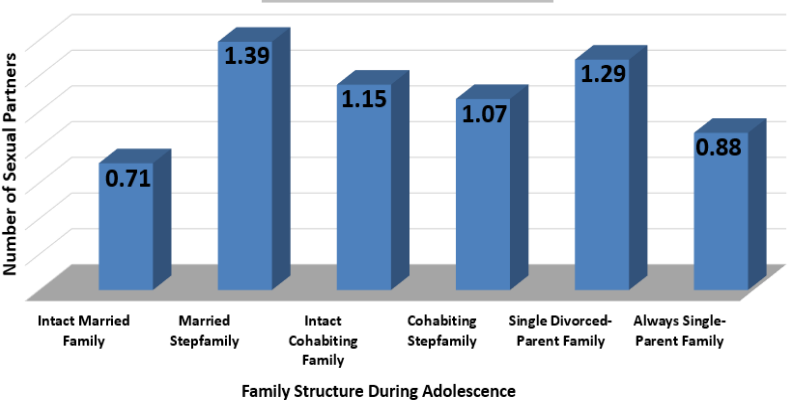


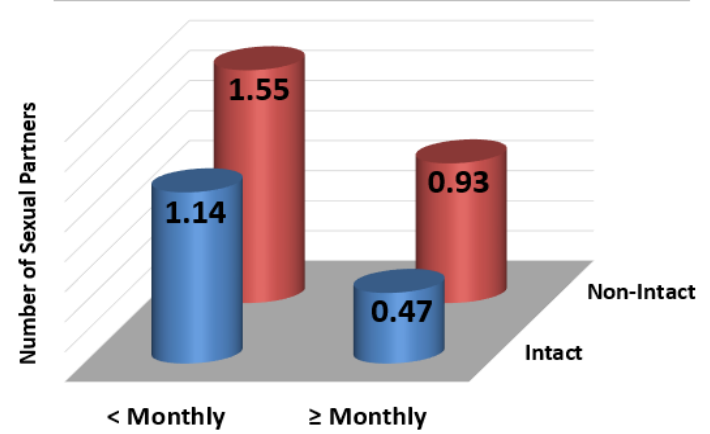
Number of Sexual Partners for Adolescent Girls By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Number of Sexual Partners for Adolescent Girls
By Family Structure



Source: National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Wave I and II. Adolescents Grades 7-12.

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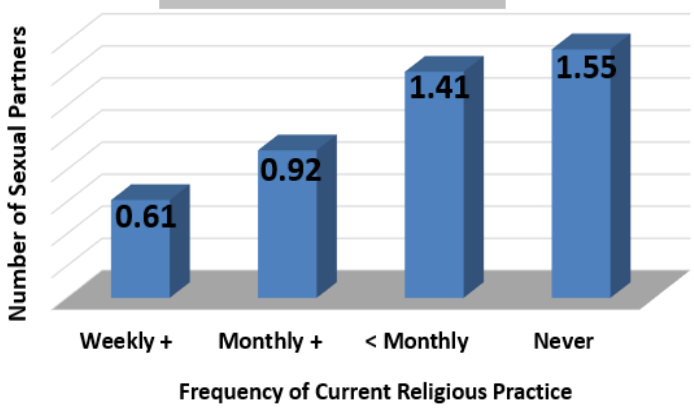
This chart groups the data in four categories: frequency of religious attendance (monthly or more/less than monthly) and family structure (intact/non-intact).

The intact category comprises families with both biological parents, married or unmarried, raising their children. The non-intact category comprises families without both biological parents, including married stepfamilies, cohabiting stepfamilies, divorced single-parent families, and always single-parent families.

The resultant four categories are 1) intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; 2) intact family with less than monthly religious attendance; 3) non-intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; and 4) non-intact family with less than monthly religious attendance.

These charts depict the average number of sexual intercourse partners for American adolescent girls in Grades 7-12 when correlated with religious attendance and family structure.

Number of Sexual Partners for Adolescent Girls
By Religious Practice



Source: National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Wave I and II. Adolescents Grades 7-12.

Number of Sexual Partners for Adolescent Females by Family Structure and Religious Practice

Family Structure: According to the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Waves I and II, female students in Grades 7-12 had an average of 0.71 sexual partners when they lived in intact married families, whereas those who had a stepparent or divorced parents had an average of 1.39 and 1.29 sexual partners, respectively. In between were those whose parents never married (0.88), and those who lived in cohabiting families with one natural parent (1.07) or both natural parents (1.15).

Religious Practice: Female students in Grades 7-12 who worshipped at least weekly had an average of 0.61 sexual intercourse partners, while those who worshipped one to three times a month had an average of 0.92, or 50 percent higher, according to the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Waves I and II. The average jumped significantly for students who attended a few times a year (1.41), 130 percent higher, or never (1.55), 150 percent higher.

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: Adolescent girls from intact families who worshipped frequently had the fewest sexual partners in high school. Female students in Grades 7-12 had an average of 0.47 sexual partners when they lived in intact families and worshipped at least monthly. By contrast, those who worshipped less than monthly and came from broken or reconstituted families had an average of 1.55 sexual partners. Those who worshipped at least monthly but came from broken or reconstituted families had 0.93 partners, and girls who came from intact families but worshipped less than monthly had a slightly higher average of 1.14. The data was taken from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Waves I and II.

Related Insights from Other Studies: Several other studies corroborate findings along these lines.¹ Analyzing fathers' relationships with their adolescent daughters, Mark Regnerus of the University of Texas at Austin and Laura Luchies of Northwestern University report that while dads may feel off balance when their daughters become teenagers, their involvement in their daughters' lives makes a significant difference, especially if they take them to church weekly and minimize their dating.²

Surveying more than 26,000 female and male adolescents, Christina Lammers of South Dakota State University and colleagues reveal that teens are more likely to practice sexual abstinence if

¹ The following findings are from www.familyfacts.org, except for Regnerus and Luchies, which is from the Howard Center for Family, Religion, and Society.

² Mark D. Regnerus and Laura B. Luchies, "The Parent-Child Relationship and Opportunities for Adolescents' First Sex," *Journal of Family Issues* 27 (February 2006): 159-183.

they are more religious, live in a two-parent household, and believe that their parents care about their actions.³

Michael J. Donahue and Peter L. Benson of the Search Institute in Minneapolis also find that religious worship is the aspect of religiosity most directly correlated to abstinence among adolescents, more so than considering religion important or participating in church-related activities.⁴

Analyzing contextual environmental data on family structure and religious adherence, Karin L. Brewster of the University of North Carolina and colleagues report that adolescent girls who live in neighborhoods with a high percentage of divorced or separated women are particularly likely to have premarital sexual intercourse. This likelihood, however, is modified by the percentage of religious believers in the community. The greater the percentage of those who practice their faith the less the sexual activity of adolescent girls.⁵

Absent fathers and empty churches contribute to the increased sexual activity of female adolescents. The evidence strongly indicates that teenage girls are least likely to engage in sexual intercourse when living in an intact family that worships frequently.

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³ Cristina Lammers, Marjorie Ireland, Michael Resnick, and Robert Blum, "Influences on Adolescents' Decision to Postpone Onset of Sexual Intercourse: A Survival Analysis of Virginity among Youths Aged 13 to 18 Years," *Journal of Adolescent Health* 26 (2000): 42-48.

⁴ Michael J. Donahue and Peter L. Benson, "Religion and the Well-Being of Adolescents," *Journal of Social Issues* 51 (1995): 145-160.

⁵ Karin L. Brewster, William R. Grady, and John O. G. Billy, "Contextual Effects on the Sexual Behavior of Adolescent Women," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 56 (1994): 387-404.