

# Childhood Religious Affiliation and Formal Sex Education

## Regarding Birth Control

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### Research Questions

- Does formal sex education regarding knowledge of birth control differ based upon childhood religious affiliation?
- Does this association vary by gender?

### Significance

- Adolescent pregnancy is a problem that can result in poor economic well-being, increased substance abuse, increased depression rates, and poor pregnancy outcomes for both mothers and children (Amjad et al., 2019; Holtfreter & Walker, 2019).

### Background

- Government funded abstinence-only sex education programs have consistently proven ineffective when compared to more comprehensive sex education programs (Hall et al., 2016).
- Knowledge of contraceptives correlates to decreased adolescent pregnancy rates (Amjad et al., 2019).
- Different religions have differing views about contraceptives that can effect the formal sex education of their youth (Hill et al., 2014).

### Hypotheses

- Individuals who were raised Catholic will have the least formal knowledge about birth control methods.
- Individuals who were raised Catholic will have the most formal instruction about abstinence.
- These differences will be found both for men and women.

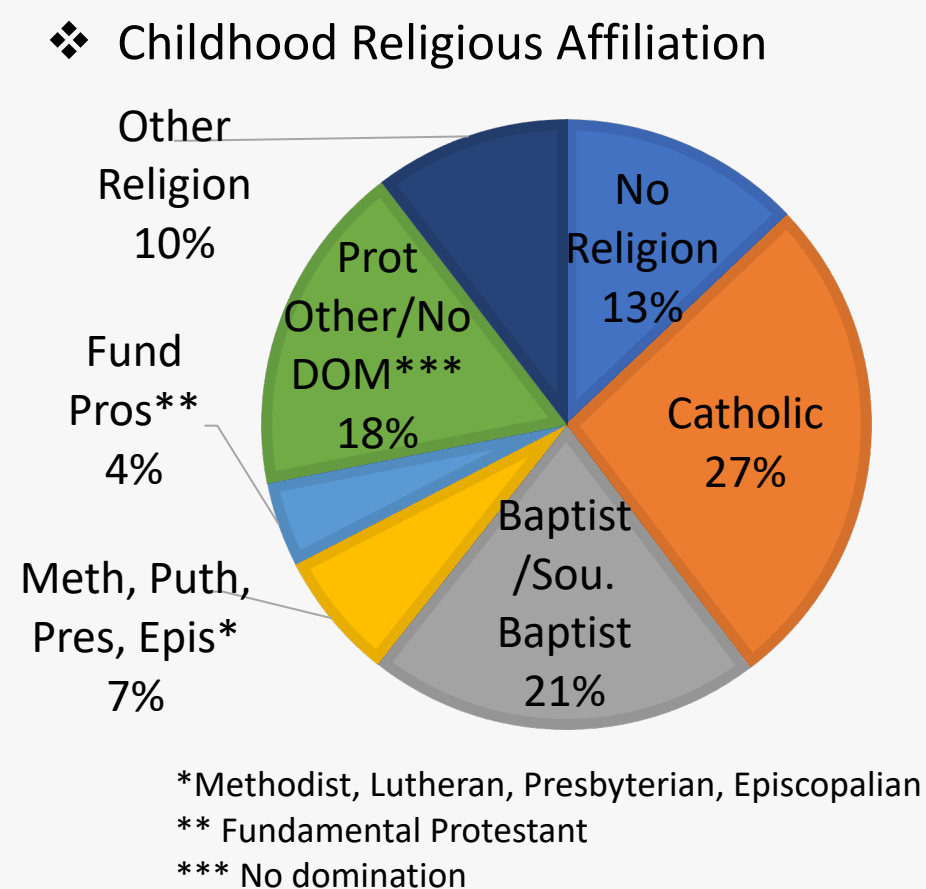
### Data and Sample

- 2015-2017 National Survey of Family Growth
- N = 3,205 (1,674 women and 1,531 men)
- Respondents aged 15-24 years old

### Dependent Variable

- ❖ Contraceptive Knowledge before age 18
  - 1) Birth control  
“Did you have [have you had] any formal instruction at school, church, a community center or some other place about methods of birth control?”  
Yes: 66.5%  
No: 33.5%
  - 2) Abstinence  
“Did you have [have you had] any formal instruction at school, church, a community center or some other place about waiting until marriage to have sex?”  
Yes: 64.6%  
No: 35.4%

### Independent Variable



### Control Variable

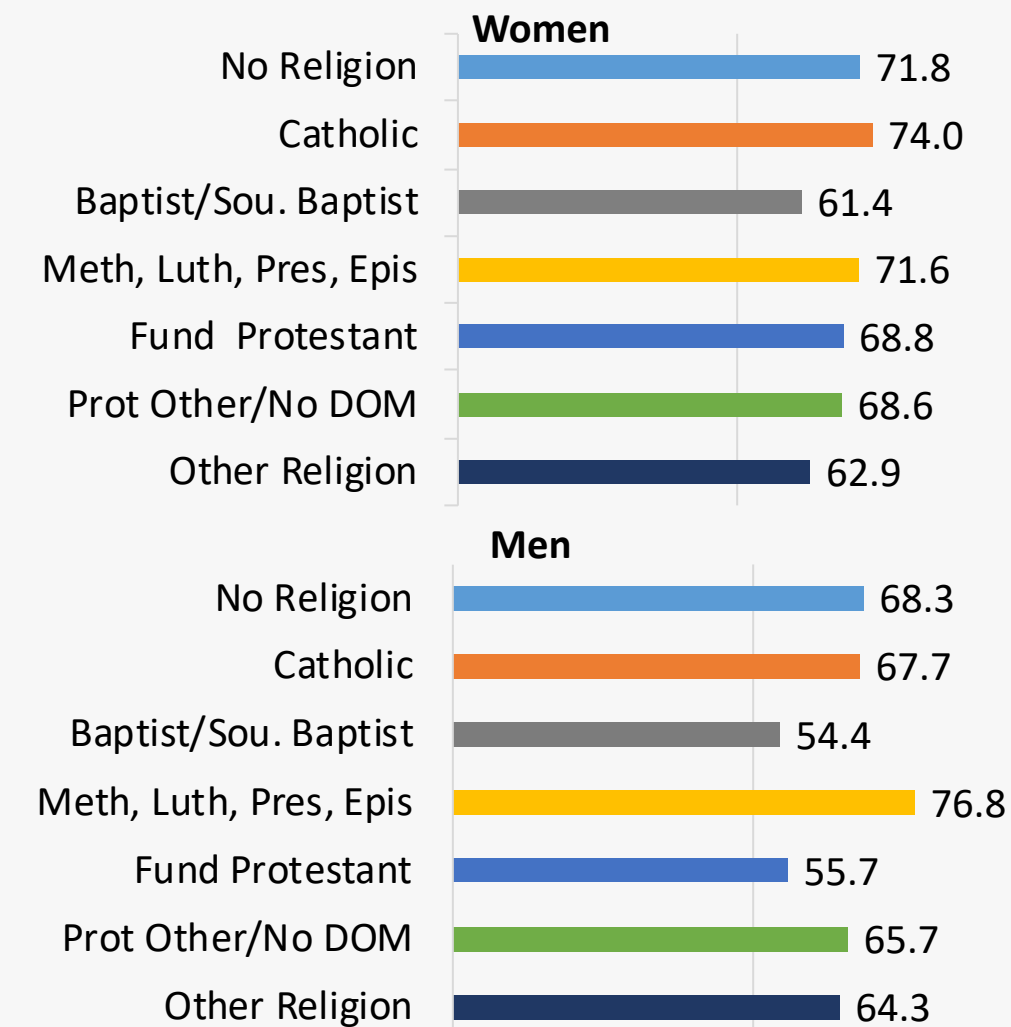
- ❖ Gender  
Male: 64.6%  
Female: 35.4%

### Analysis

- Cross tabulation and Chi-square test using SPSS

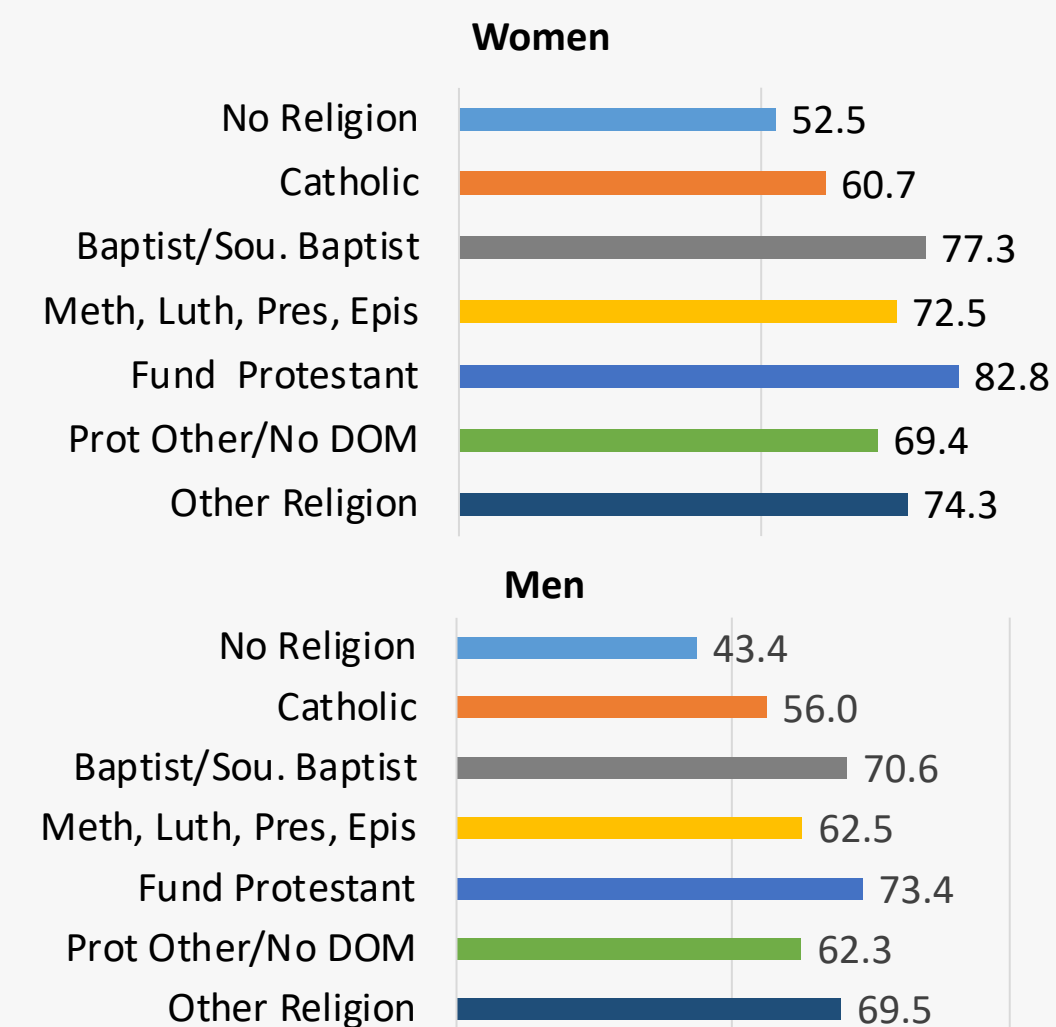
### Results

Figure 1: % Received Formal Education About Birth Control Methods



Chi-square tests are significant for women at  $p < .01$  and for men at  $p < .001$ .

Figure 2: % Formal Education About Abstinence by Religion



Note: Chi-square test are significant for both men and women at  $p < .001$ .

### Summary of Findings

- Young people who were raised Baptist, regardless of gender, were least likely to report having been taught birth control methods.
- Young people who were raised Fundamentalist Protestant were most likely to report having formal instruction on abstinence.
- Women, more so than men, reported having formal instruction on abstinence across all religious affiliations.

### Future Research

- Research looking into sex education differences by region in the United States.
- Research that includes data on adolescent pregnancy rates.
- Research that looks into a wider range of religious affiliations (Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, etc.).

### References

- Amjad, S. et. al. (2019). Social determinants of health and adverse maternal and birth outcomes in adolescent pregnancies: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Paediatric and Perinatal Epidemiology*, 33(1), 88–99.
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- Hill, N. J. et. al. (2014). “My religion picked my birth control”: The influence of religion on contraceptive use. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 53(3), 825–833.
- Holtfreter, K. & Walker, D. (2019). Teen pregnancy, depression, and substance abuse: The conditioning effect of deviant peers. *Deviant Behavior*.