



16 and Pregnant: A mixed-methods analysis of a reality TV program about teen pregnancy

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Disclosures & Learning Objectives

- The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose
- List the main themes portrayed on the show *16 and Pregnant*
- Describe the sexual and reproductive health content on *16 and Pregnant*

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Background

- U.S. has highest teen pregnancy rate in developed world^{1,2}
- Teens cite media as major source of sexual health information³
- Entertainment-education
- *16 and Pregnant*



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1. (2008). "United Nations Statistics Division Demographic Yearbook." New York: United Nations.
2. Kost K, (2010). "U.S. Teenage Pregnancies, Births and Abortions: National and State Trends and Trends by Race and Ethnicity."
3. The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. (July 2001). *Fact Sheet: Teens and Sex: The Role of Popular TV.*

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Methods

- Three seasons (35 episodes)
- Quantitative
 - Data abstraction form
 - Descriptive statistics
- Qualitative
 - Iterative process to identify themes
 - Episodes coded in video format
- Dedoose v. 4.2.81

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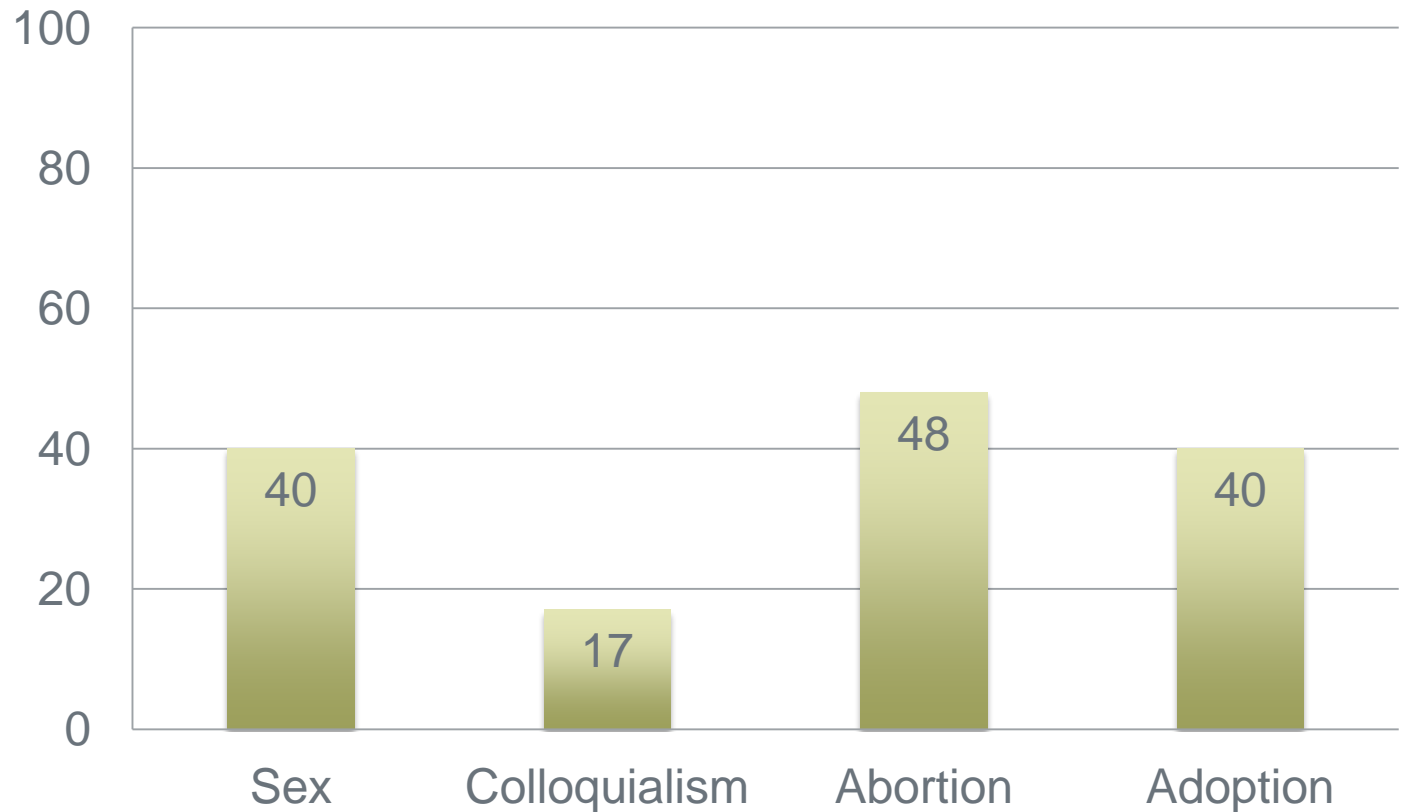
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Quantitative Results

Percentage of Episodes



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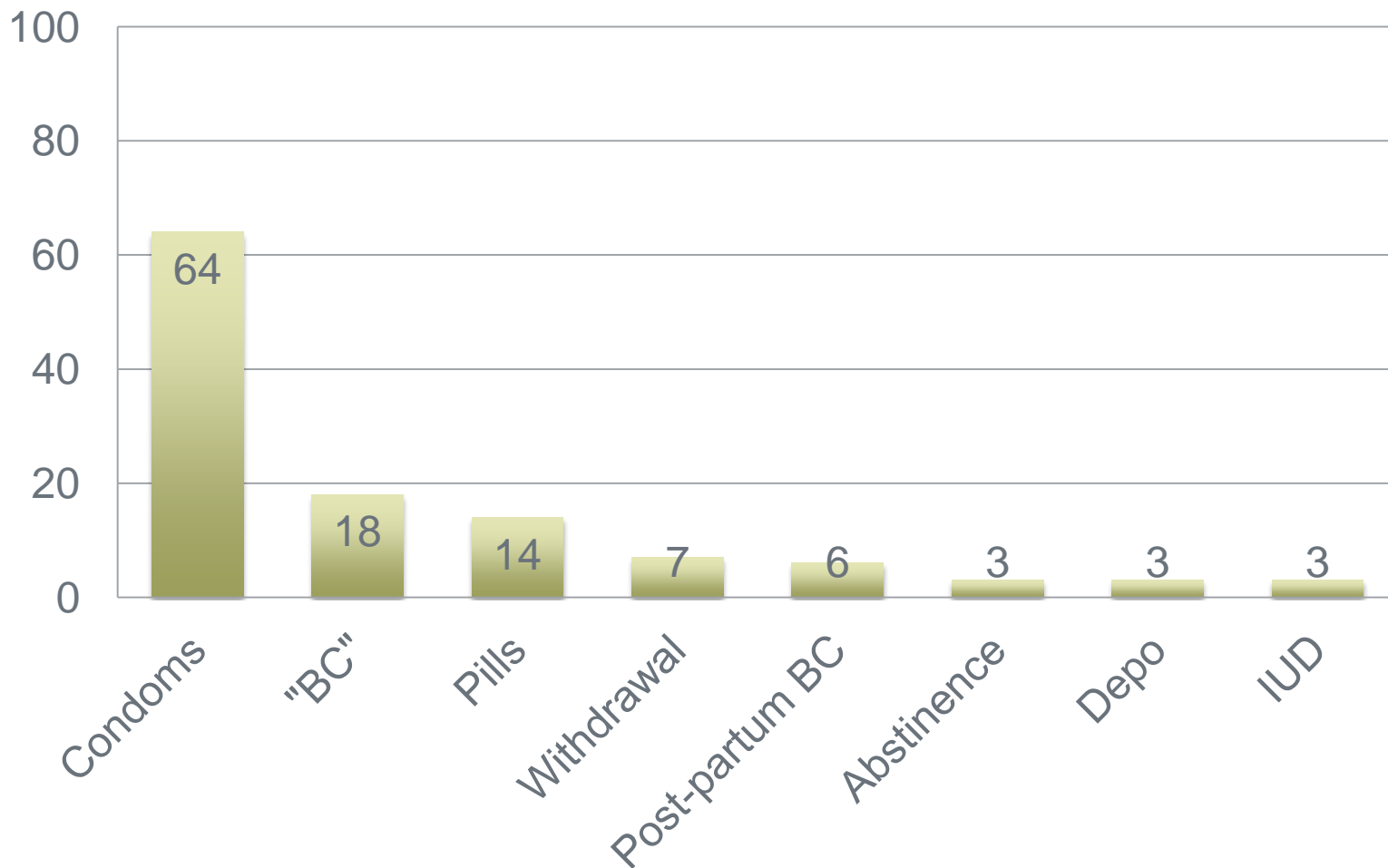
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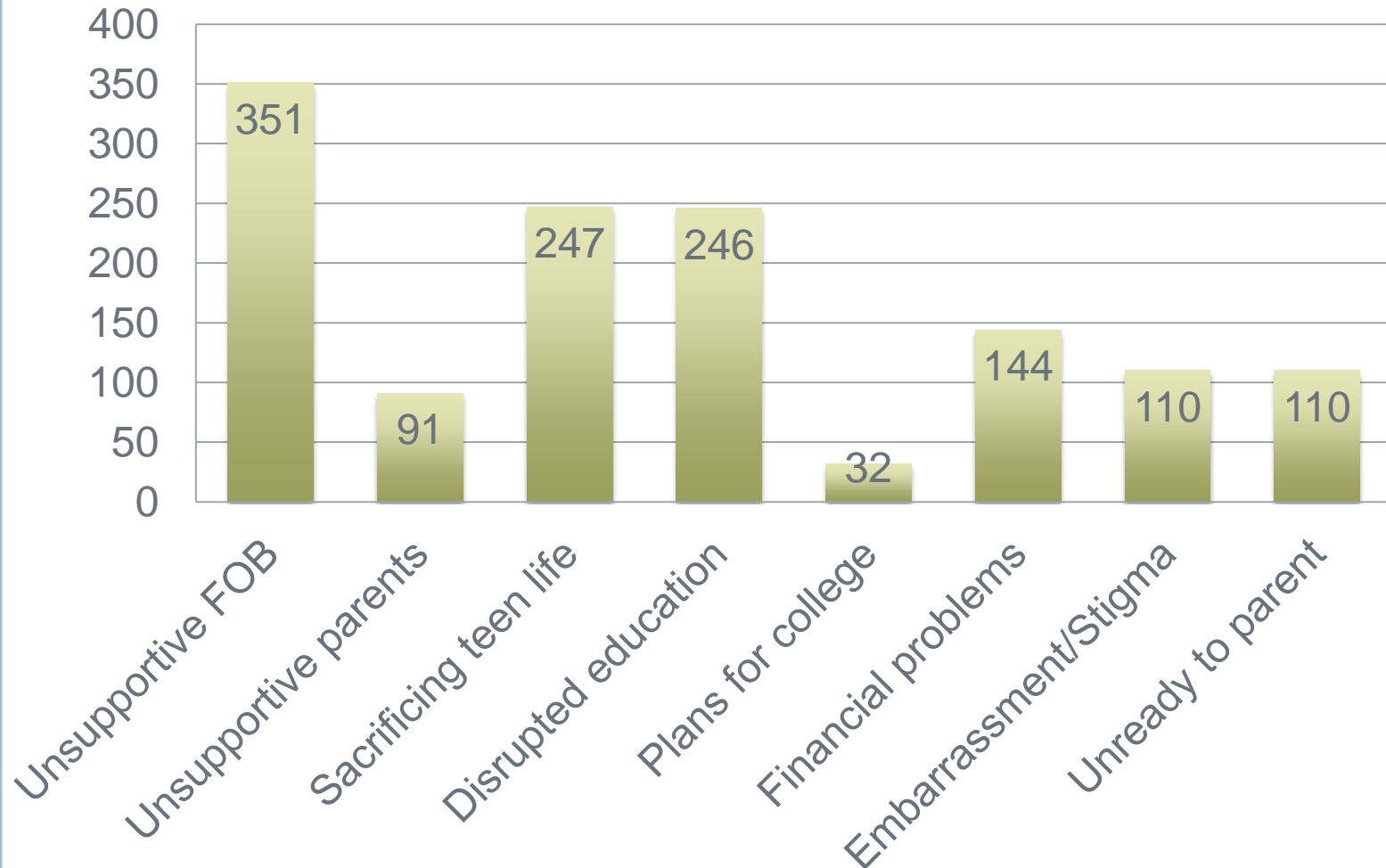
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Main Themes

of Times Code Applied



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Lack of Support

- I don't feel like doing anything today, I'm tired. I want to stay home and go to bed. (Cleondra's boyfriend)
- It really changes things not to have our family's support. But ultimately it's our decision. (Catelynn)
- As usual, my mom's boyfriend is more important than me. (Kailyn)

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Sacrifice

- I never knew how much I was going to miss just being a regular teen. Imagine being in prison. That's what it's like, being in prison. (Jenelle)
- Not being able to dance my senior year really sucks. I don't see my friends as much since I quit the dance team. (Cleondra)

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Disrupted Education/Career Plans

- I had to give up my air force dreams so that Josh could keep his...I knew having a baby meant making sacrifices, but I never imagined my career would end before I even finished high school. (Ebony)
- My biggest dream was to play the flute in the Virginia Symphony, and then I found out I was pregnant. And that dream just kind of died. I'm not doing music anymore... (Lizzie)

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Embarrassment & Stigma

- There would be girls walking by pregnant and we would be like, ‘Oh, there’s another one’, and now...I’m pregnant (Samantha)
- I worry that everyone has been avoiding me since I got pregnant. (Megan)
- I’m not saying you don’t have respect for yourself if you’re having sex, but, you know, just keep your legs closed. (Ebony’s classmate)

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Conclusions

- *16 & Pregnant* negatively portrays the experiences of teen parents
- Has potential to be used as entertainment-education
- Presents little information about sex, contraception, pregnancy options
 - Disconnection of sex & pregnancy
 - Silences abortion as an option
 - Neglects post-partum birth control

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Acknowledgements

- Dr. Sarah Wallet
- Bibi Lorber
- Dr. Lisa Harris
- The Fellowship in Family Planning