

## DATING AND SEXUAL EXPERIENCE

With an increase in the number of years that young women are single, the possibility of premarital sexual activity and pregnancy also increases. In many Asian and Pacific societies, adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable to the risks associated with misinformed and unprotected sexual relationships, as well as the adverse consequences of adolescent pregnancy (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, 2001:10). Consequently, the proportion of births to unmarried adolescent women is increasing. This trend may continue unless contraceptive use also increases.

### 9.1 DATING

In an adolescent's life, dating can be considered a step toward finding a special person who provides companionship and shares experiences. In the 2002-2003 Young Adult Reproductive Health Survey (YARHS), respondents were asked whether they have ever had a girlfriend or boyfriend, which was defined in the questionnaire as a person of the opposite sex with whom the respondent had a romantic relationship. Table 9.1 shows that men are more likely than women say that they have never have a girl friend prior to the survey (37 percent of men compared with 32 percent of women).

Table 9.1 Age at first date									
Percent distribution of unmarried women and men age 15-24 by specific age at first date, according to background characteristics, YARHS 2002-2003 Jayapura City									
Background characteristic	Never had a boyfriend/girlfriend	Age at first date					Don't know/missing	Total	Number
		≤13	14	15	16	17+			
<b>WOMEN</b>									
<b>Age</b>									
15-19	42.0	1.0	9.8	43.4	2.3	0.0	1.6	100.0	248
20-24	16.7	0.7	4.9	53.3	18.4	6.0	0.0	100.0	169
<b>Education</b>									
Less than secondary	49.1	1.0	13.1	33.0	2.9	0.0	0.9	100.0	122
Completed secondary+	24.6	0.8	5.6	53.4	11.3	3.4	0.9	100.0	295
Total	31.8	0.9	7.8	47.4	8.8	2.4	0.9	100.0	417
<b>MEN</b>									
<b>Age</b>									
15-19	51.3	0.5	7.5	38.5	2.2	0.0	0.0	100.0	232
20-24	21.8	0.0	8.5	41.8	18.0	9.6	0.3	100.0	223
<b>Education</b>									
Less than secondary	58.9	0.7	10.6	21.8	6.0	1.9	0.0	100.0	154
Completed secondary+	25.5	0.0	6.6	49.5	11.9	6.1	0.3	100.0	301
Total	36.8	0.2	8.0	40.1	9.9	4.7	0.2	100.0	455

For young people, the first date is usually remembered as an important event in which she or he has attracted the attention of the opposite sex. The first date may lead to a more serious, long-term relationship with the person of the opposite sex. Initiation of dating is more likely to occur at a younger age among women than men. While 10 percent of women age 15-19 said that they dated by age 14, the corresponding proportion for men age 15-19 is 8 percent. Most of the respondents say that they first dated at age between 15 and 16 (56 percent of women and 50 percent of men).

For both women and men, older respondents and respondents with secondary education are more likely to say that they had dated. For example, while 42 percent of women age 15-19 have never dated, the corresponding proportion for women age 20-24 is 17 percent.

## 9.2 SEXUAL EXPERIENCE

### 9.2.1 Attitudes about Premarital Sex

Increasing teenage pregnancy rates have prompted government organizations to provide reproductive health information and services to their peers. Working with PKBI and BKKBN, UNFPA support the production of materials to reach parents, policy makers and community leaders with the theme: “having sex before marriage is not appropriate among youth” (UNFPA, 2000).

In the 2002-2003 YARHS survey, respondents were asked about their attitudes and practice in dating and sexual relations. Given the fact that premarital sex is generally not socially accepted in Indonesia, the respondents were asked first about their attitude toward premarital sex, the importance of virginity, and whether they know someone who had sex before marriage in order to introduce this delicate topic. Table 9.2 presents these findings.

Background characteristic	Women			Men		
	Accept premarital sex for:			Accept premarital sex for:		
	Women	Men	Number	Women	Men	Number
<b>Age</b>						
15-19	0.9	3.9	248	5.0	6.8	232
20-24	1.7	4.0	169	7.9	11.1	223
<b>Education</b>						
Less than secondary	1.3	6.0	122	7.3	7.7	154
Completed secondary+	1.2	3.1	295	6.0	9.6	301
Total	1.2	3.9	417	6.4	9.0	455

As expected, acceptance of premarital sex is low. An earlier survey of young adults also found that nearly all respondents disapprove of sexual activity before or outside marriage (Achmad and Westley, 1999). Two important findings emerge from data in this table. In general, women are less likely than men to accept premarital sex and premarital sex is more acceptable for men. While 4 percent of women accept premarital sex for men, 9 percent of men agree to this sentiment. One percent of women say that they accept sex before marriage for women but 4 percent accept premarital sex for men.

Age and education have no association with the respondent's opinion about premarital sex for women. However, there are differences across age and education towards premarital sex for men. Women with less than secondary education are twice as likely as their better-educated peers to accept premarital sex for men. For men, older respondents are much more likely than younger men to accept premarital sex for men (11 percent compared with 7 percent).

### 9.2.2 Attitudes toward Virginity

As expected, virginity is regarded highly among both women and men. The majority of women and men say that it is important for a woman to maintain her virginity (91 percent of women and 86 percent of men). This perception does not vary much across age and education. The survey respondents were also asked their opinion about men's perception of their future wife's virginity. Two in three respondents think that men value their wife's virginity. No notable variations are observed across subgroups of respondents.

**Table 9.3 Attitudes toward virginity**

Percentage of unmarried women and men age 15-24 who agree that a woman should maintain her virginity and percentage who think that men value their future wife's virginity, according to background characteristics, YARHS 2002-2003 Jayapura City

Background characteristic	Women		Men	
	Agrees women should maintain virginity	Thinks men value future wife's virginity	Agrees women should maintain virginity	Thinks men value future wife's virginity
<b>Age</b>				
15-19	91.1	65.7	81.0	66.0
20-24	91.3	66.3	91.3	65.2
<b>Education</b>				
Less than secondary	88.4	65.9	78.5	62.7
Completed secondary+	92.2	66.0	90.0	67.1
Total	91.1	65.9	86.1	65.6

### 9.2.3 Sexual Experience

The subject of sexual intercourse is very sensitive, especially to a person who has never married. Survey data on prevalence of socially unaccepted behavior collected through personal interviews should be used with caution as they may involve wide confidence intervals (Mensch et al., 2001). A better method for collecting data on sexual behavior from young women is a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods (Weiss et al., 1996). Ever-married respondents are much more likely than unmarried persons to admit premarital sex. Data from a survey of young adults in four provinces in Indonesia show

that while 12 percent of ever-married men and 5 percent of ever-married women say that they had sex before marriage, only three percent of unmarried men and less than one percent unmarried women report having had sex (Demographic Institute, 1999).

In the 2002-2003 YARHS, all respondents were asked about their sexual experience. Eight percent of women and 33 percent for men admitted that they have ever had sex. Men started having sex at an earlier age than women. At age 17, only 2 percent of women have ever had sex. The corresponding proportion among men is 6 percent.

Table 9.4 Age at first sex										
Percentage of unmarried women and men 15-24 by age at first sex, by background characteristics, YARHS, 2002-2003 Jayapura City										
Background characteristic	Age at first sex						Don't know/missing	Percentage who have never had sex	Total	Number
	≤15	16	17	18	19	20+				
<b>WOMEN</b>										
<b>Age</b>										
15-19	1.1	0.9	0.9	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.5	96.2	100.0	248
20-24	0.6	0.6	3.1	4.1	2.9	2.2	0.7	85.7	100.0	169
<b>Education</b>										
Less than secondary	1.4	1.3	0.9	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.6	94.6	100.0	122
Completed secondary+	0.7	0.6	2.2	2.3	1.5	1.3	0.6	90.9	100.0	295
Total	0.9	0.8	1.8	1.6	1.4	0.9	0.6	92.0	100.0	417
<b>MEN</b>										
<b>Age</b>										
15-19	7.5	1.2	4.1	1.5	0.5	0.0	0.0	85.3	100.0	232
20-24	2.4	3.3	7.4	7.3	4.8	6.1	0.8	67.9	100.0	223
<b>Education</b>										
Less than secondary	8.8	0.9	3.9	4.2	1.5	0.4	0.0	80.3	100.0	154
Completed secondary+	3.0	2.8	6.7	4.5	3.2	4.3	0.6	74.9	100.0	301
Total	5.0	2.2	5.7	4.4	2.6	3.0	0.4	76.8	100.0	455

Table 9.5 shows the distribution of women and men who have ever had sex according to the reason for having the first sex. The most often cited reason for having sex is that they liked each other (57 percent of women and 42 percent of men). One in three respondents had sex because they wanted to satisfy their curiosity. The percentage of women who said that they were under the influence of alcohol when they had sex is twice as high as that for men (8 percent compared with 4 percent).

**Table 9.5 Reason for having first sex**

Among unmarried women and men 15-24, who have ever had sex, percent distribution by reason for having first sex, by respondent's sex, YARHS 2002-2003 Jayapura City

Sex	Percentage who ever had sex	Number	Reason for having first sexual intercourse						
			Liked each other	Curious	Peer pressure to be accepted	Forced	Influence of alcohol or drug	Other	Missing
Women	13.7	57	56.7	24.9	0.0	3.7	7.8	4.7	2.2
Men	35.4	161	42.3	36.3	7.5	3.3	3.8	6.2	0.7
Total	25.0	218	46.1	33.3	5.5	3.4	4.8	5.8	1.1

### 9.3 USE OF CONDOMS

In the YARHS, respondents who have ever had sex were asked whether they used protection when they have sexual intercourse. Specifically, they were asked whether they used a condom during their first and last sex. The findings show that 9 percent of men used condoms at their first sex, and 15 percent used at last sex (Table 9.6). Variations across subgroups are hard to discern due to small number of men age 15-19 and those having less than secondary education. A study in 2001 found out that the majority (60 percent) of adolescents who have had sex did not use any protection (Sahanaya, 2002).

**Table 9.6 Condom use**

Percentage of unmarried men 15-24, who have ever had sex by use of condom at first and last sex, according to background characteristics, YARHS 2002-2003 Jayapura City

Background characteristic	Condom use		Number
	At first sex	At last sex	
<b>Age</b>			
15-19	(10.6)	(15.5)	34
20-24	8.3	14.7	72
<b>Education</b>			
Less than secondary	(5.0)	(3.8)	30
Completed secondary+	10.7	19.4	75
Total	9.0	14.9	106

Note: Figures in parentheses are based on 25-49 unweighted cases.