

Music Lyrics and Influence on Teen Sex¹

Donna Davis²

Transcribed from the Family Album Radio Program, a co-production of University of Florida IFAS Extension, the Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences and of WUFT-FM. If you'd like to learn more, please visit our website at familyalbumradio.org

Listening, learning, and living together: it's the science of life.



Credits: Hemera

As a baby boomer, I was part of the generation that grew up with rock and roll. I recall the first time I heard my mother respond to explicit lyrics my older brother was listening to and thinking what a renegade he was. They weren't nearly as explicit as the lyrics of today's music, and while I swore that I'd never become my mother, I now find myself fighting with my children to turn it off! Perhaps mom was not so far off-base after all!

In a recent national study of nearly 1,500 teenagers, researchers found a link between certain music and increased sexual behavior among teens. The researchers point out that the average teenager listens to 1.5 to 2.5 hours of music each day. While sexual themes are common in much of this music, the lyrics range from romantic and playful to degrading and hostile. What they found was that teens who listen to music with *degrading* sexual lyrics—including explicit references to sex and, especially, demeaning in their treatment of women—are more likely to experience advances in a range of their sexual activities, including initiation of intercourse. The association was evident among boys and girls, as well as among whites and nonwhite teens, and across a wide variety of other personal and social factors. The same did not hold true for music with other sexual lyrics.

The researchers encourage parents to monitor the type of music their children are exposed to, set limits on what they can purchase and listen to, and consider the lyrics of the music they're listening to when their children are around.

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2. Donna Davis, senior producer, Family Album Radio, Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611.

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To listen to the radio broadcast:

http://www.radiosource.net/radio_stories/503.mp3

http://www.radiosource.net/radio_stories/503.wav

Reference

Martino, S. C., Collins, R. L., Elliott, M. N., Strachman, A., Kanouse, D. E., and Berry, S. H. (2006). Exposure to degrading versus nondegrading music lyrics and sexual behavior among youth [Electronic version]. *Pediatrics*, 118 (2), e430-e441. Retrieved August 15, 2006, from <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/118/2/e430>.