

SEX IN THE MEDIA: AN INFLUENCE ON  
ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

By

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study was to identify the prevalence of sex in the television media that adolescents watch and the magazine media targeted at adolescent females. The study was conducted by researcher observation and categorical tallying of sex related instances on various prime time television shows and commercials and in four major magazines. The television shows chosen for analysis were determined by media ratings reports indicating they are popular among adolescents. Targeted audience determined the magazines chosen for analysis. The analysis of the television shows and magazines occurred from January 2002 through April 2002.

The adolescent life stage was chosen for analysis because it is a time when individuals are developing their gender identities and sexual attitudes (Durham, 1998).

Media can play a large role in this development as a source of information and modeling (Committee of Public Education, 2001; Ward, 1995). Previous research shows that there is a substantial amount of sex and sex related references in the media (Kunkel, Cope, and Biely, 1999). This investigation aimed to identify the sexual content of media specifically targeted for or consumed by adolescents.

Upon review of 17 television shows and four magazines, this research found evidence supporting much of the literature. There were many sex related themes on both television and in the magazines. Some of the prominent themes included sexual objectification, sex as competition, and a lack of reference to protection from sexually transmitted diseases or pregnancy. The research concludes with recommendations for how to combat the sexual influence of the media.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

“Everybody’s doing it” is a common phrase, but is it really the image our society wants to portray. In this situation “it” means sex and “everybody” includes adolescents. According to a 1994 National Youth Risk Behavior survey (Steele, 1999) one out of six youth surveyed had had sex by age 13 and three out of four were sexually active by the time they were in 12<sup>th</sup> grade. A second source (Committee on Public Information, 2001) stated “61 percent of all high school seniors have had sexual intercourse, about half are currently sexually active, and 21 percent have had four or more partners” (p. 192). Sexually active adolescents are also facing serious consequences, perhaps because only ten percent of sexually active adolescents use condoms consistently (Center for disease control, cited by Chapin, 2000). Amongst these consequences are STDs and pregnancy. One out of four sexually active adolescents get infected with an STD each year (Committee on Public Education, 2001) and people under the age of 25 account for half of the HIV infections in the United States (Chapin, 2000). The United States has one of the highest teenage pregnancy rates in the world, with more than four out of ten females becoming pregnant at least once before they reach the age of 20 (Chapin, 2000; Committee on Public Education, 2001). “Over 80 percent of these pregnancies are unplanned and over 80 percent are to unmarried teens” (Chapin, 2000, p. 800).

Why are many adolescents reflecting an “everybody’s doing it” attitude? One popular answer is the media. Kellner (cited in Garner, Sterk, & Adams, 1998) stated “media stories provide the symbols, myths, and resources through which we constitute a common culture and through the appropriation of which we insert ourselves into this

culture” (p. 59). Individuals, especially adolescents, often see what is in the media and accept it as an accurate representation of what the culture is like. Therefore, in order to fit in and succeed, one must prescribe to what they learn about the culture.

The media is a powerful source of sexual information for adolescents, affecting their beliefs, and potentially their behavior as well (Steele, 1999; Strasburger & Donnerstein, 1999). Adolescents rank it second to sex education programs as a leading source of information about sex (Committee on Public Education, 2001). This information, which comes in the form of explicit images and words, is not always accurate. The images and words contain “unrealistic, inaccurate, and misleading information that young people accept as fact” (Committee on Public Education, 2001, p. 192). Research shows that increased exposure to this unrealistic portrayal of sex is associated with an increased perception of sexual activity in the real world (Committee on Public Education, 2001). The perception of high sexual activity created by the media is demonstrated by the comments of a 15-year-old girl who watches soap operas. When it came to sex, she said it “is about like everyday life. They have sex a lot and it is so romantic” (Steele, 1999, p. 334). An eighteen-year-old boy in the same study shared that he assumed that what he saw on TV is normal (Steele, 1999). This normalization of sex makes many adolescents believe that they need to be sexually active as soon as possible.

Sexual activity is portrayed as common, but the inaccuracies leave inadequate exposure to the realities of sex and the necessary safety precautions. The inadequacy of media as a source of sex information contributes to poor sexual choices by adolescents. One study found that pregnant adolescent girls watched more soap operas before becoming pregnant than non-pregnant girls and were less likely to believe soap characters

used birth control (Strasburger & Donnerstein, 1999). Another study found that adolescents who watched TV separate from their family had an intercourse rate 3 to 6 times higher than those who viewed TV with their families (Strasburger & Donnerstein, 1999). Research shows that adolescents do look to media for guidance on where they fit into the world (Steele, 1999). It is clearly demonstrated that when they look to the media, they are often faced with and influenced by inaccurate pictures of sex in the real world.

There is no question that adolescents see sexual images and hear sex related talk on television, but is what they see an accurate depiction of our society? In 1991 there were an estimated 10,000 sexual incidents on prime-time network television (Berenzweig, Godsill, Ibarra & Veverka, n.d.). One out of four prime time programs from the 1996-1997 season had sexual content and thirty percent made sex a primary focus (Berenzweig et.al., n.d.). The most common themes given to sexual content were sexual relationships as competition, selection of women on the basis of physical appearance, and sex as a defining act of masculinity (Chapin, 2000). In magazines analyzed for a study, the sexual themes centered on women making themselves sexually pleasing to men and the satisfaction of male needs (Garner, Sterk & Adams, 1998). Both types of media more frequently presented sex as a source of recreation than as a means of intimacy within a committed relationship (Berenzweig et.al., n.d.; Garner et.al., 1998).

### Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to identify the prevalence of sex in the television media that adolescents watch and the magazine media targeted at adolescent females. The study was conducted by researcher observation and categorical tallying of sex related instances on various prime time television shows and commercials and in four major

magazines. The television shows chosen for analysis were determined by media ratings reports indicating they are popular among adolescents. Targeted audience determined the magazines chosen for analysis. The analysis of the television shows and magazines occurred from January 2002 through April 2002.

#### Research Questions for Television

There are seven questions this research will address. They are:

1. How many instances of sexual humor are in the television shows and commercials adolescents watch most?
2. How many instances of female sexual objectification occur?
3. How many instances of male sexual objectification occur?
4. How many instances of images of or references to sexual practice within a committed relationship occur?
5. How many instances of images of or references to sexual practice within a casual relationship occur?
6. How many characters express a decision to abstain from sexual activity?
7. How many sex related instances included a reference to protection from pregnancy or sexually transmitted disease?

#### Research Questions for Magazines

There are seven questions this research will address. They are:

1. How many advertisements show women in a sexually suggestive position, including facial expression?
2. How many products are described as hot or sexy?
3. How many articles or responses include a reference to protection?

4. How many articles or responses include a reference to abstinence?
5. How many articles or responses give information about sex?
6. How many times are girls referred to as or encouraged to be sexy or hot?
7. How many times are men referred to as sexy or hot?

### Definition of terms

For clarity of understanding, the following terms need to be defined.

Casual relationship: two people with no emotional attachment, expressed loyalty, or exclusivity to one another. People in this type of relationship use sex for fun and their own pleasure.

Committed relationship: two people connected by an emotional bond with expressed loyalty and exclusivity to one another. People in this type of relationship use sex as an expression of love and togetherness.

Sexual objectification: occurs when an individual is valued solely on a sexually pleasing physical appearance or on their potential to be used for sexual pleasure.

### Limitations

The primary limitation in this research is the subjective nature of the categorization of instances that occur on the shows and in the magazines analyzed.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Review of Literature

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine sexual content in the media that adolescents consume. This chapter deals with the review and analysis of the studies and literature relevant to this topic. The review is focused on highlighting not only what is in the media, but also why it is important to be aware of adolescent media exposure. The importance lies in the possible influence of sexual themes and messages. This chapter has been divided into three main sections. The first section, Adolescence, describes adolescence as a developmental stage, adolescent's attitudes about sex, adolescent sexual activity, rates of pregnancy and STDs in adolescents, and patterns of media use in adolescents. The second section examines sex in the media, identifying prevalence as well as themes and messages. The media chosen for analysis in this study is television and magazines. The final section gives an overview of the literature related to the influence media has on views and behaviors. Overall, this chapter provides a general view of how adolescents use media, what they receive, and how it can influence them.

#### Adolescence

The word adolescence “comes from the Latin verb *adolescere*, which means ‘to grow’ or ‘to grow to maturity’” (Rice, 1999, p. 1). It is used to describe the growth that occurs between childhood and adulthood. Many changes and challenges take place during this time of growth and maturation. One of them is increased attention to gender identities and sexual attitudes (Durham, 1998). This increased attention links into Hill's

(cited in Chapin, 2000) five life tasks paramount during adolescence: identity, intimacy, autonomy, sexuality, and achievement. Of all of these tasks, Erikson (cited in Steele, 1999) highlighted the task of self-definition as a primary focus of adolescence. The process of defining self requires an individual to shape numerous aspects of their lives. The focus of this study is the shaping of sexual attitudes. Sexual attitudes, however, cannot be looked at in isolation, as they are intertwined with all of the other changes and tasks of adolescence.

Research has been done to identify common sexual attitudes in adolescents. Some research has indicated that adolescent girls equate sex with love (Durham, 1998). They “rationalize their sexual activity by believing they [are] carried away by love” (p. 370). In addition, adolescent sexual attitudes commonly view unprotected sex as spontaneous, natural, pleasurable, and private. Safer sex, on the other hand, is viewed as planned, artificial, cautious, and work (Chapin, 2000). A pervasiveness of these attitudes has lead to dangerous sexuality and serious consequences.

Sexuality in U.S. young adolescents is increasing in prevalence and consequence. “Sixty-one percent of all high school seniors have had sex, about half are currently sexually active, and 21 percent have had 4 or more partners” (Committee on Public Education, 2001, p. 191). A 1994 National Youth Risk Behavior survey (cited in Steele, 1999) reported one out of six youth had engaged in sexual intercourse by the age of 13 and three out of four lost their virginity by their senior year. Half of these youth did not use condoms and one third used no birth control at all. Fewer than 10 percent of sexually active adolescents use condoms consistently (Chapin, 2000). The United States has one of the highest teen pregnancy rates in the world (Committee on Public Education, 2001).

Sexually transmitted diseases affect one out of four sexually active adolescents each year (Committee on Public Education, 2001). Over half of HIV infections in the United States occur in people under the age of 25 (Chapin, 2000). “Two Americans under the age of 20 become infected with HIV every hour” (Kunkel, Cope, & Biely, 1999, p. 230).

What determines an individual’s sexuality? According to Bandura’s cross-species and cross-cultural studies (cited in Chapin, 2000), “human sexuality is governed primarily by social conditioning, rather than endocrinal stimulation. Sexual modeling teaches amorous techniques, reduces sexual inhibition, alters sexual attitudes, and shapes sexual practices by conveying norms” (p. 801). Sexual norms and expectations deal with how to be sexual, why to have sex, whom to have it with, and what the appropriate sequence of activities is (Ward, 1995). A variety of factors related to Bandura’s social conditioning theory influence early sexual activity in adolescents. The media is a factor considered by many to be significant (Committee on Public Education, 2001). American youth spend more than 38 hours per week using media (Committee on Public Education, 2001).

Adolescents use media for entertainment, identity formation, high sensation, coping, and youth culture identification (Chapin, 2000). Beginning in adolescence, media use patterns shift toward watching more adult programming and watching alone (Chapin, 2000). The media holds the potential for influence on adolescent attitudes and behavior (Strasburger & Donnerstein, 1999). One theory used to explain the level of impact media has for adolescents deals with a discrepancy between physical and cognitive preparedness. Adolescents are reaching the age of physical development much earlier than past generations. Their new bodies incite messages from their external world

and their new hormones provide messages from their internal world, both of which they may not be ready to deal with. Their cognitive and social maturity does not match their physical maturity (Chapin, 2000). This discrepancy may contribute to some adolescent's vulnerability to impact from media messages. For other adolescents, the impact depends on their motivation for watching, and on the developmental task they are addressing (Chapin, 2000).

One of the main reasons media influences adolescent sexuality is because adolescents use it as a source of information. The answers to common questions held by adolescents such as "when is it OK to have sex?" and "who should I have sex with?" are readily available on the television and in magazines (Kunkel, Cope, & Biely, 1999). Media is one of the leading sources for adolescents of information about sex (Committee on Public Education, 2001). One source (Kaiser Family Foundation, cited in Strasburger & Donnerstein, 1999) reported that 40 percent of adolescents utilize teachers, school nurses, or classes at school as a source of sexual information and 39 percent use media: television, movies, or magazines for sexual information. Parents come in third as a source of information for 36 percent of adolescents surveyed, perhaps because of the major role autonomy plays in adolescence (Chapin, 2000). Four out of ten adolescents say they have gained ideas about how to talk to a boyfriend or girlfriend directly from media portrayals (Kunkel, Cope, & Biely, 1999). Adolescents wanting to attract attention from a potential dating partner frequently look to television and magazines to find out what the other person may value (Ward, 1995). Adolescents are most dependent upon the media as a source of information when they lack personal experience and interpersonal advice in the area they are seeking knowledge (Garner, Sterk, & Adams,

1998). This is commonly the case with sexuality. Adolescents commonly have little personal experience or information from other sources with which to compare what they see on television and read in magazines (Ward, 1995). Since media providers are interested in making a profit, they turn out what they believe adolescents want, making the media as a source of information very different from family, schools, or community (Chapin, 2000).

A second area that heightens media impact on sexuality is adolescent use of media in identity formation. Adolescents use images on television and in magazines to learn what it means to be a man or a woman (Chapin, 2000). The walls of adolescent's rooms, commonly plastered with media images, are testimony to the fact that adolescents utilize media in identity formation, helping them make sense of who they are and who they want to be (Chapin, 2000). "Teens look for people or situations 'like them' in the media. When they find people or story lines that resonate with their lives, they pay attention" (Steele, 1999, p. 333). An adolescent's sense of identity will affect what media they watch, how they interact with that media, and how they apply it to their lives (Steele, 1999).

### Sex in the Media

It is evident that adolescents use and are frequently exposed to media, but what types of things are they receiving? One study indicated that media provides frequent exposure to sex that over-represents the prevalence of sex in the real world. Sex therefore is normalized for adolescents, instilling a belief that sex is common-place and risk free (Committee on Public Education, 2001). Television creates a standard about what should be important to relationships and to young people, including the impression that

“everyone is doing it.” Adolescents unable to live up to that standard may feel inadequate (Ward & Rivadeneyra, 1999). The television standard provides adolescents with a script for how dating, intimacy, relationships, and sex are dealt with in life (Ward & Rivadeneyra, 1999). This script however is “limited, stereotypical and potentially harmful” (p. 238) as it portrays sexual relationships as only for the young, single, beautiful, and usually spontaneous, romantic, and risk free (Ward & Rivadeneyra, 1999).

The sexual script that adolescents receive is constructed with frequent reference to and depiction of sex and sex related issues. There is a 50 percent chance that a given show will include some talk about sex, a 25 percent chance that it will contain a scene devoting primary emphasis to one or more sexual behaviors, and a one in eight chance that it will include sexual intercourse depicted or strongly implied (Kunkel, Cope, & Biely, 1999). In a content analysis of television programs, Ward (1995) found that an average of 29 percent of interactions on an episode contained references to sexual issues. Some episodes surpassed 50 percent. A study by Kunkel, Cope, and Biely (1999) found that conversation about people’s prospective interests in sex is the most common type of sex talk on television, followed by conversation about previous sexual experiences. A majority of sexual language and action occurs between unmarried characters (Ward, 1995).

These instances and references come together to create themes and messages. A majority of sexual references emphasize a recreational orientation toward sex. A recreational attitude towards sexuality equates sex as a natural form of expression through which to enjoy oneself. Within this orientation sex is valued even outside of a relationship (Ward, 1995). The relational attitude, which is less commonly emphasized

on television, sees sex as a way “to express affection and intimacy in a close, romantic relationship” (Ward, 1995, p. 600). Sex as competition is also a common theme on television (Ward, 1995). Contributing to this theme are discussions of scoring, cheating on partners, stealing partners, fighting over dates, and using sex as leverage to manipulate a partner. A common theme of male sexuality that was found in Ward’s study (1995) was that “men typically see women as sexual objects and value them based on their physical appearance” (p. 605). Another commonality of male sexuality portrayed on television was that sex equates with masculinity. In addition, the importance of physical attractiveness to a sexual relationship for both men and women was commonly emphasized.

Some common themes in soap operas, as reported in a study by Greenberg and Woods (1999, p. 256), are as follows:

1. Male female relationships are rocky and need constant attention.
2. Sex is very important in holding onto a relationship.
3. Sex just happens; you can’t really plan for it.
4. You can’t count on someone to be faithful if they get tempted.
5. Sex has more good things that come with it than bad things.
6. Sex is more fun before you get married.
7. Marriages don’t last anyhow.
8. If you’re in love, having sex is OK.
9. Why wait to have sex?
10. People who use sex to get what they want usually get what they want.

Beyond sexual messages in television programming, sex is also used to sell products, even those not commonly associated with sex such as shampoo (Committee on Public Education, 2001). Many believe that this trend is increasing and Americans are “becoming more accepting of advertising content that once would have been unthinkable” (Chura, 2001, p.1). This content includes innuendo, partial nudity, and sexual situations and behaviors (Reichert, 2001). For example, an advertisement for Candle’s fragrances features a woman “writhing longingly on a bed” (p. 50) as a man in boxers searches for something in the bathroom. The camera occasionally shows the woman provocatively spraying herself with perfume. The man finds what he is looking for, cologne, which he sprays on himself, including in his boxer shorts. The last shot is a close-up of the fragrance bottles rocking back and forth on the bed. A second example comes from Herbal Essences shampoo. Their ads depict women making “orgasmic sounds while washing their hair in out-of-the-ordinary places” (p. 51) with the tag line ‘A totally organic experience.’ These types of advertisements and many others send various messages to youth including, sex is the ultimate prize, you must be sexually attractive, and women are present to “look good and fulfill sexual needs” (Reichert, 2001, p. 51).

One theme that is commonly under-emphasized in the media, especially television, is the risks associated with sexuality and the need for protection. Adolescents view approximately 15,000 sexual references, innuendoes, and jokes annually with less than 170 of these instances addressing issues such as abstinence, birth control, sexually transmitted diseases, or pregnancy (Strasburger & Donnerstein, 1999).

Acknowledgement of risks such as sexually transmitted diseases, contraception, and abortion are extremely rare (Ward, 1995). A study by Kunkel, Cope, and Biely (1999)

found that less than one of ten scenes that depicted some sexually related behavior made any reference to sexual patience, sexual precaution, or sexual risks and consequences. A study of daytime television (cited in Committee on Public Education, 2001) found 156 acts of sexual intercourse in 50 hours, with five references to contraception or safe sex.

Magazines, a major part of the media adolescents consume, provide additional sets of themes and messages. Magazines are the most accessible, inexpensive, readily available, glamorized source of information about sexuality (Garner, Sterk, & Adams, 1998). They are especially targeted to and consumed by girls. Adolescent girls turn to magazines as they struggle with the conflict between fitting in and being themselves. Many believe that they must follow the magazine's reality in order to achieve high status (Garner, Sterk, & Adams, 1998). They use magazines as a "ruler for judging the behaviors, values, and opinions of themselves and others" (Garner, Sterk, & Adams, 1998, p. 60). The texts in magazines targeted at these adolescent girls create limited and stereotypical pictures of gender and sex (Durham, 1998) through themes of sexual activity and sex as competition. Woven throughout magazines is the assumption that readers are or soon will be sexually active (Garner, Sterk, & Adams, 1998). Magazines caution girls to wait to engage in sexual activity until they are ready, but with an attitude that it shouldn't be much longer before they are ready (Durham, 1998). Magazines also support the sex as a game or competition theme with titles such as "seven ways to make him want you bad" or by encouraging girls to get the guy "in the car, where he's close, he's trapped—very romantic" (Durham, 1998, p. 378).

Other major messages presented in magazines include the importance of catching a man, the importance of beauty, and the role of women as sex objects. Advice columns

present the ideal life as having a sexual connection with a man (Garner, Sterk, & Adams, 1998). Magazines typically focus on happiness stemming from “attracting males for successful heterosexual life by way of physical beautification” (Durham, 1998, p. 370). They commonly portray girls as the characters that must figure out what guys are like and what guys want, while boys are portrayed as the consumers (Garner, Sterk, & Adams, 1998). Themes in magazines equate success with knowing and providing for the desires of men and attracting them by striving for the near impossible physical beauty ideal (Durham, 1998).

Magazines also contain widespread depiction of girls as sex objects (Durham, 1998). They use words such as hot, sexy, and kissable to promote products and styles that girls are supposed to buy into in order to achieve status (Durham, 1998). These magazines created for adolescents also link exercise with a sexual body, rather than a healthy body by using headlines such as “how to look great in a bikini,” “the hot bod workout,” “get a crazy sexy cool stomach!” and “the only three exercises you need to look great from behind” (Durham, 1998, p. 377). In addition, images in magazines repeatedly portray girls in submissive body postures, using self-touch, posed in attitudes of vulnerability and seductiveness (Durham, 1998). Magazines equate female sexuality with either succumbing or not succumbing to male desire, which places women in defensive, victimized roles (Durham, 1998). They portray male sexuality as natural and transparently aggressive (Durham, 1998). Some of these themes and messages, combating purity against seduction, help contribute to the common rape myth that when a woman says no, she doesn’t really mean it (Milburne, Mather, & Conrad, 2000).

Sexual objectification, which has been demonstrated as occurring in magazines, is common throughout the mass media. It is defined as “sexual material that is demeaning, degrading, dehumanizing and exploitive of women and that presents women as mere sexual objects to be exploited and manipulated sexually” (Milburne, Mather, & Conrad, 2000, p. 653). One study (Milburne, Mather, & Conrad, 2000) found that viewing scenes that sexually objectified women lessened males’ perception of victim suffering when asked to read a date rape scenario. The effects of sexual objectification are further seen in a study cited by Milburn, Mather, and Conrad (2000) that found male viewing of sexually degrading films related to lower ratings of a female partner’s intellectual competence. A study by Lavine, Sweeney, and Wagner (1999) found that sexual objectification contributed to distorted body images by setting unrealistic standards. Gender stereotypic TV ads portray women as sex objects (Lavine, Sweeney, & Wagner, 1999). These ads contributed to concerns and insecurities about body image by portrayal of unattainable standards of thinness and female beauty.

The occurrence of sexual objectification in the media, along with other factors covered, contributes to society ills such as rape. Milburne, Mather, and Conrad (2000) stated “gender-role socialization influences rape as an extension of normative sexual mores, learned through masculine and feminine roles incorporated into our culture’s expectations of sexual behavior” (p. 646). Media portrayal of coercive sexuality normalizes and legitimizes the behavior (Milburne, Mather, & Conrad, 2000). One study (Golde, Strassberg, Turner, & Lowe, 2000) found that “men’s viewing of videos in which women were degraded appeared to foster rape-supportive attitudes” (p. 229).

## Research on Media Influence

The evidence given demonstrates that sexual themes and messages are pervasive in the media. “American media are thought to be the most sexually suggestive in the Western Hemisphere” (Committee on Public Education, 2001, p. 192). There is an overload of inappropriate and misrepresentative messages about sexuality and an insufficient level of appropriate messages related to sex (Strasburger & Donnerstein, 1999). “The picture of sexuality painted from the most frequently occurring messages is that sex is an exciting competition involving strategies and manipulations. To be competitive, players must look good or be ‘cool’” (Ward, 1995, p. 611). How are these pictures and messages affecting the people who receive them? Various studies cited by Chapin (2000) found relationships between media influence and adolescent sexuality. One found that adolescents who watched sexy television were more likely to have had sexual intercourse in the past year. Another study found a significant relationship between watching sexy television in early adolescence and earlier initiation of sexual intercourse in middle and late adolescence. Frequent and experimental viewing of sexually oriented television has been connected to liberal sexual attitudes, acceptance of sexual improprieties, and negative attitudes towards remaining a virgin (Ward & Rivadeneyra, 1999). A 1991 study of 329 North Carolina junior high students (cited in Strasburger & Donnerstein, 1999) found that those who selectively viewed more sexual content on television were more likely to have begun having sexual intercourse in the preceding year.

The effects of viewing soap operas have received extra attention. A study of soap opera viewers (cited in Greenberg & Woods, 1999) found that they tended to

overestimate the number of women who have had abortions, the number of people who have affairs, the number of illegitimate children, and the difficulty of maintaining a relationship. Frequent soap opera viewers also overestimate the prevalence of divorce (Ward & Rivadeneyra, 1999). A 1997 pilot study (cited in Strasburger & Donnerstein, 1999) found that young viewers of soap operas and talk shows tended to hold beliefs consistent with what they were viewing on television. Another study (cited in Greenberg & Woods, 1999) found that “soap viewers reported less need for contraception use than non-viewers, higher rates of pregnancy, and higher rates of adultery” (p. 255).

It has been demonstrated that media has an impact on its consumers, but media consumers are not all affected in the same ways. A study (Ward & Rivadeneyra, 1999, p. 237) reported “greater exposure and greater involvement with TV’s sexual content were associated with stronger endorsement of recreational attitudes toward sex, higher expectations of the sexual activity in one’s peers, and more extensive sexual experience.” Involvement, according to this study, is a primary key to media impact. It is defined as including viewer motivation, active viewing, perceived realism, perceived relevance, and identification. Viewer motivation addresses why the individual is watching and could range from information seeking to arousal seeking. Level of active viewing compares facilitative activity, such as selectivity and attention, to inhibitory activity, such as avoidance, distraction, and skepticism. Perceived realism refers to the degree to which the viewer believes a portrayal could happen in real life. Clothing, physical setting, dialogue, and situations influence realism. Perceived relevance and identification refers to the level at which the viewer utilizes characters as role models and relate what they see to their own life. According to Bandura’s Social Learning Theory (cited in Ward &

Rivadeneyra, 1999), identification is intensified when a viewer perceives a character to be attractive, powerful, and similar to them. It is also intensified when models are rewarded and not punished for their behavior. Level of identification was the strongest aspect of viewer involvement producing the strongest connection to sexual outcome. Sexual outcome included stronger endorsement of recreational attitudes toward sex, higher expectations of the level of sexual experience of one's peers, and more extensive experience with sexual relationships.

Steele (1999) used similar theory to explain the variance of media impact stating that interpretation and application of media content was dependent upon lived experience. The aspects of media that have the largest influence, according to this theory, are the areas that an individual sees relating to something they have lived through, perhaps making it more realistic. Selection and interaction related to lived experience as well, determining what they watched and how seriously they took it (Steele, 1999).

Ward and Rivadeneyra (1999) utilized a third viewpoint to explain television impact. They cited the cultivation theory. This theory proposed "that television's consistent images and portrayals construct a specific portrait of reality, and as viewers watch more and more television, they gradually come to cultivate or adopt attitudes and expectations about the world that coincides with this portrait" (p. 238). In this theory television is thought to have the greatest influence in areas with which viewers have the least amount of personal experience with which to compare what they are receiving from the media (Ward & Rivadeneyra, 1999). Adolescents accept what they see as real, because they have nothing to tell them otherwise. In conclusion, an adolescent's television diet alone is not a consistent predictor of their sexual behavior. It must be

combined with their attitudes about sexuality and their expectations of normal sexual behavior, which may be influenced by media exposure (Ward & Rivadeneyra, 1999).

A final variable influencing media impact is family. Family function influences an adolescent's media use and application (Steele, 1999). Strong or close family ties are one predictor that a youth will get through adolescence without major troubles such as developing a drug habit. The family is traditionally the primary socializing agent for children (Steele, 1999). Strong communication within a family about the themes and messages depicted in the media can lead to more healthy views of sexuality.

### Conclusion

Chapter two has presented selected literature and research that examined the role of sexual media content in the lives of adolescents. The first section described adolescence as a developmental stage, identified recreational sex attitudes in adolescents, and described high rates of sexual activity in adolescence as well as high rates of pregnancy and STDs. Patterns of media use as a source of information and in identity formation were also identified. The second section described the high prevalence of sexual messages and images in the media, particularly television and magazines. Some of the prominent themes discussed were, recreational sex, sex as competition, and sexual objectification. The final section presented research connecting media exposure with sex attitudes and behaviors. Four theories, viewer involvement, lived experience, cultivation theory, and family, described different ways through which media influences lives. The research presented makes a clear statement that adolescents are consuming strong sexual messages from the media and that there is great potential for influence on their views and behaviors.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Methodology

#### Introduction

This chapter will describe the media under study and how they were selected for inclusion in this study. In addition, the instrument being used to collect subject information will be discussed. Data collection procedures will then be presented. The chapter will conclude with some of the methodological limitations.

#### Description of Media and Sample selection

The researcher selected ten television shows popular with adolescents as indicated by television ratings (Adalian, 2001; Freeman, 2001; Kissell, 2001; Phipps, 2001). The television shows were as follows: *That 70's Show*, *Grounded for Life*, *Seventh Heaven*, *Dark Angel*, *Survivor*, *Temptation Island*, *Gilmore Girls*, *WWE Smackdown*, *Sabrina*, and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. The research also selected four magazines targeted at adolescent females including *Seventeen*, *YM*, *Cosmo girl*, and *Teen*.

#### Data Collection

The researcher watched one new episode of each of the “reality” shows included in the investigation and two new episodes of each of the drama and comedy shows. The commercials were included in the investigation. While watching, the researcher categorized sex related instances and identified themes. Categorization followed the research questions. A verbal instance was considered to be a comment, phrase, or story by a single character not interrupted by change in scene or entrance of new characters. It could have also included an interaction between multiple characters in which the topic

did not change. Once a new variable was brought into the topic, it was considered a second instance. A visual instance was considered an uninterrupted scene. Change of setting, commercial break or other new variables created a new instance. For the second part of the data collection, the researcher read and categorized occurrences in one new edition of each of the four magazines.

#### Data Analysis

Data was analyzed by recording instance frequency.

#### Limitations

The primary limitation of this research is the subjective nature of the categorization.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Results

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the prevalence and content of messages related to sex that are available to youth through the media. The research questions for television targeted sexual humor, sexual objectification, sex in committed versus casual relationships, abstinence, and use of protection. The research questions for magazines targeted sexually suggestive advertising, use of the terms hot and sexy, reference to protection, reference to abstinence, and sex related information. This chapter will present the results found for each episode watched and each magazine examined. A description of each television instance can be found in Appendix A. A description of each magazine instance can be found in Appendix B.

#### Findings- Television

*That 70s Show*- January 8, 2002 and April 12, 2002, 7:00-7:30.

Category	Number of instances programming		commercials	
	1/8	4/12	1/8	4/12
Sexual Humor	4	0	3	0
Female Sexual Objectification	4	6	1	1
Male Sexual Objectification	0	0	1	0
Sex in committed relationship	1	0	0	0
Sex in Casual Relationship	1	4	1	0
Abstinence	0	0	0	0
Reference to Protection	2	2	0	0

*Grounded for Life*- March 13, 2002 and March 20, 2002, 7:30-8:00

Category	Number of instances programming		commercials	
	3/13	3/20	3/13	3/20
Sexual Humor	0	0	0	0
Female Sexual Objectification	0	0	0	0
Male Sexual Objectification	0	3	0	0
Sex in committed relationship	0	0	0	0
Sex in Casual Relationship	0	1	0	0
Abstinence	0	0	0	0
Reference to Protection	0	0	0	0

*Sabrina*- April 5, 2002 and April 26, 2002, 7:00-7:30

Category	Number of instances programming		commercials	
	4/5	4/26	4/5	4/26
Sexual Humor	0	1	0	0
Female Sexual Objectification	0	1	0	0
Male Sexual Objectification	0	1	0	0
Sex in committed relationship	0	0	0	0
Sex in Casual Relationship	0	0	0	0
Abstinence	0	0	0	0
Reference to Protection	0	0	0	0

*Gilmore Girls*- April 2, 2002 and April 23, 2002, 7:00-8:00

Category	Number of instances programming		commercials	
	4/2	4/23	4/2	4/23
Sexual Humor	0	0	0	0
Female Sexual Objectification	0	0	1	1
Male Sexual Objectification	0	0	0	0
Sex in committed relationship	0	0	0	0
Sex in Casual Relationship	0	0	0	1
Abstinence	0	0	0	0
Reference to Protection	0	0	0	0

*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*- April 9, 2002 and April 24, 2002, 8:00-9:00

Category	Number of instances programming		commercials	
	4/9	4/24	4/9	4/24
Sexual Humor	0	3	0	0
Female Sexual Objectification	0	0	2	1
Male Sexual Objectification	0	0	0	0
Sex in committed relationship	0	0	0	0
Sex in Casual Relationship	2	1	0	1
Abstinence	0	0	0	0
Reference to Protection	0	0	0	0

*7<sup>th</sup> Heaven*- April 1, 2002 and April 8, 2002, 7:00-8:00

Category	Number of instances programming		commercials	
	4/1	4/8	4/1	4/8
Sexual Humor	0	0	0	0
Female Sexual Objectification	1	0	0	0
Male Sexual Objectification	0	0	0	0
Sex in committed relationship	0	1	0	0
Sex in Casual Relationship	0	0	0	0
Abstinence	0	0	0	0
Reference to Protection	0	0	0	0

*Dark Angel*- April 5, 2002 and April 12, 2002, 8:00-9:00

Category	Number of instances programming		commercials	
	4/5	4/12	4/5	4/12
Sexual Humor	0	0	1	0
Female Sexual Objectification	0	0	0	1
Male Sexual Objectification	0	0	0	0
Sex in committed relationship	0	0	0	0
Sex in Casual Relationship	0	0	0	2
Abstinence	0	0	0	0
Reference to Protection	0	0	0	0

*WWE Smackdown-* April 25, 2002, 7:00-9:00

<u>Category</u>	<u>Number of instances programming</u>	<u>commercials</u>
Sexual Humor	0	0
Female Sexual Objectification	4	2
Male Sexual Objectification	1	0
Sex in committed relationship	0	0
Sex in Casual Relationship	0	1
Abstinence	0	0
Reference to Protection	0	0

*Temptation Island-* January 16, 2002, 8:00-9:00

<u>Category</u>	<u>Number of instances programming</u>	<u>commercials</u>
Sexual Humor	0	0
Female Sexual Objectification	7	0
Male Sexual Objectification	5	1
Sex in committed relationship	0	0
Sex in Casual Relationship	6	0
Abstinence	0	0
Reference to Protection	0	0

*Survivor Africa-* January 10, 2002, 7:00-9:00

<u>Category</u>	<u>Number of instances programming</u>	<u>commercials</u>
Sexual Humor	0	0
Female Sexual Objectification	0	0
Male Sexual Objectification	0	0
Sex in committed relationship	0	1
Sex in Casual Relationship	0	0
Abstinence	0	0
Reference to Protection	0	0

## Findings- Magazines

### *Cosmogirl-* March 2002

<u>Category</u>	<u>Number of instances</u>
Sexually suggestive advertisement	7
Products described as hot or sexy	1
Reference to protection	0
Reference to abstinence	0
Information about sex	6
Girls referred to as or encouraged to be sexy or hot	8
Men referred to as sexy or hot	3

### *Seventeen-* March 2002

<u>Category</u>	<u>Number of instances</u>
Sexually suggestive advertisement	7
Products described as hot or sexy	1
Reference to protection	2
Reference to abstinence	2
Information about sex	2
Girls referred to as or encouraged to be sexy or hot	6
Men referred to as sexy or hot	4

### *Teen-* March 2002

<u>Category</u>	<u>Number of instances</u>
Sexually suggestive advertisement	4
Products described as hot or sexy	1
Reference to protection	0
Reference to abstinence	0
Information about sex	0
Girls referred to as or encouraged to be sexy or hot	4
Men referred to as sexy or hot	0

### *YM-* March 2002

<u>Category</u>	<u>Number of instances</u>
Sexually suggestive advertisement	4
Products described as hot or sexy	0
Reference to protection	1
Reference to abstinence	4
Information about sex	0
Girls referred to as or encouraged to be sexy or hot	0
Men referred to as sexy or hot	2

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Discussion and Recommendations

#### Introduction

This chapter will include a discussion of the results of the study including comparisons with the literature. The chapter will conclude with some recommendations for action.

#### Discussion

There were several similarities between what was found in literature and what was found in this study. One similarity is the amount of sex found on television. Kunkel, Cope, and Biely (1999) reported that there is a 50 percent chance that a given show will include some talk about sex. In this study, eight out of 17 episodes viewed had a reference to sex (not including sexual objectification), which is close to the 50 percent mark. Kunkel, Cope, and Biely also reported at least a one in eight chance that a show will include sexual intercourse depicted or strongly implied. This research found four out of 17 shows that depicted or strongly implied sexual intercourse which is closer to a one in four chance.

Sexual themes found on television in this research were also similar to those reported in the literature. Ward (1995) reported that sexual relations on television are frequently depicted as a competition. In this study two shows, *That 70's Show* and *Temptation Island*, strongly displayed this theme. In *That 70's Show* (January 8, 2002) two high school boys begin to compare sexual conquests. On *Temptation Island* (January 16, 2002) the primary objective of the show is for young, single adults to seduce individuals out of committed relationships. *Temptation Island* also presented the theme

that sex is something that happens because it can't be resisted. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* had a similar theme. During both episodes, Buffy repeatedly had regrets and flashbacks about sexual episodes, but could never say no.

A third way that this research supports the literature is in the comparison between sex in casual relationships and sex in committed relationships. Ward (1995) conveyed that a majority of sexual language and action on television occurs between unmarried characters. This research found a total of 21 instances in programming and advertising of sex in casual relationships compared to 3 instances of sex in committed relationships.

Lastly, this research supported the literature in regard to issues surrounding abstinence and protection from sexually transmitted diseases. According to Strasburger, Victor, and Donnerstein (1999), a vast minority of sexual instances on television address these issues. This investigation found a total of 36 sexual references or instances (including commercials but not including sexual objectification), two references to protection, and no references to abstinence. The show that did contain the two references to protection (*That 70's Show*, January 8, 2002) presented the topic as humorous and embarrassing. This attitude toward sexuality is dangerous for adolescents to adopt.

One major theme that was prevalent in both television and magazines for this research was sexual objectification. Durham (1998) reported that magazines contain widespread depiction of girls as sex objects repeatedly portrayed in submissive body postures, using self-touch, and posed in attitudes of vulnerability and seductiveness. This investigation supports the claim and extends it to television. In review of the four magazines for this study there were 22 advertisements that showed females, many of them girls, in sexually suggestive poses. In addition, there were 18 instances in which

females were referred to as or encouraged to be sexy or hot. One magazine, *Cosmogirl*, accounted for 7 of the advertisements and 8 of the instances. In comparison, there were only nine total instances in which males were referred to as sexy or hot. In the review of television there were 32 instances of female sexual objectification and 12 instances of male sexual objectification. Eleven of the 17 shows reviewed contained at least one instance of female sexual objectification in either the program or the advertising. This type of sexual objectification in both magazines and television contributes to distorted body images (Lavine, Sweeney, & Wagner, 1999) and unhealthy expectations for relationships.

Some of the other research questions for magazines also provided interesting findings. Of particular interest are the questions about protection, abstinence, and information about sex. The literature review presented a very negative view of magazines targeted at young girls. One example comes from Garner, Sterk, and Adams (1998) who offered that woven throughout magazines is the assumption that readers are or soon will be sexually active. Although there were many negative images and references in all of the magazines, there were also some healthy, valuable messages about sexuality. Both *Seventeen* and *YM* offered accurate information about birth control and offered an additional resource for finding more information (see Appendix B). In addition, an in depth article about the consequences of teen pregnancy was presented in *YM* which included statements from two girls who discussed their choice of abstinence. The article also discussed what teens need to know about sex education. In *Cosmogirl* a popular singer, Mandy Moore, discussed how she stands up for her beliefs by refusing to wear clothes that are too revealing despite the pressure to be sexy. Examples of other

useful information presented regarding sex include writings that dispel the myth that guys are ruled by hormones (although other areas of the magazine supported the myth), discussion of alternate sexual preferences, and ways to say no to sex.

Overall, this study supported the research that there is a significant amount of sexual material in the media. This research specified that the sexual content extends to media consumed by and targeted at adolescents. An awareness of the sexual messages available to adolescents is only the first step.

### Recommendations

This research has shown some of the themes and prevalence's of sex in the media that adolescents watch and read. It is important to be aware of the media that adolescents are consuming because it can greatly influence their sexual ideas, attitudes and behaviors. One helpful method to combat the influence of media on adolescents is through media education programs (Strasburger, Victor & Donnerstein, 1999). Parents and educators can take positive steps to combat the sexual influence of the media by discussing with adolescents the effect of media on sexual attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors and identifying and discussing inappropriate uses of sexual images in the media (Committee on Public Education, 2001). Parents and educators also need to teach adolescents the following important ideas about television: "1) you are smarter than what you see on your television, 2) television's world is not real, 3) television teaches that some people are more important than others, 4) television keeps doing the same things over and over again, and 5) somebody is always trying to make money with television" (Strasburger, Victor & Donnerstein, 1999, p. 136). Lastly, the following important messages about sex should be shared with adolescents: sex is a healthy and natural part of life, parent-child

conversations about sex are important and healthy, not only the young, uncommitted, and beautiful have sexual relationships, not all affection and touching must culminate in sex, sexual relationships commonly include feelings of affection, love, and respect, there are consequences for unprotected sex, contraceptives are a normal part of a sexual relationship, violence should not be associated with sex or love, rape is a crime of violence not one of passion, and the ability to say no should be recognized and respected (Committee on Public Education, 2001).

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## APPENDIX A

*That 70s Show*- January 8, 2002,

### **Sexual Humor**

1. Male teen one-“She’s out of our league.” Male teen two- “We must be in different leagues because I just had sex with her last night.” (Audience laughter).
2. Male teen-“The closest I’ve come to sex was when the football team pinned me down in the shower and made me kiss my own ass.” Female teen-“If you think that’s close to sex, then you will be delighted with actual sex.” (Audience laughter).
3. Wife-“Condoms.” Husband-“That word is forbidden.” Wife- “Condoms.” (Audience laughter).
4. Male teen- “Fondue me.” (Audience laughter).

### **In Commercials**

1. Carrottop to attractive female- “Doesn’t a spanking come with this penalty.” (1-800-CALL ATT)
2. Female to male- “How do you get it to stand up?” (*That 80’s Show*)
3. Female orgasmic sounds. (Herbal Essence)

### **Female Sexual Objectification**

1. “She’s out of your league.” (Referring to attractive woman giggling and tossing her hair)
2. “Look at that foreign bastard cracking up the whores.” (male teen who has been keeping score of sexual conquests)
3. “The manager wants a girl with boobs and stuff.” (to give cheese samples)
4. Male teen to cheese sample girl- “The floor is real shiny and I see your hiney.”

### **In Commercials**

1. Man staring at breast. (Movie)

### **Male Sexual Objectification**

#### **In commercials**

1. Woman admire attractive muscular male- “Get the body you need.” (Physique styling products)

### **Sex in committed relationship**

1. Parents decide to have sex.

### **Sex in Casual Relationship**

1. New student- “I just had sex with her last night.”

### **In commercials**

1. Dad walks in on son having sex. (Movie- American Pie)

### **Reference to Protection**

1. Mom gives 17-year-old son condoms and sexual health pamphlets. “Intercourse is a responsibility, not just a right.” (Audience laughs, son is disgusted)

Parents look for condoms before having sex.

*That 70’s Show*- April 12, 2002

### **Female Sexual Objectification**

1. “She may not have been smart, but she was sweet... and built too.” (Hands indicate breasts)
2. “Not only did Donna lose her mom, we all lost Midge’s sweet uptown rack.” “What a marvelous set of kittens. Remember that sweater?”

“Remember the week she took up jump rope?” (various images of large bouncing breasts)

3. “There are a lot of hot older women out there besides Midge and they deserve our respect because they can teach us stuff.”

“Yeah, I would love to make love to an 80-year-old.”

“The younger ones are timid, but the older ones know it won’t break.”

“How could it break if it’s invincible?”

“And plus they’re grateful, they’ll do it with anyone.”

“Anyone? Well that’s me.”

“Let’s find Fez a dirty housewife to love.”

4. “Everyone knows horny old ladies hang out at tennis clubs.”

5. Shows image of woman bent over. “Oh, me like.” (He grabs her butt.)

6. “I just noticed Mrs. \_\_\_ is hot.”

“Yeah, she’s a cutie and firm. Maybe we should get her a sweater for Christmas.”

### **In Commercials**

1. Large breasted women in bras and underwear. (Victoria’s Secret)

### **Sex in casual relationship**

1. Passionate kissing/undressing and dragging toward bedroom. Image in bed after sex. She begins to kiss him. He asks, “again?”

“Yep.”

“You don’t want to cuddle? OK.”

2. Friend is trying to get details about a sexual episode. Friend replies, “there will be details a plenty in my steamy letter to *Penthouse*.”

3. Split screen. Boy and girl talking to friends both say, “We did it.”

Girl says, “Twice.”

Boy says, “Five times.”

4. Girl says, “I would have done it with anybody.”

Male friend says, “Let’s do it...seriously, let’s do it right now.”

*Grounded for Life*- March 20, 2002

### **Male Sexual Objectification**

1. Girls oogle over attractive male.

2. Girls drape themselves on attractive male for picture.

3. Female police officer does an unnecessary search of attractive male and obviously enjoys it.

### **Sex in Casual Relationship**

1. “Back in High School I was impregnating women. I couldn’t get enough of it.”

*Sabrina*- April 26, 2002

### **Sexual Humor**

1. “I predict that by fall every forward guy on campus will have his legs in my pants.” (referring to her fashion designs)

### **Female Sexual Objectification**

1. Men drool over big breasted fashion models.

### **Male Sexual Objectification**

1. “Come here Beefcake.”

*Gilmore Girls*- April 2, 2002

### **Female Sexual Objectification**

**In Commercials**

1. Woman makes orgasmic sounds while washing her hair. "It's a totally organic experience." (Herbal Essences)

*Gilmore Girls*- April 23, 2002

**Female Sexual Objectification****In Commercials**

1. Male talks about wanting a certain female's body. (television show-*Elimidate*)

**Sex in Casual Relationship**

1. "We both want the same thing, don't we?" followed by passionate kiss (*Dawson's Creek*)

*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*- April 9, 2002

**Female Sexual Objectification****In Commercials**

1. Cheerleader in short skirt twirls leading to camera shot focused on her exposed butt cheeks. (*The Sweetest Thing*- Movie)

2. Large breasted women in bra and underwear. (Victoria's Secret)

**Sex in Casual Relationship**

1. Buffy and Spike having sex.

2. Buffy has regrets and flashbacks of recent sexual episode.

*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*- April 24, 2002

**Sexual Humor**

1. Male to female- "Do you want to slip away? I'll let you blow out my candle."

2. After being interrupted in an intimate moment- "I had a muscle cramp...Buffy was helping."

"A muscle cramp? In your pants?"

"What? It's a thing."

3. "There must be some late night activity to keep us busy until morning."

"How's that cramp Spike, still bothering you?"

**Sex in Casual Relationship**

1. "Why do I let Spike do these things to me?" (flashback of intimate moment)

**In Commercials**

1. "Do you want to take my clothes off with your teeth?" (Movie)

*7<sup>th</sup> Heaven*-, April 1, 2002

**Female Sexual Objectification**

1. "I've got the women all lined up." (for a party)

*7<sup>th</sup> Heaven*-, April 8, 2002

**Sex in Committed Relationship**

1. "That's intimate. I think we are ready to talk about sex." (Couple considering marriage)

*Dark Angel*- April 5, 2002

**Sexual Humor****In Commercials**

1. "...and backstabbing sexual innuendo- can your sitcom do all that?" (*Just Shoot Me*)

*Dark Angel*- April 12, 2002

**Female Sexual Objectification****In Commercials**

1. Large breasted women in bra and underwear. (Victoria's Secret)

### **Sex in Casual Relationship**

#### **In Commercials**

1. Fraiser and a woman in a bedroom, naked and wrapped in blankets. (*Fraiser*)
2. Man joins woman in the shower with a beer. "Your night just got a whole lot better."  
(Beer)

*WWE Smackdown-* April 25, 2002

#### **Female Sexual Objectification**

1. Man tries to look under woman's Kimono saying there's too much fabric.
2. Commentator- "She's still hot looking, but she's all covered up."
3. Another man tries to peak under the Kimono.
4. Camera scans woman in slinky dress.

#### **In Commercials**

1. "It's what you're desperately waiting for. Your wildest dreams are about to come true. The divas are back, hotter than ever." Images of large breasted women in tiny bikinis.  
(*Divas Swimsuit Addition*)
2. "Short shorts, low cut top, I'm burning with desire for you." (Stacker II fat burner)

#### **Male Sexual Objectification**

1. "Why don't I critique your body...mmm, yummy."

### **Sex in Casual Relationship**

#### **In Commercials**

1. Intimate moment in a hot tub with voice over, "I feel that I've lead Pete on." (*Tough Enough 2*)

*Temptation Island-* January 15, 2002

#### **Female Sexual Objectification**

- 1-4. Men stare with open mouths at bikini clad women made to parade in front of them.
5. Exotic dancer in a thong bends over in front of men, "Let me show you how flexible I am." The men obviously enjoy.
6. A man discusses the likelihood of being attracted to a woman based on her body.
7. Extremely suggestive dancing.

#### **Male Sexual Objectification**

- 1-4. Women comment on male body.
5. Woman discusses likelihood of being attracted based on physical appearance.

#### **In Commercials**

1. "That's hot," while admiring a man's butt. (*Ally McBeal*)

### **Sex in Casual Relationship**

1. Image of two people who met that day caressing in bed.
2. Foreplay at the beach, including butt groping.
3. Foreplay in bed with voice over, "It's an opportunity, live it for what it is. Worry about the consequences later."
4. Two people getting into bed. "I have wet clothes on," implying that she was going to take them off.
5. "Urgent passions."
6. "You're either gay or it's not working down there," in reference to one of the men not "wanting" her.

*Survivor Africa-* January 10, 2002

**Sex in Committed Relationship  
In Commercials**

1. "I'm going to be naked letting your eyes enjoy the party." (*Everybody Loves Raymond*)

## APPENDIX B

*Cosmogirl*- March 2002

### **Sexually suggestive advertisements**

1. Man and woman in passionate embrace. Redken (p. 8-9).
2. Woman stands with leg and arm raised. She is wearing tight clothes and has a seductive expression on her face. Buffalo: David Bitton (p. 29).
3. "Who wouldn't want this body?... A totally organic experience." Herbal Essences (p. 56).
4. Two women in swimwear beginning to pull down their bottoms. Say What? (p. 59).
5. Woman is shown with her thumb in the front of her skirt pushing it down. She also has a seductive expression. Hotkiss (p. 79).
6. A woman's shirt is open to expose her bikini top. Her chest is pressed forward. Newport News (p. 93).
7. Girls with their hands pulling down on the tops of their pants. Jacqueline Azria-Palombo (p. 137).

### **Products described as hot or sexy**

1. An outfit is described as "one part nautical, one part classic, and two parts sexy" (p. 116).

### **Information about sex**

1. A boy writes in to dispel the myth that guys are ruled by hormones (p. 22).
2. Two girls write in to speak up for homosexuality (p. 22).
3. A writer responds to a question and explains why girls may or may not bleed during "first-time intercourse" (p. 82).
4. A writer responds to a question and explains why some guys are aroused by pornography (p. 83).
5. A reader explains what it means to be bisexual (p. 94).
6. An article describes what to do when a guy is pushing for sex (p. 96-97).

### **Girls referred to as or encouraged to be sexy or hot**

1. "371 ways to look hot this spring" (Cover).
2. "Nice Bod. Anna Kournikova's fun sexy-legs workout" (p. 10).
3. "Be sexy. It doesn't mean you have to have sex" (p. 50-51).
4. Girls encouraged to wear "lacy bras peeking out of flirty little dresses" (p. 54).
5. Describes how to have smokin' hot, sexy eyes (p. 70).
6. Description of how Anna Kournikova gets her "sexy legs" (p. 80).
7. Description of an outfit, including "oh-so-low Levi's hip-huggers and skimpy little tank top" as "hotter than Jessica Biel" (p. 139).
8. "Being direct is irresistibly sexy, so people who are bold enough to act on their impulses will be rewarded with hot new connections. Even if you're shy, go for what you want-don't miss out on this dynamic love vibe!" (p. 158).

### **Men referred to as sexy or hot**

1. "Josh Hartnett: Sex Bomb? Do thoughts of super-sexy Josh Hartnett distract you from doing your homework?" (p. 14).
2. "Boy-o-meter. Scope him out and size him up. Rating system: on a scale of fizzle to sizzle...he's warm, he's hot, he's on fire!" (p. 40).
3. Description of *Cosmogirl*'s "Sexiest Guys in the World" issue (p. 100).

*Seventeen*- March 2002

### **Sexually suggestive advertisements**

1. Woman crawling in the sand with cleavage showing and passionate expression. Rampage (p.10).
2. Man and woman in passionate embrace. Redken (p. 14-15).
3. Woman in skimpy clothes leaning on sport car. Bongo (p. 33).
4. Man and woman in the water. Tagline- "Get it on." OP (p. 43).
5. Woman kneeling in the sand, her shirt pulled off her shoulder. She has a seductive expression. Zana-di (p. 51).
6. Girl sits with her legs opened towards the camera. Pepe Jeans (p. 79).
7. Girl is pushing her skirt down with one hand and her shirt up with the other. Hotkiss (p. 87).

### **Products described as hot or sexy**

1. "17 Hottest minidresses- maximum sexiness" (p. 13).

### **Protection**

1. A writer responds to a question about birth control and describes that different states have different laws regarding confidentiality (p. 140).
2. A writer responds to a question about using two condoms and gives a website for more information on birth control (p. 146).

### **Abstinence**

1. "Post-prom sex: Losing the big V may not be all that" (p. 16).
2. "Be strong: don't be a statistic. Nearly 80 percent of unmarried teen mothers end up on welfare" (p. 136-137).

### **Information about sex**

1. An article discusses post-prom sex and says that it is not all that it is cracked up to be (p. 132).
2. A writer responds to a question about masturbation and describes it as the "safest form of sex there is" and "the best way for a girl to achieve her first orgasm" (p. 140).

### **Girls referred to as or encouraged to be sexy or hot**

1. "Straight vs. Curly: What Boys Want" (Cover).
2. "No girl should deprive herself of good skin care and a lip gloss that makes her feel really feminine and sexy" (p. 76).
3. "Look at MTV- tight, sexy clothes are the norm. Sometimes we feel we're competing with Britney for your attention" (p. 104).
4. "I wanted to feel extra-sexy on prom night, so I wore a black garter belt and thigh-high stockings under my dress" (p. 120).
5. "Hot hairstyles you can do yourself" (p. 133).
6. A girl is described as "sassy, sexy and totally in love" (p. 141).

### **Men referred to as sexy or hot**

1. "Would you date this guy? Pick the hottest of the 17 hottest" (p. 100-101).
2. A guy is described as a hottie and simply babelicious (p. 141).
3. A guy is described as "a hot young hunk with a passion for romance" (p. 141).
4. "It's hard not to have dirty thoughts about Anson Mount" (p. 149).

*Teen-* March 2002

### **Sexually suggestive advertisements**

1. Woman in seductive pose. Hotkiss (p. 31).
2. Woman in see through lace top and nipples showing. JouJou (p. 43).

3. Girl in seductive pose (p. 45).
4. "This is the look of a totally satisfied woman. Yes! Yes! Yes! A totally organic experience." Herbal Essences (p. 122).

#### **Products described as hot or sexy**

1. "Tight clothes, sexy shoes, mad hats" (p. 42).

#### **Girls referred to as or encouraged to be sexy or hot**

1. "Suddenly Cara is red hot!" (p. 11).
2. "She was so sexy and non-etiquette, and those boots! They were just hella sexy" (p. 52).
3. "Jennifer Lopez is very urban, very sexy. She could wear a sheet and she would make that sheet look really, really good. I hate her for that" (p. 52).
4. "Be sexy, it doesn't mean you have to have sex" (p. 64-65).

YM- March 2002

#### **Sexually suggestive advertisements**

1. Couple in passionate kiss. Guess (p. 1).
2. Couple in passionate embrace. Redken (p. 2-3).
3. Woman crawling in the sand with cleavage showing and passionate expression. Rampage (p. 36).
4. Woman's shirt is unbuttoned and parts of her breasts are showing. She has a seductive expression. Ralph Lauren (p. 154).

#### **Protection**

1. An article presents teen forum on teen pregnancy and offers numbers to call for more information on birth control (p. 99).

#### **Abstinence**

1. "Jennifer thinks teens should wait until they're married to have sex" (p. 98).
2. "Catherine took a pledge of abstinence" (p. 98).
3. "My parents gave me a promise ring on my 14<sup>th</sup> birthday. It says I won't have sex before I get married. Why would I give something irreplaceable to a guy I might hate three days later?" (p. 99).
4. "I can wait. If you get married and you've had all this sex, what's left for the marriage?" (p. 99).

#### **Men referred to as sexy or hot**

1. "We saw this totally hot guy and kept our eye on him" (p. 38).
2. "After seeing Chad on *Dawson's*, lusty YM staffers e-mailed the entertainment department about the heightened activity of their hormones" (p. 93).