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**YOUNG ADULT CASUAL SEX BEHAVIOR:  
LIFE COURSE SPECIFIC MOTIVATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES**

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Abstract: Most young adults have had some casual sex experience. However, it is important to understand the motivations for such behavior because of potential health consequences. We investigate the motivations for and consequences of casual sex using a life course lens. We use the Toledo Adolescent Relationship Study to examine a diverse sample of young adults with recent casual sex experiences (N=210). We draw on a subset of in-depth relationship narratives (N=44) to provide a more nuanced understanding of the motivations for and consequences of casual sex. We find that sexual pleasure and substance use remain the most common reasons for participating in casual sex. However, young adults report life course specific motives including geographic mobility, experiential learning from prior romantic relationships, and feeling too young to be tied down. These findings highlight the multiple meanings of casual sex, particularly during this phase of the life course.

Casual sex refers to sexual activity among unmarried individuals that occurs outside of committed intimate relationships. There is growing concern that casual sexual experiences have potential negative physical and mental health outcomes for individuals. Moreover, casual sex often is associated with lower rates of contraceptive and condom use resulting in greater risk of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (Manlove, Ryan, Franzetta 2007; Manning, Longmore, and Giordano 2000). Much prior work on casual sex behavior has focused on these health concerns and has emphasized the risks associated with non-use of condoms or the role of other problem behaviors, such as alcohol misuse associated with casual sex (e.g., Desiderato and Crawford 1995; Grello, Welsh, and Harper 2006; Manlove et al. 2007). This problem-focused approach is generally useful, but does not take into account that casual sex experiences are quite common (e.g., Regnerus and Uecker 2011) and often do not result in negative physical and mental health outcomes, particularly during the life stage of young adulthood. This suggests the utility of moving beyond the idea of a “problem behavior syndrome” (Jessor and Jessor 1977) by considering life course specific motivations for casual sexual experiences.

Drawing on life course theory and using a multi-method approach (in-depth interviews and survey data) we investigate the motivations for and implications of casual sex that occurs during the early young adult years. We rely on recently collected data from the Toledo Adolescent Relationships Study (TARS), which includes questions about the relationship context of sexual experiences. This research contributes to the literature in three ways. First, few studies have considered motivations for casual sex activity from a life course perspective. The benefit of a life course approach is that the reasons for casual sex may differ for early young adults compared with adolescents or older adults. Second, many studies are limited to college samples (e.g., England, Fitzgibbons Shafer, and Fogarty 2007; Glenn and Marquardt 2001; Grello et al. 2006; Paul 2006; Paul and Hayes 2002; Paul, McManus, and Hayes 2000; Regan and Dreyer 1999) suggesting the need to explore casual sexual involvement across a broader educational

range of young adult respondents. Third, our mixed method approach allows us to explore self-described meanings, which are not possible with standardized surveys. We rely on a random sample of teenagers who have been followed into early young adulthood (ages 17-22) and include men and women pursuing many different education and employment trajectories.

## BACKGROUND

Research based on the life course perspective has concluded that emerging adulthood is a life stage distinct from adolescence and adulthood (Arnett 2004; Settersten and Ray 2010), and that life trajectories and transitions are influenced both by coexisting trajectories and transitions (MacMillian and Copher 2005) and previous life events and transitions (Elder 1985). Further, emerging or young adulthood as a life stage is associated with specific normative behaviors and attitudes. This is a time of frequent residential movement, higher education enrollment, identity exploration, and increased romantic and sexual experience that takes place prior to the full adult role of marriage (Arnett 2004). Indeed, the current historic highpoint of age at first marriage (26.5 for women and 28.7 for men) in the United States (US Census 2011) suggests that there is more time during this life stage for involvement in premarital sexual relationships. Arnett (2004) stated that there was considerable diversity in life paths in this age group. Applying this approach to our research question, we suggest that casual sex does not occur in isolation from other life events but, instead is connected intimately with these other events and transitions. Accordingly, motivations for casual sexual involvement may relate directly to the phase of the life course in which it occurs. For example, the educational arena may influence sexual behavior and sexual behavior may affect educational outcomes. McCarthy and Grodsky (2011) found that teens who reported only casual sex experiences had lower educational outcomes compared to adolescents who reported romantic relationships or romantic and casual intimate relationship experiences. This suggests in light of life course theory that sexual behavior is influenced by other life trajectories and transitions. Thus, the life course perspective informs our view that

young adults are a unique group with patterned casual sex behavior, which may be influenced by specific life course events, such as educational attainment or residential mobility.

### *Casual Sex Behavior Trends and Correlates*

For many individuals initial casual sex experiences start during adolescence. Manning, Giordano, and Longmore (2006) reported that among sexually active teenagers, 38% had a casual sex experience. Casual sex becomes more common as individuals age from adolescence to young adulthood. Among all 18-24-year-olds, 54% reported ever having casual sex and 39% reported having had casual sex during the last two years with men compared with women reporting more partners (Lyons, Manning, Giordano, and Longmore 2010). Thus, casual sex appears to be common among young adults.

Young adulthood is thus a life stage when casual sex becomes increasingly common, and committed and longer duration relationships become increasingly salient (Giordano 2012). Indeed, in a recent analysis, romantic involvement was associated with an increase in casual sex behavior (Lyons, Manning, Longmore, and Giordano 2010). Nevertheless, researchers who study casual sex have not fully examined how more serious romantic relationships and casual sex may be related. The current study investigates how prior romantic relationships can be a motivator for casual sex during young adulthood.

Along with changes in life course circumstances, attitudes and behaviors shift during early young adulthood. As individuals transition into young adulthood, they become more open regarding their sexual attitudes (Lefkowitz and Gillen 2006). For some, college is viewed as an environment more tolerant of experimenting with sexual behavior (Bogle 2008). These liberal attitudes and increased experience with casual sex suggest the importance of studying this behavior during the young adult years.

### *Motivations*

Prior research has focused on general motives for participating in casual sex, and these may be implicated in involvement in casual sex at this stage in the life course. First, consistent with a risk behavior approach, some studies emphasized the role of substance use (Grello et al. 2006; Paul 2006). Grello et al.'s (2006) found based on a college sample that 65% of students that had casual sex used drugs or alcohol during their last experience. Second, some research based on college samples reported a simpler motive: young adults were simply seeking sexual satisfaction without emotional attachment (Grello et al. 2006; Li and Kenrick 2006; Paul 2006; Regan and Dreyer 1999). A third theme was related to peer concerns. Some work reported that college students, particularly men, were engaging in casual sex to enhance their social status among peers (Regan and Dreyer 1999).

At the same time, some motives for casual sex are germane to this particular stage of life. Demographic work indicated that young adulthood was characterized by geographic mobility, enrollment in higher education, and employment changes (Mouw 2005; Osgood et al. 2005; Rindfuss 1991), and may be a phase when relationship and sexual exploration was expected (Arnett 2000; Arnett 2004). Thus, our investigation of motivations for casual sex will consider more generic as well as life course specific considerations.

### *Implications*

When investigating the implications of casual sex, prior studies typically focus on the negative consequences of casual sex, such as regret, poorer relationship quality, depressive symptoms, reputational concerns, and lower educational attainment (Campbell 2008; Eshbaugh and Gute 2008; Grello et al. 2006; McCarthy and Grodsky 2011; Paik 2010). More specifically, women who engaged in casual sex were more likely to report having feelings of regret compared to women who did not participate in such behavior (Eshbaugh and Gute 2008). Consistent with these findings, Grello et al. (2006) found that women who participated in casual sex activity had more depressive symptoms compared to their female peers who did not, but reported that men

who had casual sex had fewer depressive symptoms. In contrast, Eisenberg, Ackard, Resnick and Neumark-Sztainer (2009) analyzed a diverse sample of young adults and did not report a significant difference between depressive symptoms and whether the most recent sex partner was casual. Another line of research emphasizing negative implications such as the effects casual sex has on educational attainment. McCarthy and Grodsky (2011) reported that adolescents who only participated in casual sex behavior had lower educational outcomes, such as lower college expectations and higher truancy, compared to teens who either had romantic relationships or romantic and casual relationships.

Although much of the literature on the implications of casual sex has focused on *negative* consequences, the high levels of casual sexual activity and more liberal sex attitudes of young adults (Lefkowitz 2005) suggests that casual sexual experiences may not always be tied to negative outcomes from the perspective of those who engage in these behaviors. Based on prior research, we expect that many young adults recognize casual sex as a common occurrence during this life stage (Lyons et al. 2010; Paul 2006). Even where the focus is on adolescents, prior research has documented a substantial minority felt closer with partners after having casual sex and it was sometimes the beginning of a longer relationship (Manning et al. 2006). While building on prior work that focuses on negative implications of casual sex, we examine how young adults themselves view the consequences of casual sex, recognizing that these experiences may be viewed as having negative and positive consequences.

We conceptualize motives and consequences as distinct processes, but it is important to consider that in many instances these overlap. For example, to the degree that the individual believes friends approve of such liaisons, the individual may not only be more likely to engage in this behavior but is more likely to perceive that he or she gains approval as a consequence. Similarly, the individual may be motivated by a desire to avoid being hurt - and subsequently enjoy a fun, light relationship that does not have strings attached. However, it is possible that the

consequences that unfold are not precisely as expected (as in the case of individuals who develop unanticipated stronger feelings for the partner, even though they expected the relationship to be casual).

### *Gender*

Researchers have reported that gender is important to consider when investigating the motivations for and consequences of young adult casual sex behavior (England et al. 2007; Grello et al. 2006; Regan and Dreyer 1999). The basic trends in casual sexual behavior differ according to gender with men reporting unique trajectories and more frequent casual sex experience (Grello et al. 2006; Lyons et al. 2010; Paul et al. 2000; Poppen 1995). Further, there are potential gender differences in the motivation for participating in casual sex. Regan and Dreyer (1999) reported that men were more likely to claim the social environment (e.g., status among friends) as a reason for participating in casual sex and women were more likely to participate in casual sex because of interpersonal reasons (e.g., mutual feelings of attraction and friendship). Using an online survey of undergrad students, England et al. (2007) found that there were gender similarities in reports of enjoyment of casual sex experiences. Yet, women, more so than men, may be judged harshly by peers if they have many sex partners (Kreager and Staff 2009). This sexual double standard may prevent women from engaging in a greater number of casual sex relationships and could be implicated in gender differences in stated motivations and perceived consequences of casual sexual involvement.

### CURRENT INVESTIGATION

In this paper, we draw on structured and in-depth qualitative interviews with a large, heterogeneous sample of young adults to examine the motivations for and consequences of casual sex during this phase of the life course. We explore gender similarities and differences using quantitative survey data of 210 respondents ages 18 to 22 who reported having casual sex during the past 24 months. We add to this portrait of life course specific motives for and



consequences of young adults' casual sex experiences by drawing on the in-depth relationship history narratives elicited from 44 young adults ages 17 to 21 who were participants in the structured interviews.

## DATA

### *The Toledo Adolescent Relationship Study (TARS)*

To investigate the outlined research questions, we rely on wave III of the Toledo Adolescent Relationship Study (TARS). The TARS was originally collected to investigate the family, peer, and romantic partners' influence on romantic and sexual behaviors of adolescents. The first wave was collected in 2000, which included a random sample of youth in the 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grades in Lucas County, Ohio. Wave III was collected approximately four years later in 2004. The geographic area of Lucas County is similar to estimates of race and ethnicity, family income, and education to the national population. Wave I, includes a sample of 1,316 youth. School records were used as for the sampling frame but school attendance was not required for inclusion in the sample. Most of the interviews occurred in the respondents' homes. There is an oversampling of racial minority youth. We limit the wave III quantitative sample (N=1114) to young adult (ages 18-22) respondents (N=700) and respondents who had at least one casual sex partner during the last two years (N=210).

We draw on the subset of face-to-face in-depth interviews. The qualitative data were drawn from respondents who were administered an in-depth interview at wave III of the TARS. We interviewed respondents if they engaged in high-risk sexual behaviors, such as a high number of sexual partners and other risk factors, low socioeconomic status, or lack of school success. There was a comparative group, which included respondents who scored average on the mentioned risk factors. These interviews were generally conducted at different times than the survey interviews and were semi-structured. Interviews were conducted from August 2005 to August 2006, collecting a total sample of 92 respondents. The goal of the interviews was to

create relationship narratives where respondents were asked to describe their romantic and sexual history and the meanings behind them. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed for analysis. The qualitative instrument included questions about the most recent sexual experience and our current analyses were limited to a subsample of 44 respondents who discussed casual sex relationships. The subsample contains more men (N=30) than women (N=14). The distribution of key sociodemographic characteristics is provided in Table 1.

The TARS is an appropriate dataset for the research questions for several reasons. First, the TARS data provide detailed measurement of motivations for casual sex behavior, which are not available in larger national datasets. Second, TARS includes in-depth qualitative interviews with a sub-sample of respondents at wave III who were asked about their motives for casual sex experiences, as well as about their more serious romantic relationships. Finally, much of the research on casual sex uses college samples. To be selected into TARS, school attendance was not a requirement, so students not attending classes were included in the current project. Individuals who were not attending high school during wave I may have different higher education enrollment and casual sex trajectories at later waves and, if not accounted for, may bias the findings if using a school-based sampling frame (Lyons et al. 2010).

The analysis of the quantitative data relies on t-tests to determine gender differences and similarities in the motivations for and consequences of casual sex. The analysis of the qualitative data is based on a careful reading of the interviews as well as coding with ATLAS ti, a qualitative database. The codes for motivations and consequences are organized and classified so that broader themes emerge and can be assessed. All the names are changed to ensure confidentiality. The qualitative data provide an alternative method for assessing the validity of the quantitative results, and are especially useful for elucidating the respondent's own understandings about motivations and consequences of their casual sexual experiences.

## MEASURES

The TARS includes several survey items on casual sex, which allow for systematic comparisons by gender. The questions focus on the relationship context, attitudes, motives and consequences of casual sex, and reference respondents' most recent casual partner during the last 24 months.

*Attitudes.* To measure an overall attitude about casual sex we use responses to the statement: "A person should only have sex with someone they love." The original responses range from 1= "Strongly Disagree" to 5= "Strongly Agree." The answers are dummy coded so that 1= "Strongly Agree or Agree" and 0= "Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree or Disagree."

*Relationship Context.* The young adults in the sample are asked two specific questions about their most recent casual sex partner. Casual sex is defined as "sex with someone that you weren't really dating or going out with?" The first question asks, "When you had sex for the first time how long did you know this person?" The original responses were 1= "Just met that day" to 8= "For a year or more." Response are recoded as 1= "Just met that day" and 0= "If they knew their partner longer than that day." This question measures whether the casual sex relationship is likely to occur with strangers. The other question we use to measure the relationship context of the most recent casual sex partner is "How many times did you have sex with a *casual sex partner*?" The original responses were 1= "Only that one time" to 9= "More than once a day." The responses are recoded as 1= "Only that one time" and 0= "More than one time."

*Motivations.* Respondents are asked: "To what extent do you agree that the following are reasons why you had sex with *casual sex partner*?" With the responses ranging from 1= "Strongly Disagree" to 5= "Strongly Agree" so higher scores reflect greater agreement with the motivation. The responses are recoded so that 1= "Strongly Agree or Agree" and 0= "Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree or Disagree." The following two statements assess *sexual* motivations: "I was horny" and "I thought it would be fun." We measure *substance use* as a

motive with the statement: “We were drinking or using drugs.” The responses were recoded to 1= “Strongly Agree or Agree” and 0= “Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree or Disagree.” To measure *relationship based* motives we draw on three indicators: “I was in love;” “I thought it would bring the relationship closer;” with original responses of 1= “Strongly Agree or Agree” and 0= “Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree or Disagree” which were recoded as 1= “Strongly agree or Agree” and 0= “Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree or Disagree” and “Did you want *casual sex partner* to be your girlfriend/boyfriend” with response categories of 0= “No” and 1= “Yes.” To tap an indicator of *age and commitments* we rely on the indicator: “I’m too young to be tied down to one person.” To measure *peer pressure* we use the statement: “My friends were all doing it.” Both age and commitments and peer pressure had responses 1= “Strongly Disagree” to 5= “Strongly Agree” and the answers are dummy coded so that 1= “Strongly Agree or Agree” and 0= “Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree or Disagree.”

*Implications.* Two questions measure *peer acceptance* of the relationship. The first: “Did your friends approve of this relationship” and has response categories of 1= “Strongly Disapproved” to 5= “Strongly Approved.” This is dummy coded so that 1= “Strongly Approved or Approved” and 0= “Strongly Disapprove, Disapprove, Neither Approve or Disapprove.” The second question, “Did you tell your friends about this relationship,” is coded as 1= “Yes” and 0 = “No.” To measure *regret* of the sexual behavior we rely on the following question: “How much do you regret having sex with *casual sex partner*” responses ranged from 1= “Not at all” to 5= “Very much” and is recoded so the 1= “Felt some regret” and 0= “Not at all.” To determine *closeness* to the sexual partner after having sex we ask, “After you first had sex, did you feel closer” was coded 1= “Yes” and 0= “No.”

## RESULTS

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of both the in-depth interview sample and the survey sample. The qualitative sample is comprised of 32% women and 68% men. Half of

the sample is white, 32% Black, 18% Hispanic, and 5% would self-describe as another race/ethnicity. The sample has 7% 17-year-olds, 23% 18-year-olds, 11% 19-year-olds, 43% 20-year-olds, and 16% 21-year-olds. Finally, 16% of the qualitative sample dropped out of high school, 25% are still in high school, 27% have a high school degree but are not currently enrolled in school, and 32% are enrolled in higher education.

The larger survey sample consists of 40% women and 60% men. The two samples are similar according to race. Fifty-two percent are white, 32% Black, 14% Hispanic, and 2% some other race/ethnicity. Twenty-six percent of the sample is 18-years-old, 20% is 19-years-old, 38% are 20-years-old, 15% is 21-years-old, and only 1% is 22-years-old. Finally, 15% of the survey sample dropped out of high school, 28% is still in high school, 24% has a high school degree but not currently enrolled in school, and 33% is enrolled in college.

#### *Casual Sex Attitudes and Experiences*

To provide an overall notion of approval of casual sex we draw on the entire sample (N=1,114), not just those who had casual sex. About 38% of respondents believe it is acceptable to have sex with someone whom they do not love. A greater proportion of men (49%) than women (28%) endorse this view (results not shown). In terms of casual sex behavior, we find that 56% of sexually active respondents report having had casual sex in the two years prior to the interview (results not shown). The average number of casual sex partners during the last two years for sexually active young adults was 2.79 and was significantly greater for men (3.55) than women (1.87) (results not shown).

Among respondents who had casual sex in the past two years, their attitudes are more favorable toward casual sex. Only about one-fifth of the respondents expressed disapproval of casual sex with similar proportions of men and women reporting favorable views (Table 2). The relationship context of causal sex varied considerably. Most respondents (89%) knew their most recent casual sex partner. It was rare that the most recent casual sex partner was someone they

had just met (13% for men and 10% for women) (Table 2). A large share (66%) had sex with an ex-boyfriend or girlfriend at some point. Men and women were equally likely to report having sex with an ex (results not shown). A substantial minority of our sample who had casual sex experiences were part of concurrent relationships at some point during the past 24 months. We find 38% of men and 27% of women reported they had sex with someone who was in another relationship or had sex while in a relationship with someone else at some point (results not shown). Furthermore, over half of respondents with a recent casual sex partner had sex with that partner more than one time (62%). Men and women were equally likely to have had multiple sexual experiences with their casual sex partners (Table 2). Thus, most often casual sex is not simply a “one-night stand” with someone they did not know.

#### *Motivations for Casual Sex: Traditional*

*Casual Sex is Fun.* Even though there are many concerns about casual sex, it is important to be mindful that sex is often a pleasurable activity. Respondents give two primary reasons for having casual sex including sexual satisfaction and having fun. Sixty-five percent of the men and 62% of the women who have had casual sex state the reason they have casual sex is because they are horny (Table 2). Melvin, who dropped out of university and is a 20-year-old man with 12 casual sex partners, says casual sex is all about sexual satisfaction and states, “...I’m not putting no emotions or feelings into the girl I’m sleeping around with. It’s just for pleasure.”

The second ranked motivation for having casual sex is that “it is fun.” About 58% of men and 44% of women endorsed this belief (Table 2). Violet, a college student who is a 20-year-old with one casual sex partner during the past two years, states that she has casual sex because she thinks it will be fun:

I: And you were saying, you said from the beginning he probably thought it was more... but then for you it really wasn’t.

R: Right.

I: Ever, or just after the fact?

R: For me probably ever. I just, it was kind of like something to do. I guess. I don't know. It was like we were bored or something. I don't know. It was just (sex)...

For Violet, the sexual relationship she has is just for fun and because sex is something "to do," but she does not want a romantic relationship to follow. Kelly, a university sophomore who is a 20-year-old respondent and reported one casual sex partner explains that her casual sex relationship is an understanding between two people that it is to be fun without commitment:

I: ...did you get in this friends with benefits relationship in the hopes that it would lead to more or because it filled a niche?

R: It was just for fun kind of...both people understand that there's not going to be an emotional attachment.

Overall, we find most respondents who have had casual sex view the experience as fun and an opportunity to explore sexual desire. This is a potentially important finding because the individuals endorsing these views may not be according the behavior a problematic stance that is often emphasized in the research literature and within the context of prevention efforts.

*Substance Use.* Respondents state that substance use is often involved when a casual sex experience occurs. Twenty-eight percent of men and 38 percent of women state that the reason they have casual sex is because they are drinking or using drugs, which represents the third top ranked reason for having casual sex (Table 2). There is not a significant different between men and women claiming that alcohol and drug use are a motivation for their last casual sex behavior. Sara, a mother who is 20-years-old and has two casual partners, linked at least one of these incidents to the fact that she was intoxicated:

I got trashed one night (laughs) so it just kinda' happened. I didn't realize it you know- we were talking...but my thinking wasn't clear, and it just happened, so-I mean, now that I look back on it, I'm just like- whoa. I shouldn't have been drinking that much.

Randy, a roofer who is 20-years-old, explains that the party scene presents opportunities for casual sex:

- I: ...Was that strictly a friends with benefits?  
R: It was more or less, drunken friend with benefits. We went out for like a week, and only knew each other for like a month. Got a hotel together with a couple of friends, had sex that night, and about a week later, had sex again and then about two day later, never talked to her again.

Not every casual sex experience is related to substance use, but for some, it can be a factor in their decisions to engage in casual sex. Of course it is quite possible that the references to substance use reflect an element of rationalization, and it is not possible to disentangle completely what is motivation and what may be an after-the-fact rationalization of these experiences.

*Relationships.* As expected, a motivation for casual sex relationships is avoiding emotional entanglements. The qualitative interviews indicate that casual sex partners are not supposed to have feelings for one another, which, for some, is an attractive quality for this type of relationship. Phil, an 18-year-old high school senior, reports four casual sex partners during the past two year, explains why his casual sex relationship is good because there is no commitment:

- I: ... And um, did you want to become closer? Or did you like want to...  
R: Me and her have an agreement that it doesn't go any farther than that.  
I: And tell me....  
R: It's so cool like I could actually hook up with her, like she could be my girlfriend, like it probably could come down to that because we're so cool about it and like we're really good friends.  
I: And what makes it cool, that there is no strings?  
R: Yeah, yeah big time, there is no strings. And there is like no weirdness between us. Like we could have sex one night and she would come over the next day and we would just kick it.  
I: Okay.  
R: And there would be no weirdness or nothing.



I: And you don't think less of her for that? And she doesn't think less of you?

R: No.

These qualitative findings are supported by survey results; only nine percent of respondents who had casual sex state that they had casual sex because they were in love (Table 2). This suggests there is little emotional attachment at the time sex occurs. Luke, who currently works at a truck dealership with three casual sex partners, talks about not getting emotionally attached before the sexual interaction happens to prevent later issues:

R: Yeah, it's nice to talk and let people know that that way you don't get feelings involved and have the friend relationship type deal that you want to happen. So it's nice for both people to know, that way later on down the line when you're going out with someone else, she sees you out there with that someone else and you get a weird, you know.

I: Spark the drama.

R: Yeah. That is a bad one to have, so it's good that everyone is on the same page.

Women like Kelly, a 20-year-old quoted above, indicate that they try not to have casual sex with someone who gets attached:

R: Um, I mean if both people understand that there's not going to be an emotional attachment.

I: Is that something that you talk about out front or is that something that you talk about after the fact?

R: Uh, I think I'm pretty good reading people. I wouldn't do that with someone who I thought was going to like...

I: Get clingy?

R: Yeah or like had a crush on me or something.

It is relatively rare to report that casual sex occurs in hopes of a future traditional relationship. Only 19% of respondents state they have casual sex because they think it will bring them closer to their casual sex partner and men and women share similar responses to this item

(Table 2). Respondents noted that another appealing characteristic of casual sex relationships is that there are fewer problems compared to committed romantic relationships. James, a high school dropout who is 18-year-old, reports five recent casual sexual partners and explains in his longer narrative why he prefers casual sex relationships even more than the relationship with his girlfriend:

Like not, I don't know like you guys get along, like I get along better with this girl than my girlfriend because it's not like emotional ties and stuff. Like we can have sex or whatever and then you know afterwards just go hang out or go, I can leave or she can leave, you know. It's not like you're worried about what the other person is doing all the time or nothing. That's why I like that kind (of relationship) because I don't like all of that worrying about each other, doing anything.

#### *Casual Sex Motivations: Life Course Stage*

*Transitional.* Casual sex relationships can be considered transitional in that respondents sometimes get involved when they are between two committed relationships. Tori, who just finished school to become a paramedic and is 20-year-old, reports one recent casual sex partner and explains that casual sex can be a way to “transition” between boyfriends. She is less invested in these relationships and noncommittal about them. She says:

I: Um...what did you learn about those transitional relationships...

R: ... Just because I think I was more into partying and not really caring. When I dated those transitional guys I was still excited about talking to Justin. I mean we were emailing each other back and forth so. I guess I never really got him out of my mind and these guys were just like oh well. Who cares. If they're here, they're here if they're not, they're not.

For Tori, casual sex is a way to fill a potential intimacy gap between two committed relationships, but she nevertheless describes them as much less meaningful as her longer-term relationship with Justin. Similarly, Tim, a 19-year-old with four recent casual sex partners explains that he used casual sex relationships as a way to get over a break up with a girlfriend:

R: After we broke up, I'd probably say within that week I probably had sex with another girl already.

I: With the intent of developing a new relationship...?

R: Just sexual. No relationship...I wasn't trying to get into something after being in something for so long. It was almost two years and there's no point in sticking yourself in that position again. Talk to people, get to know people before you jump into anything.

Tim feels that he needs to “get to know people” before getting into a committed relationship; however, he holds much lower standards for casual sex relationships. Certainly, this motivation is not necessarily exclusive to the young adult period, but it may be more frequent during this time simply because young adults (as contrasted with early adolescents) have often forged longer and more intimate relationships that make breaking up and forming another strong attachment a more difficult endeavor.

*Avoid Emotional Pain.* Reflecting their accumulation of experiences over time, respondents may choose casual sex relationships over committed relationships in some cases because past boyfriends or girlfriends have hurt them. Samantha, a 21-year-old woman with three recent casual sex partners states:

I: You keep your friend with benefits, and then don't- but you have no relationship.

R: Exactly. Because why- I don't have to get my feelings involved. I won't get hurt. There's no drama, there's no nothing. We talk on the phone maybe once a week.

I: But you said you're still lonely.

R: Yes. Deep down inside. Fifty percent of me wants a boyfriend to be there with and somebody to cook for and somebody to work and come home and talk with, and then that other fifty percent is scared to death to even think about having a boyfriend.

I: Because?

R: Of the experience that I had. I'm scared to let loose again with somebody, let my feelings go, give them my all, you know what I'm saying... because then if I'm doing that, then it don't work out in three years, I'm gonna' be right back in the same position.

In addition, Samantha is afraid to get into a committed relationship because of the emotional pain she feels from past romantic relationships. In her view, casual sex relationships are less emotionally risky. Adam, a 20-year-old who works in an auto body shop, started having casual sex after he broke up with the only girl with whom he had been intimate, and reported a total of 26 partners

R: Yeah, well she was the first girl I was ever with. And...

I: Right.

R: ...for a long time she was the only girl I was ever with. And then after we broke up, then I kinda turned into a slut {LAUGH}.

I: What do you mean, you turned into a slut {LAUGH}?

R: {LAUGH} Just hanging out with girls, having sex with more than one girl in a week.

Adam later on in the interview explains that his ex-girlfriend had an abortion, and he did not have a say in the outcome of the pregnancy. This resulted in his not wanting to be involved with a committed girlfriend any time in the near future. Thus, the emotional pain from prior relationships can influence decisions about casual sex partnerships.

*Too Busy for Commitment.* Some respondents focus on other life course events and circumstances, indicating that they are too busy to have a committed relationship, but still can have non-committed sex. Jason, a junior at an online high school with two lifetime casual sex partners, states:

I: What, umm, in terms of relationships, like long term, or your next relationship, are you looking for a fling flang? Are you looking for a relationship-relationship?

R: As of right now, a fling flang. I'm not looking for a relationship at all. That's the last thing I need right now.

I: Because?

R: I got a lot of stuff still going on in my life.

At the time of interview, Jason indicated that he was busy with his online courses, and focusing on getting into a postsecondary technical training program. Lindsay, a 20-year-old university sophomore who reports two casual sex partners, explains that timing is the main difference between casual sex relationships and committed relationships:

I: What denotes somebody- like how do they earn casual status with you or serious status with you?

R: It's really- I think a lot of it has to do with where I am in my life. Like when I dated Paul- right before I dated Terrell- I had just moved like- I had just - because I lived in the dorms my second year, not my first year of college. So I was doing everything like a year-like behind almost. So, I was just moving away from home for the first time. I was on my own. I was not ready for a serious relationship at that time. I was really into myself and what I was doing and just kind of seeing how things go, but it just kind of isn't the right time, I guess.

Jason and Lindsay's accounts accord well with Arnett's (2000) depiction of the emerging adult life stage as having a strong focus on individual exploration. From Jason and Lindsay's perspectives, their lives are too busy to be in a committed relationship. At the same time, they are not willing to forgo any sexual relationship, and thus they chose to engage in casual sex.

*Geographic Mobility.* The young adult life stage is characterized by geographic mobility due to enrollment in school and moves for jobs and careers. This mobility may influence the character of romantic and sexual relationships. Kaleb, a 21-year-old man who is currently working on small jobs, reports two casual sex partners, and explains his sexual relationship remains casual because his partner is moving away to college:

I: OK...OK. Thinking about the person before Emma... that you were just going to hook up...did you want that person to be in a relationship?

R: I mean yeah. But, she was...

I: Why?

R: Uh...she was going to...it was her last year of high school, and she was about to go to college. So, I mean we could have worked out...But, it wouldn't have worked out cause, she was going to college.

Sara, explains that she has had casual sex with a close friend's cousin who lives in a different state:

I: Okay. And you like this guy.

R: Yeah. I still do, but he lives in (another state), so it's never gonna' happen.

I: ...Um and how like- um did you think that by sleeping with him, that that would elevate you to girlfriend status?

R: No. I knew it wasn't- It was just gonna be a casual-that I knew was going to be a casual thing...Because he lives in (another state) and I lived up here. I knew that I was never gonna' live there, and he was never gonna' live here. And the long-distance thing would have never worked.

I: Okay. But you said you still like him though.

R: Yeah.

The geographic distance makes Sara aware that her casual sex partner is unlikely to evolve into a serious romantic one. However, when Sara and her partner are in the same location, she nevertheless wants to be intimate with him.

In other instances individuals who participated in the in-depth interview indicated that they did not want to start romantic relationships in anticipation of moving in the near future. Even a temporary move can prevent people from forming a committed relationship. Violet explains why she does not want to have a romantic relationship, "You know I, I wasn't like, I was just being single for a while. And I could, I have been, I studied abroad and I went to (foreign country) for about six months so I was like no relationships. I'm just going to go and meet a new guy every night. That's what I'm doing." Violet feels that having a committed relationship would be holding her back from fully experiencing the time she had carved out to study abroad.

*Too Young to Be Tied Down.* Even though a number of stated motivations seem consistent with our notion of life course specific motivations, the survey data indicate that most

young adults who had casual sex do not think they are too young to be tied down. Nevertheless, one-quarter (26%) of men and 20% of women who have had recent casual sex agree with this statement. (Table 2). These findings parallel the responses from the qualitative interviews. For instance, A.J., a 17-year-old who got his GED while in jail, reported three recent casual sex partners and explains, “I can’t be in a serious relationship at a young age...Because there’s too many people to see. You know, too many things to do.” However, the narratives reveal that many respondents accept that there is an age they feel that they should stop having casual sex, but they indicate that they simply haven’t reached it yet. Quinton, an 18-year-old who just graduated high school with four recent casual sex partners, explains how he is in the process of changing:

Oh that made me change about the females because like I was saying, about the relationships...I tried to like work out a relationship and give them months and shit instead of weeks...I’m only 19 and I be feeling like I’m 90 and shit.

The narratives reveal considerable diversity in these calculations; however, as other individuals within the sample believe that they are too old to have casual sex. For example, Melvin, explains why he does not want to have casual sex anymore:

I: So tell me like- what do you mean, you got tired of having like a hookup buddy?

R: Like um because it-it gets old. It’s played out to me now...I tried to have friends with benefits, but I didn’t want to get like emotionally attached to somebody. Like with some other females, I wasn’t really emotionally attached...Because I wasn’t ready for a girlfriend...it was just like I wanted a girlfriend. I wanted to be serious with a female... Because I feel for one, just try. I mean I was what-twenty! I was getting older.

From these respondents’ perspectives, casual sex is viewed as a normal part of the life course. However, many of the comments do reflect that this is a developmental phase and indicate that later on they may want to stop having casual sex and start to look for more serious relationships, but studies have documented considerable diversity in the degree to which individuals “feel like an adult,” (Benson and Elder 2011) and statistics reveal increasing complexity in what

constitutes normative pathways and in the sequence or ordering of the various life events. Such discussions about the place of casual sex similarly reveal that most individuals accept the idea of eventually settling down, but vary significantly in the timetable they find desirable for this to occur.

### *Consequences of Casual Sex*

Even though casual sex most often involves low attachment and is viewed as lower emotional risk compared to committed relationships, respondents still recognize the consequences of their casual sex behavior. In the qualitative interviews, respondents state that there are both positive and negative consequences of casual sex. One of the most common negative consequences of casual sex is that someone is emotionally hurt by the relationship. Another negative consequence is that casual sex can sometimes lead to confrontation if the casual sex partner is in a committed relationship with someone else. The positive consequences include eventually moving into a committed relationship or friendship, enjoying casual sex and wanting to continue the behavior, and getting approval from peers.

*Getting too Attached.* A number of male and female respondents report getting emotionally hurt by casual sex relationships. For instance, Justin, a 17-year-old with three casual sex partners, explains that he feels used by his reoccurring casual sex partner:

I: ...What did you want out of the relationship with Tonya that you weren't getting?

R: I don't know. I mean, a relationship, you should care about each other or something. You should talk to each other. Stuff like that. That's (sex) all she was worried about.

Samantha, a woman with three casual sex partners and some community college experience, does not feel used like Justin, but does feel like she is settling when she engaged in casual sex relationships:

I: Why not a relationship? Why for you, does this work?



R: It don't, in a way. I guess I'm settling for less... We've never discussed a relationship.

I: And in your mind, you feel like that's settling.

R: To a certain extent, because I'm still lonely.

Unfortunately, some young adults do get hurt when there is a mismatch and one partner wants commitment and the other one does not. , some respondents have casual sex because they would rather have sex with someone they are not in a committed relationship with than not have anyone at all. Thus, even though some respondents indicated that they kept relationships casual to avoid getting hurt, lack of attachment can nevertheless result in hurt feelings on the part of one or both partners.

*Drama with the other Boyfriend/Girlfriend.* Sometimes casual sex occurs when one of the partners is in a committed relationship with someone else. As reported above, among young adults who had recent casual sex 38% had sex while one of the partners was dating someone else at some point in time. When this happens, there is a chance that there will be confrontation with the casual sex partner's other committed partner. Janis, an 18-year-old woman with three casual sex partners explains that her casual sex partner Allen's girlfriend does not like her because Janis slept with her boyfriend. "...And she don't like me, she rolls her eyes and stuff at me, but you can't be mad at me, be mad at your boyfriend." Janis goes on to say that Allan, and her boyfriend, Jonathan, got into a fight to the point that Jonathan choked Allan. Casual sex can sometimes lead to jealousy and possible conflict when the casual sex activity is actually cheating in a committed relationship.

*Casual Sex is NOT Always about Regret.* As expected, respondents who have had casual sex are not likely to report that love is a condition for sex. Only 18% of men and 24% of women who have had a recent casual sex partner agree with the idea that sex should only occur with

someone they love (Table 2). For example, Randy describes his definition of a casual sex relationship:

If you're gonna be friends with benefits, then it's basically like "when I want to have sex and when you want to have sex, we're gonna have sex." And then "if you want to have sex with somebody else, then you have sex with somebody else." And just not get mad at each other because it's guaranteed- well not necessarily guaranteed, but it's sex when you want it at the push of a button, or a phone call. Like hey, what's up? Want to come over? Okay.

Although women more often than men report having regrets, it is important to highlight that almost 51% of our sample indicated that they did not regret their most recent casual sex relationship (Table 2). Carla, a freshman at a community college with four recent casual sex partners, states:

I: And how did you come to the decision to develop that level of intimacy?

R: To sleep together?

I: Yeah.

R: It was Easter and I was drunk and he walked over from a friends. We went over to our friend Amanda's house. He wasn't drunk though that's the thing. I was drunk. He wasn't. I mean we stayed the night at my friend Amanda's house and one thing led to another.

I: Sure but what was the decision making process in your mind. I mean ok you're drunk but I mean you were down with it right?

R: Oh, yeah, I was down with it.

Even when looking back at a casual sex relationship, Carla does not express that she feels remorse about her experience. In fact, she explicitly states that she wanted to have that casual sex relationship. In the past two years, Carla has had four casual sex partners, but only one committed romantic relationship.

*Casual Sex Can Lead to Committed Relationships.* As stated above, most casual sex partner experiences are not formed with the idea of developing a romantic relationship.

However, twenty-eight percent of men and 34% of women who report a casual sex experience

indicated that they want to become boyfriend/girlfriend after having sex. Thus, casual sex can sometimes be a step in the direction of a romantic relationship. Twenty-six percent of individuals who have casual sex state that they are somewhat closer or much closer after the first time they had sex with their most recent casual sex partner (Table 2). For example, Tim, 20-year-old man with four recent casual sex partners, explains how he slept with his girlfriend the first day they met, “The first time we had met and had sex the first day we met, the next time we got together we became boyfriend and girlfriend and that was monogamy right there.” It is not typical, but committed relationships sometimes start as casual sex relationships. Additional analyses indicate that it is rare to start a romantic relationship with sex; only five percent of the total sample has had sex with their current or most recent boyfriend/girlfriend on the first day they met (results not shown).

Another possibility is that casual sex can lead to friendships. Kelly, a 20-year-old with one casual sex partner, states that her only casual sex partner became one of her close friends:

- R: Um, I mean right now it’s just kind of like standing arrangement I guess.
- I: And neither one of you has gotten attached?
- R: No. I mean we’re friends, we talk everyday so it’s like, I mean it’s not like, there’s no attachment whatsoever.
- I: You don’t expect any attachment from Ethan’s end?
- R: No, not at all...we kind of became friends after the fact because we were more acquaintance before. So I mean I guess I would just talk to him about it and try to work it out.

For Kelly, casual sex is not an experience that she later regretted, but feels it brought her closer not in the traditional romantic sense.

*Approval from Peers.* Even though peer groups provide a normative climate that can support casual sex, one-quarter (23%) of men and hardly any women (4%) state that a motivator for their own involvement was that their friends’ casual sex (Table 2). Even though a small

percentage of respondents report that peer pressure is a motivator for casual sex, some report acceptance by their friends after casual sex. Table 2 illustrates that 28% of men and 22% of women either agreed or strongly agreed that their friends approve of casual relationships. For instance, Kaleb, a 21-year-old with two recent casual sex partners, explains that he gets high peer regard because he has had casual sex partners:

I: And did you ever feel pressure back when you were out there (not in a romantic relationship)?

R: ...I mean...I was the best of them all. (laughter) Until ... for the two year. Then, after that is was somebody else. It was a competition.

Kaleb feels he earned respect from his peers for having more casual sex partners than his friends, but has since changed since he got a girlfriend. Peers can influence the type of casual sex partner one chooses. Carla, a community college student with four recent casual sex partners, explains that her friends support her having casual sex, but only with certain types of men:

R: Um, with Tom, all my friends can't stand him. They think that he was in it for sex just because he had the whole line of the future and they all think it's bullshit. Ian, everyone's friends with Ian so there's none there. They understand where I'm coming from with the whole, the whole thing with him...I talk to my friends about everything."

Carla's friends do not judge her for having casual sex, but there is the implication that she should be more selective in her choices of casual sex partners. Kaleb's and Carla's experiences illustrate that motivations for and consequences of casual sex may affect each other through a continuous feedback process. Although respondents appeared reluctant to cite peer influence as a specific motivator, prior analyses of the TARS data indicate that friends' attitudes were a significant predictor of number of sexual partners (Lyons et al. 2011), and their accounts do not uniformly suggest that peers sanction them negatively for engaging in casual sex. This acceptance, along with other motivations described above can free up the individual to engage in further casual sex behavior. Consistent with this, it is important to note that the majority of

young adults (72%) tell their friends about their relationship (Table 2), although some indicated within their narratives that not talking or bragging about these experiences was a sign of their maturity. Thus, several respondents state that they talked to their peers about their casual sex experiences when they were younger, but not anymore. For instance, James, who dropped out of high school and has five recent casual sex partners and, states:

R: I mean, yeah, when you were younger, I guess but now it really doesn't matter. I mean like I don't even need to tell anybody else what I'm doing as far as that goes, you know...Because I mean like I guess when I was younger it was like I was all excited about it, like I wanted to brag to my friends about it and so forth...

Peer support can be a motivator and consequence of engaging in casual sex behavior. In addition, bragging about casual sex partners may be age specific.

## DISCUSSION

As found in other research (Bogle 2008; Lyons et al. 2010; Fielder and Carey 2010), these data reveal that casual sex is a common occurrence during early young adulthood. We find a high level of acceptance about casual sex behavior using both quantitative and qualitative data. One of the major limitations of prior research on casual sex is that it often adopts a problem lens, for example the role of alcohol use (Bogle 2008), feelings of regret (Eshbaugh and Gute 2008) and exposure to sexual risk (Poppen 1995). The literature often omits the notion that motivations for participating in casual sex and their implications or consequences are not always seen in a negative light. The current research has demonstrated what may be somewhat universal motivations for casual sex, including substance use, feeling horny, wanting to have fun, and avoiding emotional attachment, which are found to be important factors in this sample as well. However, the results highlight that in multiple respects the nature of early young adulthood influences why individuals participate in these experiences during this time in their lives. We find several motivations for casual sex that are life course stage specific: these may be viewed as transitional relationships, involve social learning and serve as a reaction to prior negative

experiences, stem from busy schedules or residential moves, or from the belief that at this point they are too young to be tied down. Some of the older respondents did claim that they believed that they were getting too old for casual sex and were considering the benefits of a longer-term relationship. The data revealed that a majority of the individuals who reported casual involvement had been involved in one or more traditional dating relationships as well, suggesting that these were not necessarily mutually exclusive sets of relationship experiences.

The research interest in casual sex stems from concerns about the negative consequences of casual sexual experiences, which are realistic concerns as these may well be attached to significant negative consequences (i.e. inconsistent condom use). While we believe that it is important to develop a more comprehensive view of casual sex that encompasses some of the positives noted above, clearly there may be negative social psychological consequences for some of the individuals involved. For example, about half of the respondents noted regret about the most recent casual sexual encounter. Specific negative consequences mentioned within the context of the relationship history narratives included becoming emotionally attached and experiencing confrontations with committed partners. Yet, clearly not all casual sex relationships are viewed negatively by the participants themselves, nor are all of the outcomes negative. As suggested by many of the quotes above, a number of men and women like and enjoy their casual relationships and view them as a normal part of their sexual lives. Although individuals enrolled in universities or four-year higher education institutions have lower numbers of casual sex partners compared to other respondents (Lyons et al. 2010), this is still a relatively common occurrence even within these subpopulations. In the current study, university students claimed that being in a committed relationship could prevent them from achieving goals such as going abroad for school or devoting time to their studies. Thus, this type of motivator for casual sex did not come up as often for non-university students, suggesting that it is important to examine respondents' social locations as well as their life stage. Finally, some respondents

frame their experience through a positive lens in terms of feeling closer to their sexual partner and gaining acceptance from peers.

Although a number of prior studies have suggested distinctly gendered motivations and consequences for casual sex, the current analyses did not reveal significant gender differences in terms of the traditional motivations for physical pleasure and substance use. These three motivations for casual sex, being horny, thought it would be fun, and substance use, ranked high for both men and women. Although peer considerations were not frequently mentioned as motivations by either gender, men more often than women stated that they had casual because their friends were doing it. However, women in the sample who had engaged in casual sexual encounters often discussed these experiences with friends, and according to their narrative accounts did not find that friends disapproved of their behaviors. Results indicated no gender differences in the two relationship-focused motivations (being in love and wanting to be closer). Male and female respondents infrequently endorsed these motivations, suggesting that both men and women understand the sexual script that casual sex is meant to have less emotional attachment. In terms of consequences, men less often than women report regret. However, it is notable that a substantial share of women do not report that they regret casual sexual experiences. Future research may benefit from considering more subtle measures of the positives and negatives associated with casual sex, including feelings of regret that we could not detect relying on this straightforward question.

The findings of this study underscore the need to examine life course specific as well as more general motivations for engaging in casual sex behavior. Most individuals have experience with romantic relationships before they enter young adulthood (Carver, Joyner, and Udry 2003). We find that prior romantic relationships actually can lead to an increase in casual sex in early young adulthood because, for example, individuals become hesitant to form committed relationships after negative experiences in romantic relationships. In other words, previous

events influence later events in the life course (Elder 1985). As noted by life course researchers (Mouw 2005; Osgood et al. 2005; Rindfuss 1991), young adulthood is often a time with high residential movement, education enrollment, and the start of full-time employment. These life course specific young adulthood characteristics influence casual sex behavior. The qualitative results illustrate that the respondents feel that their busy schedules, residential moves, and subjective interpretations about this phase of life (feeling too young to be tied down) are important motivations for casual sex behavior. Casual sex relationships seem to fill a need and appear to be functional for young adults who want to have intimate relationships, but do not consider themselves ready to be in the full adult role of committed romantic relationships or marriage.

This study has a few limitations. The TARS is an excellent quantitative and qualitative dataset however, the sample is regional. Nevertheless, national data sets, even those focusing specifically on sexual behavior, do not include information about motivations and perceived implications/consequences, and do not contain the type of qualitative interviews that permit a fuller investigation of perceptions and motivations. Another limitation of the current analysis is that we did not focus on the ways in which socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity or other key characteristics (e.g. family background) may influence these attitudes and behaviors.

Future research on casual sex should explore in more detail the role that identities play in decision-making about these behaviors. Casual sex is relatively common or normative for this age group, and young adults reflect this by stating that they are too young to be tied down. Additional research on other subjective appraisals (e.g. “whether the individual feels like an adult” –see Benson and Elder 2011) is related to the individual’s pattern of romantic and sexual behaviors. It is possible that individuals who “feel like an adult” are less likely to have casual sex because they have at least in a subjective sense transitioned out of the life course stage of



early young adulthood. The qualitative results suggest that individuals often use negative experiences with past romantic partners as a motivator for participating in casual sex behavior, suggesting the importance of considering cognitive and emotional processes that trace back to earlier relationship dynamics. Future research should investigate the role of gender distrust casual sex behavior, which could highlight additional ways in which young men and women view these relationships in somewhat different ways.

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics

	<b>In-Depth Interview Sample (N=44)</b>	<b>Survey Sample (N=210)</b>
	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<i>Gender</i>		
Female	32%	40%
Male	68%	60%
<i>Race</i>		
White	50%	52%
Black	32%	32%
Hispanic	18%	14%
Other	5%	2%
<i>Age</i>		
17	7%	0%
18	23%	26%
19	11%	20%
20	43%	38%
21	16%	15%
22	0%	1%
<i>Education</i>		
Less than High School	16%	15%
Enrolled in High School	25%	28%
High School Degree/GED not enrolled	27%	24%
Enrolled in College	32%	33%

Source: Toledo Adolescence Relationship Study Wave Three

**Table 2. The Percent of Respondents who either Agreed or Strongly Agreed with the Statement**

	Total	Females	Males	t	Sig
<b>Attitudes</b>					
A person should only have sex with someone they love	21%	24%	18%	-1.05	
<b>Relationship Context</b>					
Had casual sex with someone they just met	11%	10%	13%	0.66	
Has sex more than once with most recent casual sex partner	62%	63%	62%	0.18	
<b>Motives</b>					
Horny	64%	62%	65%	0.17	
Fun	52%	44%	58%	1.93	
Drinking or Drug Use	32%	38%	28%	-1.61	
Love	9%	8%	10%	0.22	
Thought it would bring the relationship closer	19%	22%	18%	-0.83	
Wanted to become boyfriend/girlfriend	30%	34%	28%	-0.85	
Too young to be tied down	24%	20%	26%	0.91	
Friends were doing it	16%	4%	23%	4.04	***
<b>Implications</b>					
Friends approve of relationship	26%	20%	28%	1.33	
Told friends about the relationship	72%	77%	69%	-1.22	
Had regret (% who had regret)	51%	60%	46%	-2.08	*
Sex brought the relationship closer	26%	30%	23%	-1.23	

Source: Toledo Adolescence Relationship Study Wave Three

N=210

\*\*\*p&lt;.001; \*\*p&lt;.01; \*p&lt;.05 †

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