



**Immigrant Status, Substance  
Use and Sexual Risk Among  
Afro-Caribbean Adolescents  
living in South Florida**

**Kim Jolly**

# Dissertation Committee

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# What brought me to this study

## A nursing situation

Marie, a 16 y/o Afro-Caribbean student who come to the school clinic because she missed her period for 3 months

Marie is undocumented, she cannot work or make plans for college and is concerned about her future

Marie has a positive pregnancy test and a sexually transmitted infection

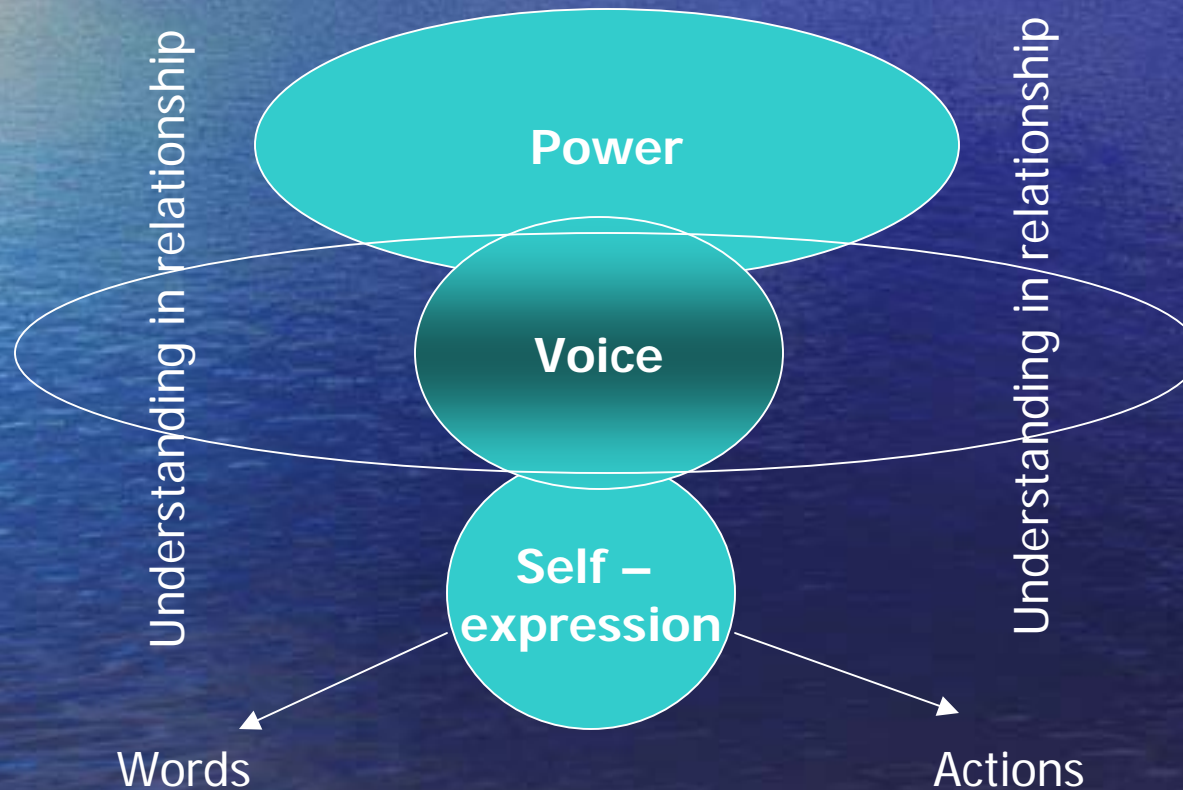
Marie lives with her mother; unsupervised after school; mother is not aware Marie is sexually active; she is not using birth control methods, including condoms

# Nursing as Caring

- Boykin and Schoenhofer (2001) believe “the unique focus of nursing is nurturing persons living caring and growing in caring.
- Regardless of the circumstances, nurses are advocates of human caring by being in the moment for patients and their families.
- With further understanding of Afro-Caribbean adolescents and their experiences, nurses providing care will increase trust, along with a safe environments for their voices to be heard.

# Adolescent Voice

Adolescent voice is the power to express self through words and actions. Being heard enables understanding in relationship.



Jolly, Weiss and Liehr, (2007)

# Undocumented population living in the U.S.

Total	Children in Florida schools	Adults with U.S. born children in Florida Schools
13 million	155,000	280,000

Passel, Van Hook, and Bean (2006)

# What we know about Caribbean adolescents risky behavior: The Literature

Epstein, Botvin, Baker and Diaz (1998) -  
Afro-Caribbean adolescents consumed  
more alcohol and got drunk more often  
than other adolescent groups.

Hunt et al. (2002) – many gang members  
are ethnic minorities including many who  
are undocumented.

Silverman, Decker and Raj's (2007) - female immigrant adolescents experience physical and sexual dating violence in relation to immigrant status and language spoken in the home.

Sexually active Afro-Caribbean adolescents living in the Caribbean report sexual debut as early as 10 y/o; less than 3 out of 10 use birth control and very few use condoms (Blum et al., 2003; Correia & Cunningham, 2003; Halcon et al., 2003).



# Purpose

## Specific

Describe the co-occurrence of substance use and sexual activity among Afro-Caribbean adolescents with attention to legal status, socio-demographic factors and risk-taking attitudes and behaviors

## Overall

To access the voice of the hidden population of the Afro-Caribbean adolescents particularly those who are undocumented

# Methods

## Sample and Recruitment

- Convenience sampling
- 106 Afro-Caribbean adolescents from community centers in South Florida
- Invitation flyers were distributed
- Parental consent and study information was available in English and Creole
- 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade Afro-Caribbean adolescents
- Five dollar gift card as an incentive

# Descriptive exploratory Study

Describe socio-demographics, immigrant status and risk-taking of adolescents who have not been studied.

- Socio-Demographics (Parental presence; Language; Parental level of education)
- Immigrant status (Documented; Undocumented)
- Risky-taking (Sexual risk; Substance use)

# Methods

## Data Collection Protocol

- Parental consent
- Adolescent assent
- Adolescent Risk-Taking Instrument (ARTI)  
part I and II

# Methods

ARTI Part I (44 item measure)

The ARTI is a 44 item measure with two subscales

- Risk-taking (sexual activity, substance use and violence) Reliability (Cronbach's coefficient alpha was .77)
- Social adaptation (propensity for risk-taking) Reliability (Cronbach's coefficient alpha was .80)

Part I used a four point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree

# ARTI: Risk-taking examples (Questions)

- I like to watch violent TV shows and movies
- When I want to be a part of a gang, I drink or do drugs
- When I want some excitement, I have sex with someone new

# ARTI: Social adaptation examples (Questions)

- I look forward to doing new things
- I know my parents are proud of me
- I make friends easily

# ARTI Part II

- Afro-Caribbean background
- Language spoken in the home
- Length of time in the U.S.
- Adult presence before and after school
- Religion
- Style of discipline
- Blacks and Blunts



# Demographics

Characteristics	Range	Mean	SD
Age	12-19	16.0	1.83
Age of Sexual Initiation	5-18	11.5	3.25
		n	Frequency (%)
Gender			
Male		49	46
Female		57	54
Social Security			
Yes (documented)		79	75
No (undocumented)		27	25
Sexual activity			
Yes (documented)		41	52
No (undocumented)		10	37
Born in the U.S			
Yes		59	56
No		47	44

# Research question #1

What percentages of documented and undocumented (social security number; yes; no) Afro-Caribbean adolescents are using substances and simultaneously engaging in sexual activity?

Analysis: Frequencies and Crosstabs

# Results

## Question One

Having sex and drinking alcohol

Social Security Number	Always	Sometime	Never
Yes	2.4% (n=1)	12.2% (n=5)	85.4% (n=35)
No	0%	40% (n=4)	60% (n=6)

A larger % of undocumented adolescents reported simultaneous sexual activity and drinking

# Results

## Question One

### Having Sex and Using Drugs

Social Security Number	Always	Sometime	Never
Yes	2.4% (n=1)	4.9% (n=5)	92.7% (n=38)
No	0%	30% (n=3)	70% (n=7)

A larger % of undocumented Afro-Caribbean adolescent reported simultaneous sexual activity and drug use

# Research Question #2

What are the socio-demographic factors (age; gender; parental presence; language spoken in the home; parent level of education) associated with substance use and simultaneously engaging in sexual activity for documented and undocumented Afro-Caribbean adolescents living in South Florida?

Analysis: Frequencies and Crosstabs

# Results

## Question Two

- Undocumented adolescent between 17-19 years were more likely to use substances and simultaneously engage in sexual activity
- Fourteen % of documented and 20% of undocumented adolescents had adult presence after school
- Creole was spoken more than English in the homes of both documented and undocumented adolescents
- None of the undocumented adolescents' mothers completed high school; 4.9% of the documented adolescents mothers completed high school
- See hand out for more details

# Research question #3

- What are the differences in risk-taking attitudes and propensity for taking risks, as measured by the Adolescent Risk Taking Instrument (ARTI) for documented and undocumented Afro-Caribbean adolescents living in South Florida.

Analysis: Independent t-test

# Results

## Question Three

Risk-taking behaviors of Afro-Caribbean adolescents

Risk-taking behaviors	Mean	SD
Social Security Number		
Yes (n=79)	2.04	.44
No (n=27)	1.89	.47

$$t = 1.43, p = .156$$

There is no significant difference in risk-taking behaviors between documented and undocumented Afro-Caribbean adolescents



# Results

## Question Three

Social Adaptation (propensity for risk) of Afro-Caribbean adolescents

Risk-taking behaviors	Mean	SD
Social Security Number		
Yes (n=79)	3.23	.45
No (n=27)	3.20	.35

$$t = 0.37, p = 0.712$$

There is no significant difference in social adaptation between documented and undocumented Afro-Caribbean adolescents

# Additional findings

- Seventy-nine % of the adolescents lived in the U.S. between 11-18 years
- Nearly 20% used Blacks
- Thirty five % used Alcohol
- Nearly 54% reported beatings as a form of discipline
- Forty-three % lived with single mothers
- Fifty-three % never talk about sex with parents

# Limitations

- Generalizability of the results
  - Convenience sampling from community centers
  - Small sample size, particularly undocumented
- Accuracy of SSI # report
- Acculturation was not measured
- ARTI to access voice

# Recommendation for Future Research

- Replicate in the school system and add an acculturation measure
- Conduct a qualitative study gathering the stories of Afro-Caribbean adolescents about risk-taking behaviors

# Nursing Involvement in Policy Development

- Bring the voice of this population to the table of school systems
- Advocate for recording distinct cultural groups within the African-American community

# Implications of Nursing Practice

- Use the lens of "*Nursing as Caring*"  
Nurses are called to set aside their preconceptions and develop a trusting relationship with this population
- Culturally-sensitive adolescent-friendly programs focusing on complex factors related to risky behaviors

# What is the riskiest thing you have ever done?

- "held a gun"
- "I tried to kill myself when I was 11 y/o"
- "going to a girl's house to fight her"
- "around people shooting and stabbing"
- "drinking shots"
- "having sex with a man I didn't know"
- "when I stabbed my friend"
- "steal and hold a gun"
- "smoked weed, took a puff from a blunt"
- "hit my little sister till she bleed"

# Unknown title and author

## A hidden voice

I can't tell my father;  
He would shoot me.  
I can't tell my mother;  
She would throw me out of the house.  
I can't tell my sister;  
She would rat on me.  
I can't tell Chris  
He would offer to marry me.  
I'm so afraid and scared;  
There's no one left to turn to.





This research is a first step in giving Afro-Caribbean adolescents a voice with caring nurses

## Questions