

For Immediate Release
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***The Journal of Sex Research* Finds Links between Facebook® Use and Sexual Behavior in Older Adolescents**

A recent study published in *The Journal of Sex Research*, “**A Pilot Evaluation of Older Adolescents’ Sexual Reference Displays on Facebook,**” is the first to examine correlations between sexual references on college students’ Facebook pages and initiation of sexual intercourse. Sexual references include posts describing sexual experiences or revealing photographs of the profile owner. Based on their findings, the authors discuss how social media can be used to improve sexual health in adolescents.

The study, led by Megan A. Moreno, MD, Assistant Professor at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, surveyed 85 college students actively maintaining Facebook pages about both prior and intended sexual relations. Researchers found that sexual references displayed on Facebook profiles were associated with intention to become sexually active.

Dr. Cynthia Graham, Editor-in-Chief of *The Journal of Sex Research*, says: “Although there is much concern expressed in the media about young people’s use of the Internet, and in particular social networking sites such as Facebook, to initiate sexual relationships/contact, very few studies have been carried out in this area. This study, finding a relationship between sexual displays on Facebook, and reported sexual intentions, provides much needed empirical data on this growing phenomenon.”

In addition to providing scientific findings on the link between social media use and real sexual experiences, the study could open the door to innovative new ways to promote healthy sexuality for adolescents and young adults. Researchers were able to identify a lapse of time, or “intention interval,” between the display of sexual references on Facebook and the initiation of intercourse, which “may represent a critical time period during which clinicians, health educators, or even Facebook itself could deliver targeted education or prevention messages.” National health organizations, as well as colleges and universities, could take advantage of this phenomenon by creating keyword-triggered messages about accessing contraception, STI testing, and other resources, the authors suggest.

This study is currently available for **free online access** on the journal’s website. To download a PDF or text version, go to www.tandfonline.com/HJSR and click on the **News & Offers** tab in the left column.

The Journal of Sex Research is a scholarly journal devoted to the publication of articles relevant to the variety of disciplines involved in the scientific study of sexuality. The journal is designed to stimulate research and promote an interdisciplinary understanding of the diverse topics in contemporary sexual science. A free online sample copy is available on the journal’s website at www.tandfonline.com/HJSR.

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Media Contact

For more information please contact: Emily Finley, Journals Marketing Associate, Taylor & Francis, 325 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106, Tel: (215) 625-8900 Ext. 252, Email: emily.finley@taylorandfrancis.com