

Prevalence of Multiple Forms of Sexting Behavior Among Youth: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis

WHAT IS THE RESEARCH ABOUT?

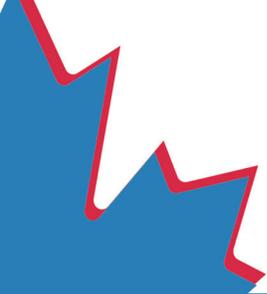
- This study examined the prevalence of 'sexting' among youth, or the sharing of sexually explicit images, videos, or messages through electronic means.
- Before this study, it was not known how often sexting was happening among youth, and whether sexting varied by age, gender, location, or method of sexting.
- It is important to understand the prevalence of sexting among youth, so we can inform policy and prevention efforts.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?

- A substantial minority of youth engage in sexting, which may mean it is a normal part of sexual behaviour and identity formation.
- Sexting should not be criminalized. Instead, we should create educational programs on the responsible use of technology and healthy relationships.
- Policymakers should create legislation to address non-consensual sexting for adolescents.

WHAT DID THE RESEARCHERS DO?

- In this study, the researchers searched for articles that examined sexting among youth. 39 articles that met the criteria for the study were identified.
- The authors then summarized the results from the 39 studies (conducted a 'meta-analysis'), which included a sample of 110,380 adolescents.



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WHAT DID THE RESEARCHERS FIND?

- 14.8% of youth had sent a sext
- 27.4% of youth had received a sext
- 12.0% of youth had forwarded a sext without consent
- 8.4% of youth had a sext forwarded to them without consent
- Rates of sexting increased with age, and increased over time
- Sexting was more likely to happen on mobile devices as compared to computers

HOW CAN YOU USE THIS RESEARCH?

- Sexting may be a normal part of sexual behaviour and identity formation in the digital age; because of this, sexting should not be criminalized.
- Educational programs that focus on the responsible use of technology and healthy relationships should be created.
- Discussions with youth by parents, educators, and health professionals should start when children are in middle school, given that on average, children receive their first smartphone at 10.3 years old.
- Policymakers should create legislation to address non-consensual sexting for adolescents.
- Future research should examine why youth engage in non-consensual sexting.

ABOUT THE RESEARCHERS

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KEYWORDS

Sexting, youth, sexual behaviour, risky sexual behaviours, intervention

FULL REFERENCE

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