

## ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Influence of social connectedness, communication and monitoring on adolescent sexual activity in Ghana

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## Abstract

This paper examines connectedness to, communication with and monitoring of unmarried adolescents in Ghana by parents, other adults, friends and key social institutions and the roles these groups play with respect to adolescent sexual activity. The paper draws on 2004 nationally-representative survey data and qualitative evidence from focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with adolescents in 2003. Adolescents show high levels of connectedness to family, adults, friends, school and religious groups. High levels of adult monitoring are also observed, but communication with family about sex-related matters was not as high as with non-family members. The qualitative data highlight gender differences in communication. Multivariate analysis of survey data shows a strong negative relationship between parental monitoring and recent sexual activity for males and females, and limited effects of communication. Creating a supportive environment and showing interest in the welfare of adolescents appear to promote positive sexual and reproductive health outcomes.

**Keywords:** Adolescents, Ghana, connectedness, communication, monitoring, reproductive health

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