Objectives
- Examine determinants of communication [recent and at least once] with significant adults in the lives of adolescents, regarding six health topics.
- Assess the effects of health communication on adolescent sexual activity [recent and at least once].

Participants
- 126 adolescents between 15 and 19 years, residing in a micropolitan/rural area in upstate New York.

Communication Topics
- Alcohol
- Drugs
- HIV/AIDS
- Pregnancy
- Sex
- STDs

Methodology
- Adolescents were recruited into the study by their peers using Participant-Driven Recruitment (PDR), a socially embedded methodology that merges Participatory Research with a chain referral sampling method called Respondent-Driven Sampling (RDS).
- Combination of bivariate and multivariate analysis with social network analysis used to examine determinants of adolescent-adult communication and effects on sexual activity, within the peer network.

Adolescent Peer Network
- Formed through recruitment process
- Serves as the unit of analysis
- Dynamic approach to understand how peer relationships may influence healthy behaviors.

Contributions
- Goes beyond communication with parents to include other significant adults in the adolescent’s life such as grandparents, teachers, and coaches.
- Network analysis and peer network illustrate how our variables of interest are related at individual, dyadic, and structural levels.

Bivariate Results
- Adolescents who reported communicating at least once about alcohol, drugs, pregnancy, or sex were significantly more likely to have had sex at least once [OR = 5.00; 4.87; 2.87; 3.23; respectively].
- Adolescents who reported recently communicating about alcohol, drugs, pregnancy, sex or STDs were significantly more likely to have recently had sex [OR = 4.86; 5.11; 2.59; 4.60; 6.19; respectively].
- Of the socio-demographic variables, adolescents’ age was the only significant predictor of having had sex, both at least once and recently.

Multivariate Results
- Of the behavioral and socio-demographic variables, being sexually active and being female were stronger predictors of communication with adults.
- Adolescents who reported attending religious activities were over three times more likely to have communicated at least once during their lifetime with an adult about pregnancy.
- Adolescents who engaged in a combination of two risk behaviors (alcohol, drug, and/or tobacco use) were almost six times more likely to have recently communicated with an adult about drugs.
- Older adolescents (16 -19 years) were over four times more likely to have recently communicated about alcohol.

Conclusions
- Even with cross-sectional data, strong associations emphasize the importance of communication with adults and its effect on adolescent sexual activity.
- Communication with adults may be a protective factor or an asset, likely to encourage the adoption of safer sexual behaviors among adolescents.
- Thus, increased likelihood of sexual activity may be reflective of responsible (sexual) decision-making by the adolescent, as a result of communication with adults.
- Though not highlighted here, adolescents had tendencies to form significant social connections with peers who shared similar adult communication patterns and similar sexual activity status.
- Interventions must cater to non-metropolitan youth.