
"Hooking up" among college students: Demographic and psychosocial correlates. Archives of Sexual Behavior

ABSTRACT

This study investigated 832 college students’ experiences with hooking up, a term that refers to a range of physically intimate behavior (e.g., passionate kissing, oral sex, and intercourse) that occurs outside of a committed relationship. Specifically, we examined how five demographic variables (sex, ethnicity, parental income, parental divorce, and religiosity) and six psychosocial factors (e.g., attachment styles, alcohol use, psychological well-being, attitudes about hooking up, and perceptions of the family environment) related to whether individuals had hooked up in the past year. Results showed that similar proportions of men and women had hooked up but students of color were less likely to hook up than Caucasian students. More alcohol use, more favorable attitudes toward hooking up, and higher parental income were associated with a higher likelihood of having hooked up at least once in the past year. Positive, ambivalent, and negative emotional reactions to the hooking up experience(s) were also examined. Women were less likely to report that hooking up was a positive emotional experience than men. Young adults who reported negative and ambivalent emotional reactions to hooking up also reported lower psychological well-being and less favorable attitudes toward hooking up as compared to students who reported a positive hooking up experience. Based on these findings, suggestions for psychoeducational programming are offered. Additionally, directions for future research are provided.