you
- Monitoring Your Teen's Activities: What Parents and Families Should Know
- > Ways to Influence Your Teen's Sexual Risk Behavior: What Fathers Can Do
- > Parents' Influence on the Health of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Teens: What Parents and Families Should Know
- > Talking with Your Teens about Sex: Going Beyond "the Talk"
- > HIV Among U.S. Youth 2016
- > HHS Innovates Finalist Research Brief

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