

**ADOLESCENT DATING RELATIONSHIPS: SEXUAL COERCION  
AND HIGH RISK SEXUAL PRACTICES**

by

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**SUMMARY**

This study investigated coercive and high risk sexual practices in South African adolescent dating relationships. Quantitative and qualitative information was collected from secondary school learners in a community near Johannesburg. Of 928 learners surveyed, 23.5% of females and 53.7% of males ever had sex. Of these, 57.8% of females and 44.2% of males reported sexual victimisation, and 46.8% of females and 50% of males reported perpetrating sexual coercion in a relationship. Significantly more males engaged in risky sex than females. Among females, sexual coercion was significantly linked to risky sexual behaviour. Among males, alcohol and perpetration of sexual coercion were significantly associated with risky sexual behaviour. Focus group data reveal how dominant constructions of gender normalise male coercion and contribute to risky sexual practices. Recommendations for sexual health initiatives include introducing alternative discourses of female sexual desire and male sexual responsibility as a means for building healthier adolescent dating relationships.

**KEY TERMS:** Adolescents; Sexual coercion; Dating relationships; Gender; High risk sexual behaviour; Alcohol use; Masculinity; Femininity

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