

Romantic Relationships Questionnaire

Grade 8 /Year 9

Fast Track Project Technical Report

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Citation

Instrument

Bearman, P.S., Jones, J., & Udry, J.R. (1997). *The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health: Research Design*. Available Online, <http://www.cpc.unc.edu/addhealth>

Report

Muschkin, C.G. (2004). *Romantic Relationships Questionnaire* (Fast Track Project Technical Report). Available from the Fast Track Project website, <http://www.fasttrackproject.org>

Data Sources

Unscored: C9AB

Scored: RRQ9

I. Scale Description

The Romantic Relationships Questionnaire is a 41-item instrument adapted by Fast Track from measures used in the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. Beginning in the seventh grade, Fast Track has administered this questionnaire to assess respondents' relationships and sexual activity. Respondents who report that they are sexually active are asked for additional information, including the number of partners; age at first sexual intercourse; contraception; what, if any, sexually transmitted diseases have been contracted; and the time of first diagnosis. This measure is used through grade 12.

II. Report Sample

This report contains data collected on cohort 1 of the high-risk control sample (n=155) and the normative sample (n=387, N=463 with overlap) from the ninth year of the study. Of these respondents, 96 (21 percent) are missing all data for this measure, including 83 from the normative group (15 from Durham, 31 from Nashville, 18 from Pennsylvania, and 19 from Washington), and 30 from the control group (5 from Durham, 10 from Nashville, 7 from Pennsylvania and 8 from Washington), with overlap between the normative and control groups.

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III. Scaling

Only one summary score was derived for this measure in year 9. This score (RRQ9SPR, "Had a Special Relationship") summarizes the responses to the first five questions, which tap into dimensions of what it means to have a special romantic relationship. As is the case for the majority of the response items, these questions have dichotomous responses, coded "yes (1)" and "no (0)." An answer of "yes" to the first question, "Have you had a special romantic relationship in your lifetime," provides a "yes" for the summary

score. The summary score is coded as “yes” if the respondent answered “no” to the first question but “yes” to question 3 (ever held hands with a non-family member), question 4 (ever kissed a non-family member on the mouth) and question 5 (ever told a non-family member that they liked or loved them). If the response was “no” on question 1 and “no” on questions 3, 4, or 5, then the summary score is coded as “no.”

This measure involves a complex skip pattern that should be taken into consideration for all analyses using these data. The main filter question, “have you ever had sexual intercourse,” reduces the respondent pool to 91 for all remaining items in the measure. Only students who reported ever having sexual intercourse were asked about sexual activity during the past year, their age at first intercourse, whether they had used birth control, what type of birth control they used, and whether they had ever been forced to have sexual intercourse. Two of the dichotomous response items (“sexual activity during the past year” and “ever forced to have sex against your will”) were recoded to replace the “S” for skipped with a “0” to indicate that “no” is the logical response for students who reported that they had never had sexual intercourse. The original variables were retained in the scored dataset, and the corresponding recoded variables named c9ab12r and c9ab17r.

It should be noted that age at intercourse is coded in years, and the method of birth control in 13 categories. Respondents were asked to designate up to three contraceptive methods used at first intercourse and during the past year, entering the code “99” if no method was used or if only one or two methods were used. Students who reported ever using a condom were asked the proportion of time that they used it (n=19). The item asking the proportion of the time that a condom was used is coded on a 5-point scale, ranging from “none of the time (1)” to “all of the time (5).” It should be noted that there is a problem with the skip patterns at this point in the original computer program. Respondents who were asked whether they had had sexual intercourse in the last year (c9ab12), and answered “no,” should have been directed to the question regarding ever having used a condom during intercourse (c9ab15) and the frequency of condom use (c9ab16). However, some of the respondents who reported no recent sexual intercourse were directed to skip these two questions. Analysts should carefully review the response sets for these items, particularly for respondents who reported no sexual activity during the past year.

Finally, respondents who reported ever having sexual intercourse were asked whether they ever had been told they had a sexually transmitted disease, with diseases listed as individual dichotomous response items. Only those who reported a disease (n=2) were asked when they were first diagnosed. The timing of diagnosis is measured on a three-point scale (1=less than one year ago, 2=1 to 2 years ago, 3=more than 3 years ago).

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IV. Differences Between Groups

Independent t-tests were conducted to assess differences between the normative sample and the high-risk control sample for the two continuous variables. Results indicate that there were no significant differences between the samples for these variables.

RRQ TTests for Continuous Variables								
Variable	Normative		Control		DF	t Value	Pr > t	N
	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev				
Amt of Time Used Condom During Intercourse	4.18182	1.25045	4.00000	1.30931	17	-0.31	0.7627	19
Age You First Had Sexual Intercourse	12.28261	1.97386	12.04444	1.83347	89	-0.60	0.5527	91

Chi-square tests of response frequency for the normative group and the control group resulted in significant values for three items only. It should be noted that the low levels of reported involvement in sexual activity compromise the ability to detect differences between groups in this sample. Only two respondents reported ever having a sexually transmitted disease; therefore, the items corresponding to diagnosis and timing are not included in these analyses.

Significance tests or tests of significance indicate that high-risk control respondents were more likely to have had “a special romantic relationship in their lifetime,” the item response; however, the summary score “had a special relationship” was not significantly different across groups. The control group was significantly more likely to have ever had sexual intercourse, as compared with normative low-risk respondents. This significant difference also held true for the recoded item regarding sexual intercourse during the past year.

Romantic Relationships Questionnaire Items							
Variable	Label	0=No/Did not occur 1=Yes/Did occur		DF	Chi Square Statistic	P-value	N
		Normative Proportions	Control Proportions				
C9AB1	Any Special Romantic Rships in Lifetime?	0.50	0.64	1	6.15	0.013	367
C9AB3	Hold Hands W/ Non-Family Member Last Yr?	0.59	0.66	1	0.63	0.429	170
C9AB4	Kiss On Moth Non-Family Member Last Year	0.66	0.68	1	0.04	0.844	104
C9AB5	Tell Non-Family Member You Like/Love Them	0.92	0.81	1	1.64	0.201	69
C9AB6	Did You Do These Things W/ Same Person?	0.84	0.65	1	2.75	0.097	61
C9AB8	Have You Ever Had Sexual Intercourse?	0.19	0.36	1	12.76	0.000	367
C9AB10	Use Any Birth Control First Intercourse?	0.63	0.62	1	0.01	0.935	91
c9q12r	had intercourse in last year, recode	0.17	0.29	1	7.56	0.006	367
C9AB13	Used Birth Control Most Recent Intercourse	0.68	0.72	1	0.20	0.655	76
C9AB15	Ever Used Condom During Intercourse?	0.69	0.73	1	0.05	0.824	27
c9q17r	ever forced to have sex against your will, recode	0.01	0.02	1	0.46	0.499	367
rrq9sp	Had Special Romantic Relationship	0.67	0.76	1	2.95	0.086	367

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V. Recommendations for Use

Although most of the items are straightforward in use and interpretation, the low number of subjects reporting sexual activity, contraceptive use, and having a sexually transmitted disease indicate that these data should be used with caution. Analysts should keep the skip patterns and response sets in mind, noting that skipped data, as well as the item response “99” are coded as “S” in this dataset.