

## ABSTRACT

### Popular Music and Associated Health Behaviours Among Female Adolescents 15-19 Years in Three Parishes of Jamaica

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The many health risks faced by adolescents place them high on the list of priorities for family health services. The inculcation of values and sound decision making skills among adolescents are factors which facilitate their resilience.

The alleged negative influence of Jamaica's popular dance hall music has been an issue of much public debate. Even as the lyrical content of some dance hall music get more sexually explicit, a sizeable proportion of our population seem to enjoy them.

Recognizing the power of music, this study was undertaken to explore the relationship between music and adolescents' emotions, self-concept and gender perception. The preference for, use and effects of dance hall and other music was analysed among fifty sexually active (cases) and fifty, reportedly, non-sexually active (control) female adolescents in three parishes. It was statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) that sexual activity was associated with the kinds of feelings evoked by music. There was no conclusive evidence however, that exposure to dance hall or

other types of music is associated with early sexual involvement, or that they contribute to negative feelings about self, men and women.

Soul music was the most valued by both cases and controls and significantly elicited feelings of love, intimacy and loneliness among those who were sexually active. Dance hall music was the preference among adolescents for fun and excitement while reggae music was seen as an instrument for building consciousness and for reflection. Gospel music was more for spirituality.

The words of songs were the major reasons for liking selected songs and this was significantly so for soul music among sexually active and non-sexually active adolescents. Although more detailed research is required, it can be concluded that music is vital to the lives of adolescents and offers scope for use in educational programmes.