

SAFE TEENS Study

White DG. SAFE TEENS: Preventive Care for Adolescents. Findings from RRNeST. Annual Scientific Assembly, American Academy of Family Physicians, Orlando FL. October 2004.

Context: Infrequent office visits from adolescents and competing demands of busy practice prevent physicians from providing optimal preventive care to teenagers.

Objective: To describe family physician preventive care with adolescents, and determine patient and visit characteristics that optimize that care.

Subjects: Physician volunteers completed data checklists on 316 consecutive visits with adolescents age 11-21 years old.

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Measurement: The checklist assessed patient demographics, characteristics of the visit, and discussions of prevention topics, organized as **SAFE**

TEENS: Sexuality, Accidents/abuse, Firearms/homicide, Emotions, Toxins, Environment, Exercise, Nutrition, and Shots.

Results: Patients were 16.1 years old, on average. Most were Latino (77 %) and female (68%). In 316 consecutive visits with adolescents, physicians had prevention discussions during 87% of those visits, addressing an average of 4.3 topics. Social environment, tobacco, alcohol and drugs, sexuality, and exercise were discussed in more than half of the visits. Logistic regression analysis showed that gender, parent presence, type of patient and type of visit predicted certain types of discussions. Discussions about sexuality and social environment were more frequent with girls than boys. Discussions about sexuality, emotions, substance abuse, and social environment were more likely when parents were present for *part of the visit*. The purpose of the visit was an important predictor. If the visit was for prevention purposes – such as sports physical – the odds that physicians would address prevention topics increased 3- to 22-fold ($p < .05$).

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Conclusions. Findings demonstrated that prevention is more likely during visits scheduled for that purpose, and that parents have an important role to play. When parents are present for part of the visit, balancing parental involvement and respect for privacy, preventive care is more likely to occur.