Peer groups, dating, sex, emotions and mental health

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The “Juno Effect?” Mass Media and the Sexual Socialization of Adolescents  
By Jane Brown

In the past year the news media have been full of stories about teen pregnancy: the supposed pregnancy pact among girls in a Massachusetts high school, TV star Jamie Lynn Spears’ pregnancy, and then vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin’s daughter’s pregnancy. Some media commentators even dubbed the phenomenon the “Juno effect” suggesting that the movie Juno that featured a teen pregnancy had encouraged viewers to follow suit.

Some lauded the cultural move as providing an opportunity for more open discussion about a problem that still plagues the United States. Others, me included, lamented that the conversation lacked key elements, such as questions about the role of love, relationships, and contraceptives in young sexual relationships.

For the past couple of decades my research has focused on the role the media play in the sexual socialization of adolescents. I have argued that in the context of a culture in which parents are still reluctant to talk with their children about sexual values, many schools are limited to teaching only about abstinence until marriage, and religions that say only that sex is a sin, the media have become powerful sex educators. This is not a good trend, however, because media depictions of sexual behavior rarely include the three C’s – Commitment, Contraceptives or Consequences (Hust, Brown, & L’Engle, 2008).

Research evidence is accumulating that the media do play a role in adolescents’ sexual socialization, although probably not as uniformly as the “Juno effect” hypothesis would suggest. In the past five years, a number of new longitudinal studies that were funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development have (continued on page 9)

Student Involvement at EARA  
By Laura Wray-Lake

Torino, Italy is a beautiful city at the base of the Alps and was a spectacular location for the most recent EARA conference. Birthplace of the Fiat car and home to the Shroud of Turin, the city offered lively plazas, quaint cafes, interesting museums and palaces, and all the espresso and gelato one could ever want.

But there was more than just beautiful scenery, excellent cuisine, and rich historical sites at the XIth biennial meeting of the European Association for Research on Adolescence (EARA). The conference agenda featured presentations from internationally-recognized scholars on a range of topics that furthered our knowledge of adolescents. Participants in this conference examined adolescents in the diverse contexts of Europe and other parts of the world.

One of the most inspiring aspects of the conference, from my perspective, was the amount of involvement from the EARA Student Union. The EARA Student Union is an organization of student members of EARA that fosters conversation and collaborations between students across countries in Europe. They achieve these interactions through a website, newsletters, and EARA student meetings at conferences. Involvement of Student Union members was notable in three main areas: giving poster awards, hosting a student dinner, and convening a student meeting.

First, elected representatives of the Student Union oversaw the process of giving awards to the best posters presented at the meeting. Poster sessions took place once each day of the conference, and student representatives assembled a team of reviewers to survey the posters and (continued on page 11)
Greetings! It is an honor and pleasure to serve as a newly elected student representative on the Society for Research on Adolescence’s (SRA) Membership Committee under the leadership of Lorah Dorn, PhD. As an introduction to the SRA community I would like to highlight my academic and research background with the intent to build networks and connect with those who share similar interests, share my experience with SRA as a public health social work doctoral student, and describe what I hope to gain from and contribute to the SRA community.

Professionally, my career has been primarily in the area of reproductive and sexual health. Whether in the past as a research associate, program manager, volunteer, consultant or USAID Global Health Fellow intern, I am committed to a global health perspective, with an emphasis on adolescent development, socio-cultural contexts, immigrant communities, and psychosocial phenomena.

**Academic and Research Background**

My first formal introduction to research was as an undergraduate Minority International Research Training fellow at the University of Michigan. I traveled from my home in The Bahamas to undertake undergraduate studies in Ann Arbor, Michigan, which was quite a transition. This was an opportunity coordinated by the Center for Human Growth and Development at the University of Michigan, funded by Fogarty International and the National Institutes of Health. My research centered around the impact of stress on maternal health and parent-child communication among a population of Chinese elementary students living with schizophrenia.

My academic and research journey continued with my entry into graduate school. I obtained Masters degrees in Public Health and Social Work at the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor, MI). At this juncture I was able to integrate my knowledge of adolescent reproductive and sexual health with concepts of the health behavior model, the ecological framework, and the role of culture in context as it relates to the status of and expectations for adolescent behavior from their families, communities, and larger societies.

As part of my public health field placement I was selected to study in South Africa as a Moody Scholar with the University of Cape Town’s Child Health Policy Institute and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), located in Western Cape, South Africa. At IPPF I conducted a Photovoice-based project under the guidance of Carolyn Wang with adolescents living in the three townships of Gugulethu, Kayelitsha, and New Crossroads. Using the medium of photographs to communicate their concerns, we explored adolescents’ health issues. The concept of “Photovoice” developed by Carolyn Wang and Mary Ann Burris, utilizes the medium of photographs as assessment and action tools for communities to describe their environments, and this project became my introduction to participatory action research.

After working in the field for a few years on matters of health communication, contraceptive access, and service delivery improvement with Advocates for Youth in Washington, DC, I returned to graduate school at Howard University School of Social Work. My time has involved diverse experiences, and all of them have enriched my development as a researcher and future faculty member. I have worked with Dr. Fariyal Ross-Sheriff on research related to the topics of acculturation, adolescent socialization, and risk-taking behavior among immigrant adolescents. Also, I have been involved with research related to international social work and fetal alcohol syndrome in South Africa with Cudore L. Snell, DSW (Dean of the School of Social Work). As the project manager and research associate for the International Sexuality Mental Health Research Project at Howard University with principal investigator Dr. Kamilah Majied, I helped in the development and management of this mixed method study. We examined and explored the extent to which racism and oppression based on sexual orientation have had negative impacts on mental health and social functioning among Black lesbian, gays, bisexual, and transgender populations in the African Diaspora.
Planning has begun for the Biennial Meeting in 2010—March 11-13 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The invited program has been outlined, with a focus on diversity in subject areas, disciplines, and presenters’ backgrounds. We have had considerable input – from Reed Larson, SRA President, SRA Executive Council members including student representatives, and other SRA members who heard that we were organizing and sought us out to give input. By late spring the invited program will be in place and you will receive notification of the submission deadlines and submission website opening date.

It is never too early to begin thinking about the Biennial Meeting. We encourage you to discuss submission ideas with scholars from fields not typically represented at SRA, and widely share information about the conference.

We will try several new things this year. First, in the review process, we will have a new option: We will be inviting student/mentor reviews. Mentors and students who both are members of SRA will have the option of jointly joining review panels, and jointly reviewing submissions. Consider pairing up with a mentor or a student now and watch for instructions in the Biennial Meeting announcements.

The second new option is the new website tool, the “Symposium Assistant.” It is designed to help people connect with others about symposia topics. Paper, poster, or symposium topics can be posted on a searchable website to encourage connections and collaboration in Biennial Meeting submissions. Watch the SRA website, newsletter, and monthly E-News for more details.

In the coming months we will be seeking scholars to lead pre-meeting workshops. If you have a suggestion for a topic, please email us. This year we plan statistical methods workshops, as well as at least one workshop that focuses on a qualitative method. Suggestions are welcome.

We look forward to seeing you in Philadelphia!

Attention Symposium Organizers!

For 2010 SRA will offer a new website, “Symposium Assistant,” to help you connect with people interested in submitting symposia for the 2010 SRA Biennial Meeting in Philadelphia, March 11-13. Use of this website is entirely optional; however, from the inaugural launch of this website in 2008 we learned that the more people who use the website, the more rewarding the functionality is for everyone. Watch the SRA website for a link to this new website in the spring of 2009.

What you can do on the Symposium Assistant website:

1. A chair may list components of an incomplete symposium and indicate what he/she is looking for to complete it.
2. An author may post a paper, poster, or topic that he/she would like to be included in a submitted symposium;
3. A person may nominate him or herself to serve as a discussant for a symposium;
4. A chair may contact individual authors and discussants and invite them to join his/her symposium.
5. An author of a posted paper, poster, or topic may contact the chair of a symposium he/she is interested in joining;
6. A potential discussant may contact the chair of a symposium to discuss the possibility of joining that symposium;
7. By posting a paper, poster, or topic, you may find others who are seeking to join a symposium on a similar topic. The Symposium Assistant can help you find each other and form a symposium.

A CV or biosketch is required for authors/discussants to acquaint others with your backgrounds and research focuses.

Search engines are available to help

- Chairs find papers, posters, topics, and discussants to complete their symposia and
- Authors and discussants find posted symposia that could include their posted papers or posters.

SRA will not monitor or intercede in communications among users of this website.
**In Memoriam: Stuart Hauser (1938-2008)**

Stuart T. Hauser, M.D., Ph.D., former President of the Society for Research on Adolescence (1996-1998), died this summer at the age of 70, following a brief battle with cancer of the esophagus.

Stuart Theodore Hauser was born and grew up in the Bronx and graduated from the Bronx High School of Science. His education largely reflects his breadth of interests and his ‘Renaissance Man’ approach to understanding the social condition. Dr. Hauser attended Antioch College in Ohio and graduated with a double major in philosophy and physics. He received his master’s degree in social anthropology from Harvard and then went on to Yale where he received his medical degree. Finally, he returned to Harvard where he received his doctorate in psychology and to the Boston Psychoanalytic Institute where he received training as a psychoanalyst.

Dr. Hauser began working at the Massachusetts Mental Health Center (an affiliate of Harvard Medical School) in the 1970s where he remained until he became director of the Judge Baker Children’s Center in Boston in 1993. He served in that position until 2004, and after that time he held several visiting professor positions internationally.

Dr. Hauser is known for the wide range of his scholarly writings, from an early book, *Black and White Identity Formation* to his best known work following a sample of adolescents from high- and low-risk backgrounds from age 14 well into middle age. This work led to many published articles as well as to a book, *Out of the Woods: Tales of Resilient Teens*, published in 2006.

Dr. Hauser was also known for his work on the Clinical Research Training Program at Harvard over several decades and was responsible for mentoring many prominent researchers in the field of adolescent and adult development.

Dr. Hauser’s colleagues remember him as an enormously open-minded, thoughtful, creative, and generative colleague who saw opportunity and adventure wherever he looked and imbued this spirit in those around him. Dr. Hauser is survived by his wife, Barbara, his sons Joshua and Ethan, and a grandson and granddaughter.

*Written by Joesph Allen*

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**Announcements**

**JRA Pre-Published Articles Now Available**

NEW! The Society for Research on Adolescence (SRA) is pleased to announce that pre-published articles are now available on the Journal of Research on Adolescence (JRA) publication website. These are unedited versions of the articles and may differ slightly from the published versions. The articles are copyrighted and may be cited as in press, but may not be quoted without permission. Articles may be copied for class use.

Please note SRA subscribes to journal practices concerning the release of information by using an official “embargo date.” An embargo means that no journalist can ethically release a story based on an article until that time (when the journal reaches print).

To view the pre-published articles, please visit the SRA website at [http://www.s-r-a.org/jra.html](http://www.s-r-a.org/jra.html). For more information, please contact the journal office at jra@s-r-a.org.

**Call for Study Group Proposals**

The Society for Research on Adolescence invites proposals for Study Groups focusing on new conceptual, empirical, methodological, and professional issues within the study of adolescence. SRA members with common interests in emerging, cutting-edge issues or theoretical perspectives are encouraged to apply for SRA Study Group status. Established study groups may request up to $4,000 as seed money to support their work. The deadline for consideration is June 1, 2009.

SRA members interested in submitting Study Group proposals should refer to the SRA Study Groups Committee Policies and Procedures located at [http://www.s-r-a.org/documents/miscellaneous/studygroup_policies.pdf](http://www.s-r-a.org/documents/miscellaneous/studygroup_policies.pdf) for details concerning application. If you have questions after having consulted the guidelines, please contact Melanie Zimmer-Gembeck at m.zimmer-gembeck@griffith.edu.au.
Young Scholar Opportunity

The 2009 Summer School of the European Association for Research on Adolescence (EARA) and the Society for Research on Adolescence (SRA)

Summer Schools are training grounds for young scholars interested in adolescent development. Since 2001, the European Association for Research on Adolescence (EARA) has hosted summer schools to train young researchers. The first summer school took place in Chebrex, Switzerland, the subsequent ones at Marbach castle, Germany in 2003, Antalya, Turkey in 2006, and Turin, Italy in 2008. The summer school is now jointly sponsored by EARA and the Society for Research on Adolescence (SRA), and we are planning the 2009 summer school to be held at The University of British Columbia (Point Grey campus in Vancouver), June 1st to June 6th.

The summer schools have given students enthusiasm to search for scientific guidance outside of the borders of their countries and the walls of their universities. Some of the senior researchers who will be participating in the Vancouver summer school are Xiaojia Ge, Reed Larson, Margaret Kerr, Shelley Hymel, and Lisa Diamond.

The Vancouver Summer School
The Summer School will cover 5 working days and will offer two types of educational experiences to the doctoral students attending. Specifically, students will:

- learn about different content areas of adolescent research. Each of 10 leading senior researchers will give a presentation in his or her area of expertise. Senior researchers are selected to represent diverse areas of research on adolescents – basic research in various areas and research on prevention and intervention.
- receive feedback and advice about their own research. Students will present their own dissertation research and receive feedback from senior researchers and other students. Counseling will be adjusted to the specific needs of the students involved. The daily work, meals, and recreation schedule will be planned to allow maximum interaction between students and senior researchers.

Students who are members of EARA or SRA are eligible to apply. A total of 24-30 doctoral students will be selected. Selection will be based on applicants’ academic records, research experience, letters of recommendation, and overall evidence of scientific aptitude and competence. We will also aim to have the different regions of Europe and the Americas represented. Students will receive travel subsidies, and accommodations at Vancouver will be free.

Finally, a word about the site for the Summer School. The University of British Columbia is on a peninsula surrounded by protected temperate rain forest and views of the coastal mountains. Beaches and hiking trails are nearby as well as the renowned Museum of Anthropology. The city of Vancouver is spectacular in June with gardens in full bloom. It is a great place to work and play.

HOW DO YOU APPLY?
Include the following:
1. your curriculum vitae
2. a short description of your dissertation topic and progress so far (1-2 pages double spaced). Students must have dissertation planning or work underway.
3. a recommendation letter from your supervisor. The supervisor should send the letter directly to Sheila Marshall (Sheila.Marshall@ubc.ca; letter as an attachment to their email).

Send this information before January 30, 2009 to Sheila Marshall (Sheila.Marshall@ubc.ca). The applications will be evaluated by two senior members of EARA or SRA. Notification of acceptance will be given February 13th, 2009.
A Personal Journey
By Doreen Rosenthal

Why do adolescents behave the way they do? What makes a sunny, well-balanced child turn into a surly, unpredictable teenager? These and other questions engaged my mind as a mother of pre-adolescents contemplating their emergence into what is commonly portrayed as a particularly difficult stage of life. At the same time, in the mid 1960s, I became an undergraduate student of psychology. The Department of Psychology at The University of Melbourne, like its counterparts in other parts of Australia, had a strong emphasis on developmental psychology, but the focus had been exclusively on infants and young children. At that time, more than four decades ago, the theory and work of Jean Piaget was particularly influential and engaging, and so it was that my interests leaned towards cognitive development.

I was fortunate that my entry into the honors year coincided with the appointment of Dr. Susan Somerville (later, after her move to the USA, to become editor of Child Development). Sue had worked on Piaget’s theory of adolescent reasoning and, as supervisor for both my honors thesis and my PhD, she took me by the hand and led me through the arcane binary propositions underpinning Piaget’s account of the formal operational reasoning that he postulated characterized adolescents’ cognitive development. It was exciting and innovative work. Very few researchers in Australia or elsewhere had examined this stage of cognition at the time, and I was able to show that many of Piaget’s ideas about the shift to abstract, logical thinking were correct.

On my appointment to a university position, I developed and taught the first course in adolescent development in an Australian university. In researching material for this course, I became interested in understanding how young people achieved a sense of self identity. Erikson, of course, had written eloquently about the psychosocial stages of development, but there had been little attempt to operationalise and validate these stages. Together with colleagues, I developed an inventory for assessing adolescents’ identity status, the Erikson Psychosocial Stage Inventory or EPSI (Rosenthal, Gurney, & Moore, 1981). Now nearly 30 years old, the EPSI is still being used, and I have responded to more than 500 requests to use it. It seems fated to be my most cited endeavor even though I have long since moved on to other aspects of adolescence.

Soon my interest in identity evolved into a concern for the wellbeing of young people in this country whose parents had been immigrants of non-English speaking background.

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My program of research is concentrated on the interface of peer and family relationships, self-system processes and mental health. Not only are these my research interests, but they are interests that impact upon my work and personal life in many ways. They influence my relationships with others, my interests in mentoring and collaborative research, and my family and friendships.

I work as an Associate Professor in the School of Psychology at Griffith University, Gold Coast campus, Queensland. I also maintain a position as an Adjunct Faculty Member in the Oregon Evidence-based Practice Center at Oregon Health & Sciences University, USA. Because Australia is a large country with a small population, there are federal and state priorities that influence funding, and these often guide research directions. One area of high priority in Australia is optimum health and health care, including improving mental health. This means that it is common for researchers to combine basic research with applied research and community involvement. For me, this has been a natural blend, because I concentrate my research on theoretical processes underlying child and adolescent mental health (i.e., stress and the development of coping, emotion regulation, attachment, social relationships, and self-determination) in connection with real-world applications such as educational engagement and vocational development.

I am probably best known for my research on dating, couple relationships, sexuality and sexual behavior, with a predominant interest in girls and young women. This emphasis began with my dissertation research on adolescent females’ peer group relationships at the time of the emergence of dating and romance. Living in Australia has given me unique opportunities for research on dating and sexual behavior. Although this topic is sensitive in any context, we have found that schools are supportive of our need to ask personal questions, and we have had little trouble in developing a strong base of support from parents and school personnel.

Most recently, I have collaborated with others to study the daily social and emotional correlates of maltreatment by dating partners, and the role of rejection sensitivity and commitment in understanding the association between romantic relationships and depressive symptoms (e.g., Gallaty & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2008). Sexual subjectivity, defined as sexual self-conceptions of sexual body-esteem, beliefs about personal sexual desire and pleasure, and the capacity to engage in sexual self-reflection, is another current direction for research. I am currently conducting a longitudinal study of females’ development of sexual subjectivity within romantic relationships.

Together with colleagues, I also have completed other studies on sexual behavior in recent years. In one 16-year longitudinal study we differentiated the correlates of high- and low-risk sexual behavior at age 16 (see Zimmer-Gembeck & Helfand, 2008). In another study, we examined pubertal timing, dating and alcohol use during early and middle adolescence as correlates of patterns of sexual partnering into early adulthood (Zimmer-Gembeck & Collins, 2008). Over the last couple of years, my house and office have been littered with papers on sexual behavior while I completed a systematic review of longitudinal studies on the onset of sexual intercourse (Zimmer-Gembeck & Helfand).

Another longitudinal study recently completed in my lab was focused on adolescents’ peer relationships, depression, anxiety, and relational aggression. In the area of depressive symptomatology, one of my recent publications revealed that adolescents’ perceived social acceptance is a direct correlate of depressive symptoms and a mediator between peer dislike and self-reported depressive symptoms. Most importantly, the discrepancy between actual and perceived peer acceptance is even more relevant to understanding children’s depressive symptoms. Early adolescents who perceived low acceptance or underestimated their acceptance were relatively more depressed, and perception, rather than actual dislike by classmates, was most directly linked to children’s functioning. In a longitudinal follow-up to this study, it was depressive symptom level that was associated with declines in positive perceptions of peers over time rather than the converse (Zimmer-Gembeck, Hunter, Waters, & Pronk, 2008, in press). (continued on page 14)
Netball, cricket, and surf-lifesaving were new to me, but band, choir and dance felt familiar. In collaboration with my students at Murdoch University, and with Jacque Eccles at the University of Michigan, I have launched an Australian research program on adolescent involvement in extracurricular activities: the Youth Activity Participation Study – Western Australia (YAPS-WA). In the process, I have realized how much more I’d like to know about Australian adolescent leisure time use. After studying a cohort of adolescents/young adults in Michigan in collaboration with Jacque Eccles for 20 years (e.g., Eccles & Barber, 1999; Barber, Eccles, & Stone, 2001), I pulled up stakes from the University of Arizona and moved to Perth, Western Australia in 2004. At Murdoch University, I found a small cohort of psychology students interested in adolescent development, and in particular, in activity involvement and well-being. Our collaborations started in their honors (4th) year (e.g., Abbott & Barber, 2007) and have continued into their PhD research (Barber, Abbott, Blomfield, & Eccles, in press).

Relative to the US and UK, there has been a clear gap in knowledge about activity participation in Australia, and how that participation relates to positive development in Australian youth. Research on adolescent extracurricular participation in Australia is relatively rare and is predominantly descriptive in nature. From my students, I learned that activities are distributed differently in Australia than in the US, where most of the published activity research has been conducted.

Sport participation, for example, can occur through community clubs, school teams, or both. The community plays a much larger role in such activities here than in the US, and we do not know whether the non-school sports have the same, fewer, or more benefits than school-based sports. In terms of the developmental properties of interest to our research, key differences exist between community- and school-based participation. For example, for one proposed mediator in our study – connection to caring adults – having coaches who are parents of teens’ friends rather than teachers at school can result in a rich local network of families that join together in a community activity. Alternately, given their personal investment in their own child’s outcomes, such coaches may pressure their athletes and push the competitive aspects more than school-based adults. Some school sport participation benefits found in US studies may not be as pronounced for these club sport participants. However, less health-risking behavior, or a deeper sense of community belonging, may result from having a larger, better-connected group of adults watching out for youth. We are able to test this idea more readily in Western Australia than in the US given the different distributions of activities.

We have obtained funds from the Australian Research Council for YAPS-WA, and we are in the second year of data collection. The project investigates the importance of organized activity participation for healthy development during the high school years. We are examining the role of such activities in patterns of change over time in school attachment, identity and self-concept, body image, risk behavior, and psychological adjustment. Three PhD students are collecting their thesis data as part of the larger project: Bree Abbott, Corey Blomfield, and Keri Ann Reid.

The Western Australian context has presented some challenges for conducting the study. The distribution of students across the government and private school systems is quite different in Western Australia compared to the American settings in which I have previously worked. With approximately 40% of students in non-government schools (Catholic or Independent), we have recruited our participants from across those systems, and included both Perth metropolitan and more remote regional school districts to more fully represent students in the state. To accomplish this, 33 high schools have been included. Our schools are spread around the state, with some of the regional schools being 600-900 kilometers from Perth (and 2-lane highways, populated by kangaroos and emus at night, (continued on page 15)
I was principal investigator for the Teen Media study (www.teenmedia.unc.edu) that surveyed more than 1,000 adolescents when they were 12 to 14 years old and again when they were 14 to 16 years old. For each teen at baseline we calculated a Sexual Media Diet measure based on the frequency with which each teen watched, listened to or read about sexual content in four media (television, music, movies, and magazines). We found, after controlling for many other factors that might influence early sexual behavior, that white teens who had heavier Sexual Media Diets in early adolescence were more than twice as likely to have had sexual intercourse two years later (Brown, L’Engle, Pardun, Guo, Kenneavy, & Jackson, 2006). Two other longitudinal studies with adolescents have documented similar patterns for exposure to sexual content on television (Ashby, Arcari, Edmonson, 2006; Collins, Elliott & Berry, et al. 2004) as well as for exposure to sexually degrading music lyrics (Martino, Collins, Elliott, Strachman, Kanouse, & Berry, 2006).

Although in the Teen Media study the initial associations between sexual media exposure and sexual outcomes were similar for African-American youth, the patterns were not statistically significant after controls for parental and peer expectations were introduced. For African-American adolescents’ sexual behavior, parents, and peers may be more influential than the media in either pushing toward or guarding against early sexual behavior. It may also be that the media’s influence occurs earlier for some youth, especially for those who mature earlier. In other analyses we’ve found that early maturing girls were more interested in sexually-oriented media than girls who matured later (Brown, Halpern, & L’Engle, 2005).

As with any study that doesn’t include random assignment to treatment, we cannot conclude with certainty from these longitudinal studies that the media are causal factors in early sexual behavior. It is certainly likely that as youth mature physically and are more interested in sexual feelings and behavior they will seek information and images that help them understand what is happening. Some of what a teen learns may then be incorporated into his/her own sense of sexual self and may affect subsequent sexual behavior. But some of what is seen or heard may also be critiqued or resisted in light of existing information and values. The Media Practice Model (Steele, 1999; Steele & Brown, 1995) that guides our research program, in fact, assumes that differential selection is a part of the process of media effects.

To illustrate how varied the use of media as sexual socialization agents may be we used cluster analysis of the Teen Media sample to identify four sexual self-concept types that cut across gender and race in early adolescence (12 to 14 years old) (L’Engle, Brown, Romocki, & Kenneavy, 2007). We found that:

**Virgin Valedictorians** were the least likely to have had sexual intercourse in early adolescence. These teens paid the least attention to, and were the most critical of, the media they did use.

**Curious Conservatives** were heavy users of media, especially music and magazines, and strongly identified with the teen characters on television and in magazines. These adolescents had low intentions to have sex, but were interested and knowledgeable about sexual health (e.g., knew that condoms were effective in preventing sexually transmitted diseases).

**Silent Susceptibles** were critical of mainstream media, but used the Internet and played video games frequently. They wanted to engage in sexual behavior but had little sexual health knowledge.

**Sexual Sophisticates** loved the media and used different kinds frequently. They were the most likely to identify with and wish to be like media characters. Moderately knowledgeable about sexual health, they were the most likely to have had sexual intercourse.

These variable patterns of media use and sexual behavior among early adolescents suggest that media effects will be different depending on the adolescents’ orientation to the media, current sexual development and behavior, as well as other factors in their lives.

The clusters also suggest that if we wanted to help young people live healthier sexual lives, we would craft information and messages differently depending on where young people already are. The Silent Sus-
(continued from page 9)

ccepts, for instance, may need more information about contraceptives. The Curious Conservatives and Sexual Sophisticates might benefit from media literacy education that could help them develop more critical media use skills.

More research is needed now to learn more about who chooses what kinds of content, who is most affected by what is seen and heard, and what kinds of factors reduce or enhance the power of the media as sexual socialization agents. We also need to learn more about the role new media forms such as the Internet, social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, MySpace), and text messaging play in the sexual lives of adolescents. These new media forms provide unprecedented opportunity for customization, interactivity, and access to all kinds of content. On the one hand, the new communication technologies provide new opportunities for young people to try on identities, to express themselves, and to find others who share their interests, without geographical limitations. On the other hand, the new media may reduce privacy, and increase exposure to unhealthy sexual content.

We found in the Teen Media study, for example, that two-thirds (66%) of 7th and 8th grade males and more than one-third (39%) of females had seen at least one form of sexually explicit media/pornography in magazines, movies or on the Internet in the past year. Longitudinal analyses showed that early exposure to pornographic material predicted less progressive gender role attitudes, and having oral sex and sexual intercourse two years later (Brown & L’Engle, in press). Similar longitudinal studies of adolescents in the Netherlands suggest that more frequent exposure to sexually explicit Internet material is associated with greater sexual uncertainty and more positive attitudes toward uncommitted sexual exploration (i.e., sexual relations with casual partners/friends or with sexual partners in one-night stands) (Peter & Valkenburg, 2008).

In short, the media are probably not as powerful as the Juno effect hypothesis would suggest, but they do play an important role in at least some adolescents’ sexual development. As the media become even more under the control of young users, it is incumbent on those of us interested in healthy adolescent development to pay attention to what the media are saying and what adolescents are learning about sex from the media.

References


Student Involvement at EARA (continued)

(continued from page 1)

decide on one winner for each session. This activity seemed like an excellent way to reward students and new professionals for outstanding research and presentation of their work.

Second, the EARA Student Union hosted a popular and well-attended student dinner. At least 50 students and young professionals took part in this event. We enjoyed the meal in true Italian style, savoring appetizers, gourmet pizza, and desserts with wine along with several hours of dinner conversation. The student dinner built camaraderie and community between students and young professionals from Europe and around the world.

Last but not least, the EARA Student Union meeting in Torino was a gathering with the purpose of exchanging ideas among students, holding student elections, and mapping out an agenda for the group. SRA emerging scholars can significantly benefit from adopting this model. In fact, we already have: The Emerging Scholars Community meeting held during the 2008 SRA conference in Chicago was modeled after the EARA Student Union meeting.

A prominent agenda item at the EARA Student Union meeting was the EARA/SRA partnership. EARA students and young professionals are eager to continue cultivating the relationship between the two organizations. Recently, both organizations have instituted conference registration/membership discounts for the other organization’s student members. EARA and SRA are now jointly sponsoring a summer school to give students intense training in adolescent development, feedback on research projects, and networking opportunities with senior scholars. The first jointly sponsored EARA-SRA summer school took place in Torino, Italy prior to the XIth EARA meeting.

Twenty-five students attended the 2008 summer school in Torino, and many of these students sent in reactions to their experience to SRA. Please visit the SRA website to view students’ comments and photos from the Torino summer school (www.s-r-a.org). The students overwhelmingly endorsed the summer school as a meaningful learning experience and incredible professional opportunity for students. The next EARA-SRA summer school will be held in Vancouver in June, 2009.

Students should consider applying to the next EARA-SRA summer school – you won’t want to miss this opportunity! SRA Students and Emerging Scholars: I encourage you to attend a biennial EARA meeting – it is a wonderful learning experience! The next conference is in May 2010 in Vilnius, Lithuania.

I want to extend my appreciation to the EARA students for their warm hospitality and the enjoyable interactions I had with them during the EARA conference: Thank you for the stimulating academic and social conversations! We discussed several ideas for strengthening the links between SRA/EARA through student activities and collaborations. Samantha Dockray and I look forward to working towards a stronger partnership with EARA students in the future.

Links of Interest:
EARA Student Union http://www.eara-student-union.tk/
EARA Page http://www.earaonline.org/
SRA Student Page http://s-r-a.org/student.html

Photo Caption:
Some of the incoming, outgoing, and current EARA and SRA Student Representatives gather at the EARA conference in Torino. From left to right, Laura Wray-Lake (The Pennsylvania State University), Jenny Symonds (Cambridge University, UK), Tina Kretschmer (Sussex University, UK), Irene De Goede (Utrecht University, the Netherlands), Olga Solomontes-Kontouri (University of London, UK), Peter Titzmann (University of Jena, Germany), and Zena Mello (University of California, Berkeley).
Spotlight on International Researchers (Rosenthal continued)

ground. Australia is one of the most multi-ethnic countries in the world, with a long history of immigration, yet we had paid little attention to how these immigrants fared. My interest in this topic brought me into contact with another Australian-born researcher, long resident in the USA. During a period of study leave at Stanford University, Dr Shirley Feldman and I developed a joint research program. Given the very different circumstances in which young Chinese-Australians and Chinese-Americans found themselves, we expected greater differences in adaptation and ethnic identity than we found (see, for example, Rosenthal & Feldman, 1992; Feldman, Rosenthal, Mont-Reynaud, Leung, & Lau, 1991).

One welcome outcome of my early work with Shirley was an introduction to the fledgling Society of Research on Adolescence and its annual conference. I became a keen conference attendee, starting with, I think, the conference in Alexandria, Virginia. The SRA conferences gave me the opportunity to meet key researchers in the field, hear straight from the proverbial ‘horse’s mouth’ where research was heading, what ideas had currency and, generally speaking, to create international networks – especially valuable at a time when there were so few researchers in Australia who were interested in adolescent research. After a few biennial meetings, I was invited on to the International Committee of the Society and subsequently, as Chair of that committee, to spend four years as a member of Council. I valued greatly the opportunity to take part in the Council’s decision-making and to advocate strongly for the encouragement and inclusion of international researchers both at the conference and as authors of papers in the Society’s prestigious journal.

Meanwhile, life in Melbourne had taken yet another new turn. It was the late 1980s and the threat of HIV/AIDS began to be a major public health concern, with a particular focus on preventing an epidemic in Australia through appropriately targeted health promotion campaigns. Because young people were seen to be a key target group, I became involved, together with a long-time colleague, Dr Susan Moore, in gathering solid data on young people’s sexual practices. Without realising it, I had set off on what was to be my last shift in research.

Of course every textbook highlights adolescent sexuality as a key developmental issue, but this important and intriguing topic had been little theorized and even less researched up to this point. HIV/AIDS proved to be a powerful stimulus for change in this respect. My research activities from this period until my recent retirement (and beyond) have largely concentrated on adolescent sexuality and sexual health, particularly with marginalized and vulnerable groups.

My interest in HIV/AIDS prevention led to a collaboration with Dr Mary-Jane Rotheram Borus of UCLA. Our shared expertise in adolescent sexuality and risk-taking among marginalized groups led to a 5-year collaborative project following the pathways into and through homelessness of young people in Los Angeles and Melbourne. This extremely successful project has resulted in key policy and practice changes in youth homelessness in Victoria, as well as some 25 papers in scholarly journals (see, for example, Mallett, Rosenthal, Myers, Milburn, & Rotheram-Borus, 2004; Rosenthal, Mallett, Milburn, & Rotheram-Borus, 2008).

The move into public health has been vital to recognizing that research outcomes need to be brought to the attention of those who can use them for the benefit of the population researched. As a member of key national and State advisory committees that provide policy advice to relevant Ministers, I played an active part in helping to shape Australia’s HIV/AIDS policies. As director of the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, I developed a unique ‘research into practice’ model by means of which community groups were involved in the planning of research and its dissemination. Also, I have worked in many ways to provide sexual health information to young people, including writing booklets, contributing to a school sex education program, and creating two award-winning web sites (www.thehormonfactory.com and www.yoursexhealth.org).

Now, in retirement, I have had time to reflect on my career trajectory with its many twists and turns. I have loved contributing to a deeper understanding of young people; I have railed against the stereotype of young people as being ‘bad’ and ‘difficult’; I am proud of my contribution to the sexual health and wellbeing of young people; and I cherish the connections I have made with like-minded

(continued on page 13)
fit in the SRA community? Just fine! During the 2008 Biennial SRA Conference in Chicago, Illinois I had the opportunity to present my poster titled, “Good girls don’t get pregnant again: Repeat pregnancy and the role of culture and sexuality among adolescents in The Bahamas”. I proposed a conceptual framework and research design utilizing the ecological framework, sexual scripts, and the Eriksonian stages of psychological development for the study of repeat pregnancy among currently pregnant adolescents in The Bahamas. According to the United Nations Children’s Fund, in Latin America and the Caribbean region adolescent pregnancy continues to be a serious concern because of the link to poverty and vulnerability that young mothers and their children face.

At the conference, outside of presenting my research, I got involved by volunteering. Giving of my time gave me the opportunity not only to meet other students and emerging scholars, but also to learn more about the latest issues related to adolescent research. I was also able to participate in the “Meet the Scientist” luncheon which featured Dr. Stephen Russell. The meeting with Dr. Russell was invaluable to me because it facilitated my thinking about the conceptualization of my dissertation research proposal. The opportunity to act as a guest reviewer for the Journal of Adolescent Research with Editor Jeffrey Jensen Arnett, PhD and joining networks such as the Emerging Adulthood listserv keep me informed about upcoming meeting and conferences, and foster networking across the many sub-disciplines of the Society for Research on Adolescence community.

My hopes for the future
My current dissertation research, under the guidance of my advisor Ruby Gourdine, DSW, focuses on exploring the experiences of pregnancy among first-time, unwed pregnant adolescents in The Bahamas. I am excited to do this research because of the hopes of contributing to the gap in research literature on experiences of pregnancy among adolescents in the English-speaking Caribbean, and the implications for health and mental health service delivery, girls’ education, and adolescent health policy.

In my role as student representative with the Society for Research on Adolescence membership committee, I plan to contribute to the development of strategies to engage students and scholars from multiple disciplines, including social work and public health, conduct outreach to the graduate student community for continued engagement with SRA, and address the needs of current members. I hope that my global perspective and international research experiences will help inform ways to connect and network with colleagues worldwide. I offer my commitment to adolescent research, my willingness to learn, and my enthusiasm to work with peers and others on the promotion of adolescent research.

I look forward to reuniting with friends and colleagues and making new ones at the upcoming SRA Biennial conference in Philadelphia, PA in 2010. See you there!

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Spotlight on International Researchers
(Rosenthal continued)

scholars. Have I answered the questions I had nearly four decades ago? I think not, but I have been grateful for the opportunity to at least scratch the surface. I don’t think I’ve finished yet; I can’t imagine losing interest in adolescence - this vibrant, puzzling and challenging stage of life. E-mail: d.rosenthal@unimelb.edu.au

References
One of the surprising findings from our research with students in grades 5 to 10 was the lack of a gender difference in depressive symptoms even after grade 7. In fact, in one of our studies we found that young boys reported more depressive symptoms than girls. North American data are widely cited as illustrating the increase in depressive symptoms among adolescent girls, which is thought to account for the higher rates of clinical depression among females compared to males. Conducting similar research in another Western context is presenting a unique opportunity to understand national differences and the potential social correlates of different developmental patterns.

Queensland Australia is known as a holiday destination; Brisbane is often referred to as BrisVegas and surfing, skating, skiing, wakeboarding, scuba, snorkeling and swimming are just about prerequisites for living in Queensland. I love the beach culture and living here is both a lifestyle and a career choice. However, I am sorry to say that sometimes my beach time suffers (except in the summer!) because time is devoted to research management and supervision. Most recently this is because of my role as the Director of the Psychological Health Research Unit (PHRU) within the Institute of Health & Medical Research.

In Australia, there is a shortage of mental health workers, including clinical psychologists, and a priority has been placed on training more skilled professionals. Some of my own research is only possible with collaboration from clinical psychologists or other practitioners. This research includes opportunities for training in prevention and intervention. For example, in addition to serving as the Director of the PHRU, I direct the Family Interaction Program, which is a centre for developing and evaluating innovative interventions for children, adolescents and their families. Although I bypassed clinical training, choosing instead to concentrate on developmental psychology, I depend on collaborations with clinicians from many disciplines. For example, colleagues from the medical and biological sciences have been critical to one of our current longitudinal studies in which we are investigating pregnant women’s stress reactivity and infants’ reactivity and attachment in their first years of life.

The primary objective of the Family Interaction Program is to guide policy for children, adolescents and families by examining what is known about prevention efficacy. In this vein, we often conduct intervention trials and systematic reviews of the literature. Most recently, we have reviewed the literature on Parent-Child Interaction Therapy and the Positive Parenting Program – Triple P, and finished a randomized controlled trial of Parent-Child Interaction Therapy. Another area is my work on the development of coping with stress across the lifespan in collaboration with Professor Ellen Skinner and others (e.g., Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007).

Australia has strong foundations in psychological science and practice. Psychology is one of the most popular choices of study at Australian universities. For more information about psychology in Australia, me, Griffith University, colleagues or students, please access www.sdrs.info. I am always happy to communicate about studying or conducting research in Australia, so please contact me at m.zimmergembeck@griffith.edu.au.

References
Second, the requirement to have active parental consent for participation led to our networking with local businesses and state professional sport teams to make prizes available for a lottery draw at each school for students who returned signed consent forms. Surf boards, acoustic and electric guitars, movie tickets, signed sports memorabilia, music and sport gift vouchers, kite surfing lessons, family passes to cricket matches, and iPods have been appealing to the Years 8 and 10 student cohorts we recruited.

With our schools widely distributed around the state, and some not having computer labs available for us to use, we have come up with a mobile computer lab that fits in the boot of the car. We bring 20 laptops, a server and router, and set up an intranet at each school. The students enter their responses on the laptops, and the participants have been far more enthusiastic to this delivery format compared to the paper and pencil version. We are learning every day about the leisure experiences of Australian youth, including the following early findings from two PhD theses.

Corey’s analyses reveal a link between participation in structured extracurricular activities and a more positive sense of self. Adolescents in extracurricular activities reported higher academic and social self-concepts, and general self-worth, when compared to their non-participating peers. Further, combining different kinds of activities may provide even greater benefits, as those with both a sport and non-sport activity have more positive outcomes, compared to those in only one activity types. Further she has found that experiences of success, perseverance, and peer interactions in both sports and non-sports positively predict self-worth.

Bree is focusing on the potential of sports to encourage a healthy body image, particularly among adolescent girls. Sports participation and physical activity may provide a context whereby girls are able to experience freedom of movement and explore the instrumental qualities of their bodies. Her findings support this suggestion with girls participating in sports reporting a more positive body image than those who do not. Specifically, sports participants reported higher value and investment in their body’s functionality than their body’s aesthetic appeal and being more satisfied with their body overall. In addition, the number of different sports played and hours spent per week predict a more positive body image. These findings suggest that sports may give girls the opportunity to challenge cultural expectations and explore the functional aspects of their body, enabling them to learn to value their body not only as an aesthetic object but also as an instrumental tool.

Organized extracurricular activities such as sport and art have the potential for promoting healthy development and reducing the risks faced by teenagers. However, current research evidence, often based on middle-class youth in the US, is inadequate for making policy recommendations for improvement to the after-school lives of Australian youth. We hope that YAPS-WA will offer insight into the importance of making a diverse selection of organized activities available to Australian young people. Please write to Bonnie if you wish to have more information: B.Barber@murdoch.edu.au.

References
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