

1. *Parent Involvement and Communication.* Research has shown the importance of parents' involvement with their children and open communication between parent and child in the prevention of adolescent premarital sexual activity, pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection, as well as other adolescent risk behaviors. Many interventions designed to reduce these risks have thus added specific components for parents. Unfortunately, efforts to enroll and retain parents in these programs have too often been unsuccessful. Careful examination of recruitment strategies, and the interventions themselves, should provide insights on how to more effectively implement these program components. Research questions of interest include, but are not limited to:

- Factors that affect recruitment and retention of parents in prevention programs for adolescents.
- Evaluations of strategies or interventions designed to assist parents in effectively communicating with their children about sexuality issues.
- Mechanisms and/or venues for educating parents on adolescent development, the importance of parental expectations and boundary setting, and sexuality issues.

2. *Youth Development/Developmental Assets.* The Youth Development or Developmental Assets approach, either by itself or in combination with sexuality education, is increasingly used in programs designed to prevent adolescent sexual activity, pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection or other risk behaviors and negative outcomes. Strategies encompass strengthening families, fostering lasting relationships with adult mentors, involving youth in community service, promoting connectedness with school, providing opportunities to engage in sports and cultural activities, building confidence and self-efficacy; all are designed to strengthen supports, either internal or external, for youth as they transition to adulthood. Research questions of interest include, but are not limited to:

- Incorporating youth development concepts into risk avoidance interventions for adolescents.
- Impact of youth development strategies on adolescent premarital sexual relations and other health risk behaviors.
- Impact of youth development strategies (e.g., education, vocational training, employment) on transition to self-sufficiency and other positive outcomes for adolescent parents.

3. *Pro-Social Risk Behaviors.* It is well established that some amount of risk

taking in adolescence is normative in that it helps define and develop identity. While risk taking is part of the normal developmental spectrum for adolescents, risk behaviors fall into two broad categories: Those that are associated with negative consequences such as drug, tobacco and alcohol use, sexual activity and violence as opposed to those that are associated with more positive outcomes—pro-social risk behaviors such as athletics, academic endeavors, or community service. Research questions of interest include, but are not limited to:

- The impact on adolescent sexual behavior of programs offering pro-social risk behavior activities.
- Whether adolescents actively reject taking negative health risks when offered appealing pro-social risk behavior activities.
- Whether offering pro-social risk behavior activities can reverse established negative risk behaviors.

4. *Adoption.* Adoption is a positive option for unmarried pregnant adolescents who are unable to care for their infants, yet available data indicate this option is seldom chosen. Prior research suggests that attitudes about adoption—by family members, the father of the infant, the pregnant adolescent herself, or the professional providing counseling—can often have great influence on the young mother's decision-making. Other factors of importance include the costs and benefits of the adoption decision for all involved, as well as the implications of the various types of adoption that are available. Areas of inquiry include, but are not limited to:

- Social, psychological, legal and service dimensions of adoption decision-making.
- Social, economic, and/or psychological effects of adoption on the adolescent mother, the child, and/or the adoptive family.
- Usage and differential outcomes for the adolescent mother, the child, and/or the adoptive family among formal, informal, closed and open adoption arrangements.

5. *Adolescent Parents.* The consequences of adolescent pregnancy and parenthood are well documented. Adolescent parents are less likely to complete their schooling, their employment prospects and income are concomitantly reduced, and they are more likely to be single parents. In addition, their children are more likely to have poor health status, poor educational outcomes, behavior problems, and to become adolescent parents themselves than are children born to older parents. Appropriate and

adequate services for these adolescent parents and their children, however, do hold some promise for ameliorating these disadvantages. Research questions of interest include, but are not limited to:

- Preparation for building committed adult relationships and strong marriages.
- Evaluation of strategies or interventions to provide necessary support services (e.g., health, education, social) to adolescent parents and their children.
- Factors influencing continuation of schooling for adolescent parents and/or evaluation of strategies to promote school retention or return for adolescent parents.
- Factors influencing successful parenting by adolescents and/or evaluation of strategies to promote successful parenting by adolescents.

6. *Long Term Impact of Adolescent Childbearing on Family Structure.* The negative impact of adolescent pregnancy and childbearing on schooling, employment, income and health are well documented in the research literature. Another important area of inquiry, not as well studied, is the effect of adolescent parenthood on the structure and function of the young families created by this early, and most often, out-of-wedlock childbearing. Research topics of interest include, but are not limited to:

- The impact of adolescent out-of-wedlock childbearing on the likelihood of marriage and the stability of marriage.
- Types of support systems and their viability, other than marriage, for adolescent parents.
- The level of satisfaction with parenting, over time, experienced by adolescent parents.

7. *Influences on Adolescent Premarital Sexual Behavior.* An important component in developing effective interventions to prevent adolescent premarital sexual activity, pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection is an understanding of the factors that influence adolescent sexual behavior. While research over the past few decades has contributed substantially to this understanding, the complexity and variability of these factors—and the interplay among them—still warrants continued study. For the purposes of this announcement, such factors include, but are not limited to:

- Demographic, economic, social and psychological characteristics of the adolescent.
- Family, peers, media, and other social factors.