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Silence Speaks Volumes

Parental Sexual Communication Among Asian American Emerging Adults

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Although parents greatly influence children's early understandings of sexuality, little is known about how sexual communication transpires in Asian American families. Accordingly, the authors examined the amount and type of parental sexual communication recalled by 165 Asian American college students. Parents were perceived as providing very little information about a range of sexual topics. Communication was most minimal from fathers, among sons, and in homes marked with language barriers. At the same time, however, most participants could recall receiving restrictive sexual messages, in particular, daughters and participants having less acculturated parents. Qualitative results shed light on the specific types of sexual messages that parents provided. Together, results suggest that Asian American parents use implicit and nonverbal ways to communicate their sexual values.

Keywords: *Asian Americans; sexuality; parent-child communication; psychosexual development; culture; sexual attitudes*

Although research has shed considerable light on how parents educate children about sexual roles and relationships, much of our knowledge is derived from studies of White, European American families (for a review, see Dilorio, Pluhar, & Belcher, 2003). In one line of inquiry, researchers examine the amount or incidence of sexual communication occurring between parents and children. These studies show that although parents often report *wanting* to

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be the primary sexuality educators of their children (Alexander & Jorgensen, 1983; Bloch, 1979), in reality, they tend to be reluctant and infrequent transmitters of sexual information (Brock & Jennings, 1993; Holland & Ramazanoglu, 1996; Hutchinson & Cooney, 1998). Parents' rates of communication depend, in part, on the sexual topic in question (Fox & Inazu, 1980; Hepburn, 1983), a finding that has prompted many researchers to abandon global measures of communication (e.g., "Have your parents talked to you about sex?") in favor of scales that make distinctions between different sexual topics. It is unfortunate that small but persistent differences in the wording of such scales make it difficult to draw broad conclusions across these studies. However, in a recent review, Dilorio et al. (2003) estimated that the percentage of adolescents and young adults who reported having ever discussed sexual topics with at least one parent ranged from 37% to 93% for menstruation, 11% to 70% for birth control, 12% to 84% for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), 31% to 80% for sexual intercourse, and 66% to 80% for pregnancy.

Knowing whether or not sexual communication takes place is most informative if the substance of that communication is identifiable. Therefore, a second line of inquiry, typically qualitative, concentrates on the content or tone of the sexual messages that parents provide. Research here reveals that much of this communication is indirect and subtle (Hepburn, 1983), with parents conveying messages about sexual morality more often than they provide children with explicit sexual information or facts (Fisher, 1986; Hepburn, 1983; King & Lorusso, 1997). Parents' messages tend to be negative or cautionary in tone (e.g., Ward & Wyatt, 1994) and often emphasize the potential for adverse sexual outcomes (Brock & Jennings, 1993; Darling & Hicks, 1982; Fox & Inazu, 1980; O'Sullivan, Meyer-Bahlburg, & Watkins, 2001).

Despite these broad trends in the literature, research suggests that parental sexual communication is rarely uniform but is instead shaped by salient characteristics of the family environment. Gender differences are pervasive. Studies find that mothers are more likely to impart sexual knowledge to their children than are fathers (Dilorio, Kelley, & Hockenberry-Eaton, 1999; Downie & Coates, 1999; Miller, Kotchick, Dorsey, Forehand, & Ham, 1998; Nolin & Peterson, 1992) and that daughters are the more likely recipients of this communication than are sons (Fisher, 1987, 1993; Nolin & Peterson, 1992; Thornburg, 1981). In addition, the content of parents' messages often conveys a sexual double standard. Whereas messages to sons sometimes promote sexual exploration and pleasure (Downie & Coates, 1999; Moore & Rosenthal, 1991), messages to daughters are overwhelmingly restrictive in tone, stressing the negative consequences of sexual activity (Brock & Jennings, 1993; Darling & Hicks, 1982; Downie & Coates, 1999).

Differences have also emerged based on race or ethnicity (Baumeister, Flores, & Marin, 1995; Dilorio, Hockenberry-Eaton, Maibach, Rivero, & Miller, 1996; Hutchinson & Cooney, 1998; Ward & Wyatt, 1994). In their study comparing Black and White young women, Hutchinson and Cooney (1998) found that at least two thirds of Black participants, but less than half of White participants, had discussed birth control, postponing sex, and sexual protection with their mothers. This finding is consistent with earlier studies in which Black mothers were found to discuss sexuality with their daughters earlier than White mothers and were more likely to initiate conversations about "sensitive" sex-related topics (Fox & Inazu, 1980). Latino mothers, in contrast, have been shown to communicate less frequently than White mothers (Davis & Harris, 1982) and to use more power-assertive techniques to dominate discussions about sex with children (Lefkowitz, Romo, Corona, Au, & Sigman, 2000).

Parental Sexual Communication Among Asian Americans

Whereas research on parental sexual communication is relatively extensive on White families and is increasingly focusing on Blacks and Latinos, research on Asian Americans is nascent at best. The lack of attention to Asian Americans is not surprising, given that this group is frequently identified as being at low-risk for STDs and unwanted teenage pregnancies. Indeed, in the relatively few sexuality-related studies that do consider Asian American adolescents (for a review, see Okazaki, 2002), these youth have been found to initiate sexual activity at later ages (Baldwin, Whiteley, & Baldwin, 1992; Upchurch, Levy-Storms, Sucoff, & Aneshensel, 1998), to report fewer sexual partners (Grunbaum, Lowy, Kann, & Pateman, 2000), and to prefer more restrictive sexual timetables (East, 1998) than teens in other ethnic groups. Although such cross-cultural comparisons of sexual outcomes are informative, they add little to our understanding of the sexual socialization processes occurring within this unique sociocultural context. As a result, even the most basic questions about parental sexual communication among Asian Americans have not yet been answered.

Currently, Asian Americans make up the third largest and most rapidly growing ethnic minority group in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). However, to our knowledge, only three studies have provided initial insight into sexual communication in Asian American families. Abramson, Moriuchi, Waite, and Perry (1983) found that second- and third-generation Japanese American parents were less likely than White parents to persist in talking about sexual topics with their children in the face of discomfort.

More than a decade later, Harman and Johnson (1995) conducted a multi-ethnic study of college students' sex education experiences, reporting that the 14 Asian American participants in their study understood what sexual intercourse was at an older age than non-Asian participants and that only one Asian American identified parents as a primary source of sex education. Finally, in the most in-depth study to date, Chung et al. (2004) conducted a series of focus group interviews with first- and second-generation Filipino American adolescents, parents, and grandparents. Although most participants identified school as teenagers' primary sex education source, they were dissatisfied with the education that schools provided. Parents were also critical of mainstream American parents' open, friend-like communication with children, arguing that these ideals contributed to children's loss of respect for elders.

Despite their initial contributions, previous studies are marked by a number of limitations, including the use of samples that are too small to perform statistical tests (Harman & Johnson, 1995) or the inclusion of only a single ethnic subgroup (Chung et al., 2004). A related shortcoming is that they fail to examine within-group variation. Asian Americans represent a large and heterogeneous group, and dramatic differences in parental sexual communication may emerge with respect to a number of basic and culturally relevant demographic factors, including parents' education level, religiosity, ethnicity, immigration history, English proficiency, and acculturation to the dominant U.S. culture. Finally, a major shortcoming of past studies is their omission of gender as a key variable, given its central role in past sexual socialization research, in particular. Like many other cultures steeped in patriarchal ideology, traditional Asian cultures uphold different norms and expectations for the sexual conduct of women and men. Specifically, female virginity is valued more highly, and thus regulated more closely, than male virginity (Espiritu, 2001; Lam, Shi, Ho, Stewart, & Fan, 2002; Liu, 1997), suggesting that Asian American daughters might receive more prohibitory messages about sex from their parents than might Asian American sons.

This Study

Given the small amount of research in this area, the purpose of our study was to build a descriptive base of the amount and content of parental sexual communication recalled by Asian American youth. We approached this topic from a cultural psychological framework (Greenfield, 1997; Shweder et al., 1998), viewing culture as a process that could shape the nature and tone of sexual communication in Asian American families rather than as an

index on which ethnic group differences may (or may not) emerge. This theoretical framework informed the design of our study in three key ways.

First, it justified our decision to focus exclusively on Asian Americans (Reid, 1994), purposefully foregoing cross-group comparisons for the closer, in-depth investigation of one particular cultural group. Indeed, Reid has argued that until a firm understanding of developmental processes is established within cultures, cross-cultural comparisons have the potential to mislead more than they do to inform. A mixed-method approach, using qualitative, open-ended questions in conjunction with quantitative survey measures, was expected to be particularly adept at garnering rich, descriptive data on this understudied group.

Placing Asian Americans at the center of our study helped us theorize about how characteristics of traditional Asian cultures (i.e., shared belief systems, norms, values, traditions) could shape parental sexual communication in Asian American families. Specifically, they led us to expect reports of sexual reticence from parents and gender-specific communication that would be especially negative for women. In traditional Asian cultures, there is a cultural taboo that relegates displays of sexual expression to private spheres and deems sexuality an inappropriate topic to be discussed with others (Okazaki, 2002). Indeed, cross-cultural research indicates that compared with Whites, Asian Americans talk less frequently about sexual intercourse with their friends (Chan, 1997; Moore & Erickson, 1985). In addition, in Asian cultures, family relationships are structured hierarchically and children are expected to respect and show deference to their elders rather than to communicate with or ask questions openly of them (Chung et al., 2004; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Shweder et al., 1998). Uncomfortable or sensitive topics may be avoided altogether to preserve family harmony (Gudykunst, 2001). Therefore, with respect to the amount of communication recalled, we expected Asian American participants to report that their parents offered minimal communication about sex.

Yet, whereas some characteristics of Asian cultures may encourage sexual reticence, these tendencies are likely to be offset by parents' need to clearly convey their sexual values and expectations to their children and especially to their daughters. Indeed, although dominant sexual attitudes in Asian cultures stem from different cultural philosophies (e.g., Confucianism, Hindu beliefs), they are similar in their stigmatization of sexuality and their strong condemnation of nonmarital sexual activity (Espiritu, 2001; Okazaki, 2002). The onset of puberty is frequently marked by parents' stricter rules about dress, comportment, and activities, in particular among daughters, whose sexual conduct is a symbol of their families' honor (Gupta, 1999; Inman,

Ladany, Constantine, & Morano, 2001). Thus, with respect to the types of sexual messages that parents provided, we expected women and men to report receiving higher levels of sexually prohibitive messages than sexually permissive messages and for daughters to recall receiving more sexual information and more sexually prohibitive messages from parents than sons.

Second, a cultural psychological framework drew our attention to the potential for within-group variation among Asian Americans with respect to basic and culturally relevant demographic factors, such as parents' education level, religiosity, ethnic subgroup, generation status, parents' acculturation to mainstream American norms, and the presence of language discrepancies in the home. Past studies exploring demographic predictors of parental sexual communication have produced a rather mixed body of findings. For example, higher maternal education, socioeconomic status, and religiosity each have been linked to receiving more sexual communication from parents (Fox & Inazu, 1980; Lefkowitz, Boone, Au, & Sigman, 2003; Regnerus, 2005), less sexual communication from parents (Lefkowitz et al., 2003; Leland & Barth, 1993; Regnerus, 2005), or neither (Raffaelli, Bogenschneider, & Flood, 1998; Sly et al., 1995).

As a result, our analyses of within-group variation were largely exploratory in nature. However, based on our review of the literature, we offered three specific hypotheses. First, we expected participants who perceived their parents to be more highly acculturated to mainstream American norms and values to recall receiving more communication about sexual topics overall, fewer messages about sex as a taboo topic, and more messages conveying their acceptance of premarital sex. Second, we expected more religious participants to recall receiving more sexually prohibitive messages than less religious participants. Third, because research suggests that an intergenerational discrepancy in language use (i.e., a child is predominantly English-speaking and the parent is predominantly non-English-speaking) is associated with less frequent parent-child discussions, greater discomfort and miscommunication, and greater difficulties in expressing complex ideas or emotions (Tseng & Fuligni, 2000), we expected participants reporting a language barrier in the home to recall receiving less sexual communication from parents than those without such barriers.

Finally, a cultural psychological framework underscored the importance of using culturally appropriate measures that were sensitive to the ways in which Asian immigrant parents may communicate their sexual values and beliefs. For example, existing scales of sexual communication, which ask, "How often do you *discuss* sexual topics with parents?" (Fisher, 1987) or "How often has your mother *talked to you* about sex?" (Rosenthal &

Feldman, 1999), are biased toward assessing direct and verbal communication and may be incompatible with the indirect and nonverbal styles of communication documented in Asian cultures (Gudykunst, 2001). Therefore, in the quantitative component of our study, we asked, "How much 'information' (i.e., facts, attitudes, or values) was *communicated to you* by your mother and father?" and in the qualitative component, we allowed participants to write at length about parents' sexual messages without forced response choices. In doing so, we anticipated that the most prominent and memorable of parents' sexual messages would emerge, perhaps shedding light on culture-specific messages that would not be detected by existing quantitative measures.

Method

Participants

Participants were 165 Asian American college students who were recruited from an introductory psychology subject pool at a large, Midwestern university. Students were not aware of the purpose of the study prior to arriving at the session, and their participation partially fulfilled a course requirement. The sample was made up of 74 women (45.1%) and 91 men, ranging in age from 17 to 25 years ($M = 19.41$ years). Among these participants, 97 were of East Asian ancestry (e.g., China, Japan, Korea), 55 were of South Asian ancestry (e.g., India, Pakistan), 7 were of Pacific Island ancestry (e.g., The Philippines), 4 were of Southeast Asian ancestry (e.g., Vietnam, Laos), and 3 were multiracial or multiethnic. With regard to their immigration status, 58 participants (35.2%) identified themselves as first-generation, or born abroad; 102 (61.8%) as second-generation, or born in the United States to immigrant parents; and 5 (3.0%) as third-generation or higher. Among the first-generation subset of the sample, the average age of immigration was 8.6 years, and the majority (83.0%) had come to the United States before the age of 16 years.

Participants' level of religiosity during their formative years was assessed by three questions: (a) "How religious were you?" (*not at all to very*); (b) "How often did you attend religious services?" (*never to very regularly, more than once a week*); and (c) "How often did you pray?" (*never to very regularly, at least once a day*). Individual responses were coded on a 5-point scale and were summed to produce scores that could range from 0 to 12. The mean level of religiosity in this sample was 6.69 ($\alpha = .94$); however, the modal level was 10, and more than 40% of the sample scored

a 9 or higher, suggesting that a substantial proportion of the sample was highly religious. Participants also indicated the level of schooling completed by each parent. The score of the more highly educated parent was used as an index of parental education ($M = 17.80$ years). Participants came from highly educated families. Indeed, more than 70% of mothers and close to 90% of fathers had earned an undergraduate college or more advanced degree.

Intergenerational language discrepancy. Participants identified whether they used English or an Asian language when speaking with their mothers and their fathers and whether their mothers and fathers used English or an Asian language when speaking to them. A dichotomous variable was then created from these four items that reflected whether or not participants experienced an intergenerational language discrepancy at home. Participants ($n = 102$) who spoke and were spoken to in the same language (e.g., English in all cases; Cantonese in all cases) received a score of 0. Participants ($n = 65$) who spoke and were spoken to in different languages in the home (e.g., spoke English, but were spoken to in Korean) received a score of 1.

Perceived parental acculturation. A series of four questions asked participants to rate each parent's level of acculturation. The questions read, "How 'traditional' (i.e., Asian or non-Western) is your mother/father in her/his attitudes and behavior?" and "How 'mainstream American' (i.e., Western) is your mother/father in her/his attitudes and behavior?" Participants responded on a 5-point scale (0 = *not at all*, 4 = *extremely*). Parents' levels of "Asian-ness" were reverse coded and a mean was taken across all items, such that higher scores represented parents' perceived acculturation to mainstream American values ($M = 2.76$).

Sexual Communication Measures

Amount of sexual communication. We used an adapted measure from Fisher (1993) to assess the incidence and amount of sexual communication provided by mothers and fathers. On a 4-point scale (0 = *none*, 1 = *a little*, 2 = *some*, 3 = *a lot*), participants indicated how much information (i.e., values, norms) each parent provided about the following 10 specific sexual topics: menstruation, dating norms and expectations, necking and petting, fertilization/conception, sexual intercourse, pregnancy, birth control, STDs, abortion, and homosexuality. We computed a series of mean scores that

represented the perceived frequency of communication overall and by individual topic from mothers, fathers, and both parents combined.

Types of parental sexual messages. Surveys included two means of assessing the content of parents' sexual communication. First, an open-ended item asked participants to spontaneously recall the types of sexual messages parents provided during their formative years. In total, participants generated 385 statements that were subjected to qualitative analysis based on a coding system developed for this project. First, a random portion of participants' responses was examined to establish preliminary coding categories. These categories were then tested and revised over several rounds of preliminary coding until it was evident that the system adequately captured the variety of themes appearing in participants' responses. A graduate student assistant received training on the coding scheme and accompanied the second author in coding participants' responses for the presence of one or more statements about dating and sexual relationships. Interrater agreement was assessed by conducting a Cohen's kappa statistic. Once an acceptable level of agreement was reached ($\kappa > .70$), the two coders coded all statements independently, meeting periodically to compare their codes and to reach consensus when discrepancies arose.

Second, to compare more directly the content of parental messages across participants, we used an adapted version of The Childhood and Adolescent Sexual Messages scale (Caruthers & Ward, 2002), a cued-recall measure that assesses how often parents, peers, and the media convey several specific sexual themes. The measure was developed based on an extensive review of the sexual socialization and sexual scripts literatures and included themes drawn from existing findings (e.g., Burt, 1980; Darling & Hicks, 1982) and from analyses of media content (e.g., Ward, 1995). The original scale was made up of 37 items that reflect several dominant sexual discourses in U.S. culture. Participants were asked to indicate how frequently parents conveyed each message on a 4-point scale ranging from 0 (*never*) to 3 (*a lot*). To adapt the scale for use with an exclusively Asian American sample, six items were added to capture messages about sex being a taboo, private, and shameful activity.

Although versions of this scale have been used in previous research conducted among Black and White college students (e.g., Smiler, Ward, Caruthers, & Merriwether, 2005; Ward, 2004), we conducted a principal components factor analysis with varimax rotation to assess factor loadings for this Asian American sample. As presented in Table 1, results yielded a five-factor solution with excellent Cronbach reliability scores. Three of the

resulting subscales reflected conservative or prohibitory attitudes toward sexuality, whereas one subscale reflected a permissive sexual attitude. The seven-item Abstinence Until Marriage subscale ($\alpha = .89$) stressed the importance of remaining abstinent Until marriage (e.g., “Sex belongs in married relationships only”). The six-item Sex Is Relational subscale ($\alpha = .88$) described sexual intercourse as an intimate activity that takes place in the context of a loving and committed relationship (e.g., “Sex should be a deep and beautiful expression of love between two people”). The five-item Sex Is a Taboo Topic subscale ($\alpha = .85$) described sex as a private topic that should not be discussed with others (e.g., “Sex is a private matter and should not be discussed in public”; “It is not appropriate to hug and kiss your partner in front of members of your family”). The six-item Acceptance of Premarital Sex subscale ($\alpha = .81$) conveyed notions that premarital sexual intercourse is a normal, positive, and frequently nonrelational activity among adults (e.g., “Having sex should be viewed as a normal part of dating relationships”). The fifth subscale conveyed a sexual double standard and could therefore be interpreted as sexually prohibitive for women and sexually permissive for men. Specifically, this 12-item Gendered Sexual Roles subscale ($\alpha = .92$) described men as sex-driven initiators of intercourse and women as passive sexual limit-setters (e.g., “It is up to women to limit the sexual advances of men and to keep men from going ‘too far’ ”). A mean score was computed for each subscale with higher scores signifying greater parental communication about that theme.

Results

Amount of Parental Communication About Sexuality

How much information did participants recall receiving from parents about sexuality when they were growing up? To address this question, we first calculated the percentage of women and men who reported receiving at least “some” communication about each sexual topic from mothers and fathers. As presented in Table 2, the topic that participants were most likely to report receiving information about was menstruation among girls and their mothers, and dating norms and expectations for both sexes. Whereas fathers’ rates of communication were strikingly low across the remaining topics for both daughters and sons (never surpassing 34%), mothers’ rates exhibited more variability. The right portion of Table 2 allows comparisons of our findings with previous reports of the incidence of mothers’ and fathers’ sexual

Table 1
Items and Factor Loadings for the Childhood and Adolescent Sexual Messages Scale (adapted for Asian Americans)

Item	Factor Loading
Factor 1: Gendered sexual roles	
Men want sex all the time.	.80
It's difficult for men to resist their sexual urges.	.78
Men want as much as they can get on the first date.	.76
To catch a man, a woman should play "hard to get."	.75
Men want sex; women want relationships.	.70
Men are most interested in women as potential sex partners.	.70
It is up to women to limit the sexual advances of men and to keep men from going "too far."	.69
In dating, the goal for men is "to score" with as many women as they can.	.67
It is better for a woman to use her "feminine charm" to indicate her interest.	.55
It is worse for a woman to sleep around than it is for a man.	.52
Men lose respect for women who sleep with them too early in a relationship.	.49
Men should be the initiators of romantic relationships.	.44
Factor 2: Abstinence until marriage	
Sex outside of marriage is a sin.	.80
Sex belongs in married relationships only.	.75
A woman should not live with a man outside of marriage.	.71
People who have premarital sexual relations bring shame to the family name.	.70
The primary goal of sexual intercourse is to have children.	.52
People who have sex before marriage typically regret it later.	.52
You should abstain from sex until marriage to avoid getting or getting someone pregnant.	.68
Factor 3: Sex is relational	
Sex should be a deep and beautiful expression of love between two people.	.77
Making love is different from having sex.	.74
Partners should be emotionally intimate before they are physically intimate.	.74
Having sex is serious and should not be taken lightly. It comes with a lot of responsibilities.	.64
Sex is best when the partners are in a loving and committed relationship.	.54
Being sexual is a natural part of being human.	.41

(continued)

Table 1
(continued)

Item	Factor Loading
Factor 4: Sex is a taboo topic	
When it comes to sex, people should follow the “don’t ask/don’t tell” policy.	.75
Sex is a private matter and should not be discussed in public.	.74
Sex is a taboo topic and should not be talked about with others.	.67
It is not appropriate for women to be too interested in sex or to plan for sex.	.51
Physical affection between two people should not be displayed in public.	.47
Factor 5: Acceptance of premarital sex	
Having sex should be viewed as a normal part of dating relationships.	.79
Women have just as many sexual desires as men.	.72
Premarital sex is perfectly fine as long as “protection” is used to prevent STDs and pregnancy.	.65
No sexual act is immoral as long as both parties are consenting adults.	.64
College is a time for sexual exploration.	.60
It is better for men and women to have diverse sexual experiences before they are married.	.60

Note: STDs = sexually transmitted diseases.

communication among Blacks, Whites, and Latinos. For all topics, the rates of parental communication reported by Asian American students are markedly lower than those recalled by Black, White, and Latino students aged 14 to 20.

Next, we assessed the amount of parents’ communication about these topics. As presented in Table 3, participants reported receiving minimal information about most sexual topics. In general, dating norms and pregnancy ranked among the two most frequently discussed topics, whereas necking and petting emerged as the least frequently discussed topic by parents. Again, communication was perceived to be especially limited from fathers. Indeed, with the exception of their communication about dating norms, the mean amount of communication recalled from fathers by both daughters and sons never exceeded the 0.50 mark, a quantitative assessment that corresponds with a response between “none” and “a little.” Mothers were perceived to be similarly uncommunicative about most sexual topics by sons, but less so by daughters, who, on average, reported receiving at least “a little” information about menstruation, fertilization, dating norms and expectations, and pregnancy.

Table 2
Percentage of Participants Who Reported Receiving at Least “Some”
Communication From Parents by Sexual Topic

Sample Characteristic	This Study				Hutchinson & Cooney (1998)				Miller et al. (1998)	
	Asian American (aged 17-25 years)		Sons		Black and White (aged 19-20 years)		White Daughters		Latino (aged 14-16 years)	
	Mothers	Fathers	Mothers	Fathers	Mothers	Fathers	Mothers	Fathers	Mothers	Fathers
Menstruation	81.1	4.1	9.1	2.3						
Dating norms	66.2	33.8	30.7	25.8						
Necking/petting	4.1	0.0	2.2	0.0						
Fertilization	35.1	4.1	9.0	4.5					64.0	29.0
Sexual intercourse	27.0	4.1	12.4	6.7						
Pregnancy	48.6	2.7	18.0	9.0						
Birth control	24.3	2.7	5.6	4.5	69.0	25.0	47.0	15.0	44.0	24.0
STDs	12.2	1.4	7.9	7.9	59.0	27.0	41.0	12.0	70.0	42.0
Abortion	17.6	2.7	11.2	6.7						
Homosexuality	12.2	8.1	7.9	2.2						

Note: STDs = sexually transmitted diseases.

Table 3
Mean Amount of Parental Communication Provided to Daughters and Sons

	Daughters (<i>n</i> = 74)			Sons (<i>n</i> = 91)		
	Mother	Father	<i>t</i>	Mother	Father	<i>t</i>
Menstruation	2.30	0.22	18.35***	0.45	0.11	3.79***
Dating norms	1.77	1.04	6.48***	0.91	0.80	1.32
Necking/petting	0.30	0.08	3.91***	0.12	0.09	.90
Fertilization	1.08	0.18	7.62***	0.37	0.27	1.15
Sexual intercourse	0.85	0.20	5.44***	0.46	0.34	1.15
Pregnancy	1.50	0.20	10.56***	0.67	0.38	3.44**
Birth control	0.73	0.12	5.44***	0.21	0.17	.63
STDs	0.54	0.14	4.50***	0.30	0.31	-.19
Abortion	0.59	0.15	4.72***	0.38	0.28	1.32
Homosexuality	0.50	0.36	2.19*	0.37	0.16	3.02**
Overall	1.04	0.31	10.88***	0.42	0.29	2.29*

Note: Results from *t* tests report differences in mothers' and fathers' communication amounts within each gender. STDs = sexually transmitted diseases.

* $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$. *** $p \leq .001$.

Did mothers and fathers differ significantly in the amount of communication they reportedly provided to children? As presented in the fourth and final columns of Table 3, a series of paired-samples *t* tests revealed that among daughters, the amount of communication recalled from mothers significantly exceeded that of fathers for every single sexual topic. Among sons, however, mothers were only perceived to be significantly more communicative than fathers for three topics: menstruation, pregnancy, and homosexuality.

Next, a series of independent-samples *t* tests assessed whether daughters reported receiving significantly more sexual communication from parents than did sons. These results, presented in the top portion of Table 4, indicate that there was no sexual topic assessed for which men reported receiving more communication than women. Indeed, compared with sons, daughters received significantly more sexual information from parents, overall, and for half of the 10 individual sexual topics (i.e., menstruation, dating norms and expectations, fertilization, pregnancy, and birth control).

Cued Recall of Parent-Provided Sexual Messages

What types of sexual messages did participants recall receiving from parents during their formative years? Parents' mean levels of communication

Table 4
Mean Amount of Communication About Sexual Topics and
Sexual Messages Averaged Across Parents

	Daughters (<i>M</i>)	Sons (<i>M</i>)	<i>t</i>
Sexual topics			
Menstruation	1.26	.28	11.18***
Dating norms	1.41	.85	3.67***
Necking/petting	.19	.11	1.64
Fertilization	.63	.32	3.43***
Sexual intercourse	.53	.40	1.43
Pregnancy	.85	.52	3.06**
Birth control	.43	.19	2.80**
STDs	.34	.31	.37
Abortion	.37	.33	.46
Homosexuality	.43	.26	1.81
Overall	.68	.35	4.57***
Types of sexual messages			
Abstinence until marriage	1.80	1.03	5.44***
Sex is relational	1.61	1.01	4.32***
Sex is a taboo topic	1.17	0.71	3.25***
Accept premarital sex	0.24	0.21	0.46
Gendered sexual roles	1.03	0.29	7.64***

Note: STDs = sexually transmitted diseases.

** $p \leq .01$. *** $p \leq .001$.

of five sexual themes are presented in the bottom portion of Table 4. We had predicted that both sons and daughters would recall receiving more sexually prohibitive messages than sexually permissive messages from parents. Consistent with expectations, paired-samples *t* tests conducted within each sex revealed that women recalled receiving more prohibitive messages [Abstinence Until Marriage, $t(73) = 13.02$, $p < .001$; Sex Is Relational, $t(73) = 15.20$, $p < .001$; Sex Is a Taboo Topic, $t(73) = 7.50$, $p < .001$; and Gendered Sexual Roles, which are restrictive for women, $t(73) = 8.30$, $p < .001$] than the permissive message conveying an Acceptance of Premarital Sex. Similarly, men recalled receiving more prohibitive messages about Abstinence Until Marriage, $t(89) = 7.62$, $p < .001$ and $t(91) = -7.91$, $p < .001$; Sex is Relational, $t(89) = 10.16$, $p < .001$ and $t(91) = -8.9$, $p < .001$; and Sex Is a Taboo Topic, $t(89) = 5.28$, $p < .001$ and $t(91) = 1.79$, $p < .001$, than permissive messages conveying an Acceptance of Premarital Sex and Gendered Sexual Roles, respectively.

We next examined whether Asian American women reported receiving more sexually prohibitive messages from their parents than did their male counterparts. As presented in the fourth column of Table 4, results from a series of independent-samples *t* tests indicated that women did indeed recall receiving more prohibitive messages about abstinence until marriage, sex as relational, sex as a taboo topic, and gendered sexual roles than did men. Parents were perceived to be equally unlikely to convey to sons and daughters their acceptance of premarital sex, with mean scores on this subscale hardly exceeding the lowest level.

Qualitative Analyses of Parental Sexual Messages

Our next set of analyses explored the types of sexual messages that participants *independently* recalled receiving from parents in response to an open-ended query. Table 5 presents the 15 themes identified in qualitative analyses, as well as results from chi-square analyses assessing gender differences in the prevalence of each theme (15 statements, coded as “non-message/other,” were excluded from the table).

The most common theme overall, appearing in 24% of men’s statements and 12% of women’s, described sexual and romantic relationships as a taboo topic, one that either never naturally came up in conversations in the home or was actively avoided by both parents and children. As one Indian American man stated plainly, “This was not talked about in my family,” and an Indian American woman clarified, “Growing up, the word *sex* was never mentioned.” In their written responses, many participants expressed difficulty in remembering any parent-provided messages about romantic or sexual topics at all. Typical responses to this question included, “Nothing I can remember,” “They pretty much never said anything to me about it at all,” and “I can’t remember anything they ever told me.” However, some participants suggested that although explicit communication about sex was silenced, parents made their sexual values clear via nonverbal or indirect means. Indeed, several participants stated that “it was just understood” that they were not supposed to date or engage in sexual behavior. As one Korean American woman elaborated, “They never talked to me about sex; it was just understood that it was bad and I wasn’t supposed to do it.” Consistent with earlier quantitative results, significantly more men than women recalled receiving no verbal or direct communication from parents.

The second most common theme, emerging in 17% and 13%, respectively, of women’s and men’s recollections, dealt with parents’ disapproval of dating. In contrast to the previous one, this theme was mentioned equally

Table 5
Specific Sexual Messages Recalled From Parents (listed in
order of prominence)

Message	All	Women	Men	Sex Diff. (χ^2)
Taboo; nothing mentioned	68	25	43	9.77**
verbally/directly	(17.6)	(12.1)	(24.0)	
Discouragement	58	35	24	1.31
of dating	(15.2)	(17.0)	(13.4)	
Save sex for	48	28	20	.801
marriage	(12.5)	(13.6)	(11.2)	
Norms/features of	43	17	22	2.48
relationships/how tos	(11.2)	(8.1)	(12.1)	
Protect self	24	10	14	1.58
physically	(6.2)	(4.9)	(7.8)	
Protect self emotionally/ sex as personal choice	22	13	9	7.97*
(5.7)	(6.3)	(4.5)		
Vague warnings/ don't have sex	18	14	4	4.59
(4.7)	(6.8)	(2.2)		
Sex is serious/special	15	10	5	1.17
(3.9)	(4.9)	(2.8)		
Gender norms: Good	14	13	1	9.16**
girls/real men	(3.6)	(6.3)	(.6)	
Practical information/ book knowledge	12	3	9	4.13
(3.1)	(1.5)	(5.0)		
Consequences/don't get pregnant	12	7	5	.181
(3.1)	(3.4)	(2.8)		
Acceptance of dating/sexuality	11	8	3	1.75
(2.8)	(3.9)	(1.7)		
Save sex for older/love	10	5	5	.104
(2.6)	(2.4)	(2.8)		
Religious values dictate behavior	9	6	3	.693
(2.3)	(2.9)	(1.7)		
Missing	6	2	4	32.84***
(1.6)	(.5)	(2.2)		

Note: Participants generated a total of 385 sexual messages. Top numbers represent the number of messages coded in each theme. Numbers in parentheses represent the percentage of messages coded in each theme.

* $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$. *** $p \leq .001$.

by women and men. According to some participants, parents strongly discouraged their children from dating, portraying romantic partners as distractions from important life goals, such as getting into college or working

toward a successful career. According to one Korean American woman, her parents told her, “Studying and schoolwork is more important than dating a guy,” and one Chinese American man stated simply, “Sex can wait—career first.” Some parents were perceived as prioritizing their children’s academic achievement over and above their social lives. Women were told, “There’s no need to date when you are still young,” “Boys will mess you up and make you distracted,” and “Concentrate on your studies.” Similarly, men were advised to “wait until after college to start dating,” “put school first; worry about relationships later,” and that “dating will hurt grades/classwork.” Some parents set rules that prohibited dating, and these rules were based on chronological age (e.g., “Dating was not allowed until I was 25”), academic accomplishments (e.g., “Don’t date until you’re done with grad school”), or other major life transitions (e.g., “Don’t date ‘til you are ready to get married,” “Romance is for marriage, and *not before*”). Taken together, these messages suggest that a portion of Asian parents did not view dating as a normative component of adolescent development, which stands in contrast to expectations conveyed by the dominant U.S. culture through avenues such as peers or the media.

The third most common theme described sexual activity as existing only within the confines of marriage. Messages in this category were strikingly similar across gender, ethnicity, and generation status. Participants were told to “wait until marriage for sex,” that there should be “nothing physical before marriage,” and that “you can’t have sex until you’re married.” Only occasionally did these messages appear to be gendered, with one Korean American woman remembering that she was told to “keep your body clean until you marry,” and another Indian American woman recalling a clear sequence of expected events, “kissing-husband-marriage-children.”

The fourth most common theme dealt with parents’ advice concerning the norms and features of romantic relationships. Messages to both sexes were comparable in content, with many focusing on the importance of men being respectful toward women. Messages recalled by women, such as “Boys should treat me well and with respect,” and “Find someone with good manners and confidence,” complemented those recalled by men (e.g., “Men should always be polite to ladies”; “You should treat her right—nice and respectful”). Parents were also seen as providing descriptions of the qualities of a suitable partner (to women, “Choose to date someone kind, relatively good-looking,” and to men, “You should get girls who are attractive,” and “You should find someone smart, pretty”). Nine participants, both male and female, reported that their parents specified the desired ethnicity of their

future dating or marriage partners. One Chinese American woman recalled her parents saying, "Get an Asian. It's easier to communicate." Similarly, a Vietnamese American man recalled hearing, "Just grow up and marry a Vietnamese girl."

The next two themes, which appeared in at least 5% of men's and women's recollections, focused on protecting oneself, either physically or emotionally. First, some participants recalled receiving cautionary statements from parents that warned them about the negative physical consequences of sexual activity. In many cases, these warnings were vague; participants were told to "be careful," to "be responsible," and "not to make mistakes." However, a few women recalled more specific messages from parents about rape and physical victimization. For example, one Chinese American woman wrote that her parents told her, "Be careful at parties—always keep your drink with you—guys will take advantage of you," and one Taiwanese American woman was warned, "The people that rape you are your friends." Messages to men more often involved information about STDs and contraception, implying that many parents either knew or assumed that their sons were already sexually active. For example, a Taiwanese American man wrote that he was informed about "basically any disease-related precautions I could take." Similarly, one Chinese American man said that his father told him, "When you have sex, use a condom," and another Taiwanese American man specified, "Mostly they just wanted to make sure I didn't get any STDs or any girls pregnant before I was married." Second, some parents validated participants' ability to make their own dating and sexual decisions but also warned them about the perils of bad choices. Notably, the underlying message was often sexually prohibitive. For example, one Korean American woman wrote, "I think they had faith in me, that I'm the type of person that would stay away from such things," and one Chinese American man reported that his parents said pointedly, "I know you know what is right and wrong." Messages recalled by women suggested that parents were also preoccupied with their daughters' potential to be taken advantage of by men. Parents reportedly warned them to "never be in a relationship that makes me uncomfortable," "never to feel pressured by anyone when it comes to sex," and to "never be controlled; always be the one in control in relationships." Significantly more women than men reported receiving such messages.

Three additional themes appeared in at least 5% of either men's or women's recollections. They included vague warnings to sons and daughters not to have sex (e.g., "Don't do it"; "No fooling around!"; "Sex will ruin your life!"), information that was educational in nature ("How babies are born";

“My mom basically explained the idea of sex to me when I was younger”), and gender-related norms (e.g., “If you give in too easily, your partner will not respect you”; “When doctors would ask if I was sexually active, my dad would say, ‘No, she’s a good girl’”). Notably, significantly more women than men reported receiving gendered messages, and these messages often conveyed sexual stereotypes about men (e.g., “Boys have bad intentions”; “Guys will lie to get what they want, but then not care for you”; “You can’t trust guys”).

The remaining six themes were recalled by fewer than 5% of male and female participants. They included negative threats about the consequences of pregnancy (e.g., “If you get pregnant I will kick you out!”), messages that linked sexuality to religious values (e.g., “Sex is a sin”; “You should not let [your relationships] distract you with your personal relationship with God”), and messages that affirmed sexual activity (e.g., “Sex is intimate and something to be shared with someone important”; “Sex is a natural thing”).

Within-Group Variation in Parental Sexual Communication

Our final set of analyses examined within-group variation in parental sexual communication based on the following five dimensions of family background—parents’ education level, ethnicity, religiosity, parents’ acculturation to American norms, and the presence of a language discrepancy in the home—and two sets of dependent variables—parents’ overall amount of sexual communication and their communication of messages about abstinence until marriage, sex as relational, sex as a taboo topic, their acceptance of premarital sex, and gendered sexual roles. Because all of our hypothesized associations were expected to appear in the same direction for men and women, this set of analyses combined male and female participants’ responses. First, we conducted exploratory analyses examining the role of parental education and ethnic subgroup. A series of zero-order correlations revealed that parents with more formal schooling were perceived as providing higher overall amounts of sexual communication to their children, $r(156) = .19$, $p < .05$, but no differences in the types of messages provided. A series of independent-samples t tests compared the two largest ethnic subgroups in the sample, East Asian Americans (e.g., Chinese, Korean) and South Asian Americans (e.g., Indian). No differences emerged in the amount of communication received, $t(127) = -.52$, ns , but South Asian American participants reported receiving significantly more messages about abstinence until marriage ($M = 1.63$) and about sex being a

taboo topic ($M = 1.09$) than did East Asian American participants, $M = 1.24$, $t(138) = -2.39$, $p < .05$, and $M = .76$, $t(138) = -2.07$, $p < .05$, respectively.

Our analyses next turned to the three specific hypotheses we offered based on our review of the literature. First, we had predicted that participants with highly acculturated parents would recall receiving more sexual communication overall, fewer messages about sex as a taboo topic, and more messages conveying an acceptance of premarital sex than would participants with less acculturated parents. Results of zero-order correlations indicated that parents' acculturation level was unrelated to the overall amount of information they were perceived as providing, $r(148) = .10$, *ns*, or the frequency with which they transmitted messages about sex being a taboo topic, $r(161) = -.07$, *ns*. However, more acculturated parents were perceived as providing more messages conveying their acceptance of premarital sex, $r(161) = .22$, $p < .01$. Second, we had predicted that participants from more religious families would recall receiving more sexually prohibitive messages and fewer sexually permissive messages. Results indicated that more religious participants did indeed report receiving more messages about abstinence until marriage, $r(166) = .44$, $p < .001$, and sex as a taboo topic, $r(166) = .25$, $p < .01$, and fewer messages conveying an acceptance of premarital sex, $r(166) = -.15$, $p \leq .05$. However, there were no associations between religiosity and messages about gendered sexual roles or about sex being relational.

Finally, we had predicted that participants who encountered a language discrepancy in the home would receive lower amounts of sexual communication overall from both mothers and fathers. An independent-samples *t* test provided partial support for this hypothesis; participants with a language discrepancy in the home received less information from their mothers ($M = .50$) than those without such a discrepancy ($M = .79$), $t(152) = 2.77$, $p < .01$. No differences were apparent in fathers' mean amount of communication, $t(154) = .24$, *ns*.

Discussion

As their earliest socializing agents, parents have the unique opportunity to provide children with the sexual facts, values, and beliefs that will ground their understanding of sexuality and may, in turn, have enduring effects on their sexual decision making. Although significant advances have been made in documenting parental sexual communication, Asian Americans are consistently overlooked in this literature. Our study addressed this omission by

providing foundational data on the amount and types of parental sexual communication in Asian American families, according to retrospective reports by Asian American college students. Whereas quantitative analyses of survey data allowed us to test hypotheses and evaluate within-group variation, qualitative analyses provided greater depth and clarity to participants' sexual socialization experiences. Several noteworthy findings emerged and are discussed below.

Our first set of hypotheses addressed the amount of communication that participants reported receiving from parents during their formative years. Initially, quantitative results depicted Asian American homes as shrouded in silence about sexuality. Indeed, on a standard survey measure, participants reported receiving minimal information about a variety of sexual topics ranging from biological processes (e.g., menstruation, fertilization) to potential sexual outcomes (e.g., pregnancy, abortion). In fact, among sons, the modal level of information they reported receiving from both mothers and fathers was "none" for *every* sexual topic assessed. This pattern also held among daughters, with the exception of mothers' communication about menstruation, pregnancy, and dating norms and expectations. Furthermore, investigations of rates reported by teens in other ethnic groups suggest that Asian American youth may receive considerably less sexual communication from their parents, by comparison.

Why do Asian Americans recall receiving such little communication about sexuality from their parents? Although we could not test this assumption directly, it seems likely that a cultural taboo about sex and/or expectations for hierarchical familial relationships deter open and explicit communication about this sensitive topic. If parents do not initiate these discussions because of the taboo, as was suggested by many of the open-ended responses, then their children may feel that it is not their place to ask such questions. At the same time, a lack of shared vocabulary or difficulty in expressing complex ideas may also create obstacles to intergenerational knowledge or values transmission in some immigrant families. We found that participants who spoke to parents in English but were spoken to in an Asian language recalled significantly less sexual communication from mothers than participants who encountered just one language in the home, whether that language was solely English or solely of Asian origin. Although we did not find a significant relation between language use and fathers' communication, this null finding could be attributed to a lack of variability or a floor effect in fathers' communication amounts.

Similar to previous studies, we found that parents were not uniformly silent about sexuality. Gender differences were quite striking, with results

suggesting that male family members were less engaged in the sexual socialization process. Sons recalled receiving less sexual information than did daughters, and fathers were perceived as providing substantially less information than mothers about almost all sexual topics. Mothers spoke to daughters most frequently about topics that were related to anatomy and biological reproduction, like menstruation and fertilization, or about topics that were less overtly sexual, such as dating norms and expectations. However, it is noteworthy that a substantial proportion of Asian American women reported that their mothers gave them "a lot" of information about pregnancy. This set of findings stimulates several interesting questions for further research. For example, at what age and in what context do parents deliver sexual information to daughters? Do mothers provide extensive information about pregnancy to daughters due to concerns about family honor, daughters' academic success, or other reasons? In the absence of parental communication about sexuality, to which sources do Asian American boys and young men turn to learn about sex?

Our second set of analyses addressed the types of sexual messages parents provided. Despite initial reports of sexual reticence, on a cued recall measure, most participants could remember receiving a number of specific sexual messages. Furthermore, in response to an open-ended question, participants generated 385 messages, only 20% of which indicated that no verbal or direct communication was provided from parents. These findings are not incompatible but suggest that parents who do not directly provide their children with sexual facts use indirect ways to make their sexual values clear and that their children are generally sensitive to these cues. This interpretation is compelling given that Asian cultures are described as "high-context" cultures (Gudykunst, 2001). In high-context cultures, individuals are expected to convey messages in indirect, implicit, and nonverbal ways, and listeners, in turn, are expected to attend to these external cues to discern the messages' meaning. In this study, parents who informed their sons and daughters that "romance is for marriage" or that "dating can wait until college" conveyed clear expectations about their children's sexual conduct without ever explicitly referring to sexual intercourse. Likewise, participants who reported that "it was just understood" that their parents did not approve of sexual or romantic relationships could be identified as competent recipients of high-context communication. Future researchers using Asian American samples are advised to pay special attention to the implicit ways that Asian American parents make their sexual values known, perhaps by creating separate scales of parents' nonverbal and indirect sexual communication. Examples of questions that could be included on such scales

are, "How often did you hear your parents gossip about the sexual activity of others?" or "In what ways did your parents' interactions with each other shape your ideas about love, marriage, or sexuality?"

Although all participants reported receiving more sexually prohibitive messages than sexually permissive messages, on the cued recall measure, daughters reported receiving more prohibitive messages from parents than did sons. Yet, despite this evidence of a sexual double standard, the themes identified in qualitative analyses were only sometimes gender-specific. For example, women and men were equally likely to recall receiving messages from parents that discouraged dating or promoted sexual abstinence until marriage. Notably, messages about romance being a serious threat to academic achievement were slightly more prevalent than messages about sexual morality. This finding may be an artifact of the sample's composition; most participants came from highly educated families and all were attending a prestigious university, suggesting that they may hold academic achievement in higher regard than may the general Asian American population. Qualitative analyses also indicated that whereas sons were sometimes educated about STDs and safer sex practices, daughters were usually advised to avoid social situations and/or men altogether. Indeed, many parents were concerned that their daughters would be physically or emotionally victimized by men and warned them to guard themselves against this risk. Future studies should examine how Asian American girls and young women contend with conflicting cultural expectations about dating and sexuality. Specifically, what challenges do young Asian American women face when bridging two cultures—one in which a cultural imperative for female chastity is stressed, and another in which women (and Asian women, in particular) are highly sexualized (Mok, 1998)?

One of our key objectives for this study was to examine how background characteristics of participants' families influence the amount and types of sexual messages that Asian Americans recalled. Consistent with expectations, we found that the content of parents' messages was more consistently correlated with demographic factors than parents' sheer communication amounts. For example, compared with East Asian Americans, South Asian Americans reported receiving more sexual messages that encouraged abstinence until marriage and regarded sex as a taboo topic but similar amounts of sexual information overall. Participants from more religious backgrounds reported receiving more messages about the inappropriateness of premarital sex and about sex as a taboo topic and fewer messages conveying an acceptance of premarital sex. More acculturated parents were perceived as providing more messages accepting premarital sex, but not more

sexual information overall or more messages about sex being a taboo topic. The latter null results could be attributed, in part, to the limitations of the four-item acculturation measure developed for this study. In addition, because these results are correlational, we cannot speak to the causal nature of the associations described above. For example, although the process of acculturation may lead to parents' more lax attitudes toward sexual activity, it is also possible that parents are perceived to be more acculturated by their children *because* they provide more permissive messages about sex, or that a third, unmeasured variable explained these relationships. We chose to assess five culturally relevant demographic factors in this study: parents' education level, religiosity, ethnicity, parents' acculturation level, and language use. However, this list is by no means exhaustive. Future studies may benefit from considering a more comprehensive set of moderators and testing these associations longitudinally.

We recognize other limitations of this study. First, we acknowledge that the select nature of our sample may have constrained our ability to find more within-group variation and also limited the generalizability of our findings. Participants in this study came from highly educated families, attended a prestigious university in the Midwest, and were predominantly East Asian or South Asian in origin. Future studies should aim to recruit larger and more diverse Asian American samples with respect to age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and immigration history. Parental sexual communication may be quite different among Asian American families living in more impoverished or ethnically diverse communities. Second, because our measures of parental sexual communication were based on retrospective reports by Asian American college students, it is fair to ask whether participants accurately recalled the amount and type of sexual communication their parents had provided during childhood and adolescence. However, like previous researchers using this widely used technique (e.g., Hutchinson & Cooney, 1998), we argue that it is children's perceptions of past communication that are important, as it is these perceptions that will be called to mind during their subsequent sexual encounters. Finally, parents represent just one of many sources of adolescents' sexual socialization. In addition to examining peers and the media, we advise future researchers to explore other sources with culture-specific considerations in mind. Given Asian Americans' heavier reliance on extended family networks, future studies should examine how nonparental family members, such as grandparents, siblings, aunts, and cousins, contribute to the sexual socialization process.

In our increasingly multicultural society, understanding how sexuality is socialized in ethnic minority families is a critical endeavor. By providing insight into the amount and type of parental sexual communication provided

to Asian American emerging adults, our study has taken a first step in meeting this challenge and in enhancing our understanding of the ways in which sexual communication is (or is not) delivered in Asian American homes. It is our hope that the information provided in this study will encourage further work on this understudied issue and population.

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