

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE SOURCES OF SEXUAL INFORMATION
AMONGST THE PUPILS IN STANDARDS 9 AND 10
IN A CO-EDUCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL IN CAPE TOWN

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MINOR DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION
IN EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

1989

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I should like to express my sincere appreciation to the following people:

- My supervisor, Professor I. de V. Heyns, for his support, encouragement and constructive advice.
- Julie Dyall, for her efficient typing, and helpful suggestions.
- The principal, staff and pupils of the school under investigation for being so accommodating, and thereby making this research possible.
- Floss Mitchell, for her calming reassurance and invaluable assistance when it was really needed.
- My parents, Minnie and Simon, for their unconditional love and support prior to, and during the duration of the degree.
- The Human Sciences Research Council for the provision of financial assistance. Opinions expressed in the dissertation do not, however, represent those of the H.S.R.C.

ABSTRACT

An investigation into the actual and preferred sources of sexual information among male and female adolescents in standards 9 and 10 at a private school was undertaken. A review and theoretical consideration of the sources of sexual information among pre-adolescents, adolescents and tertiary students in the Western world during the past seven decades is provided. The sample of 260 pupils completed a four-part questionnaire, which is based on questionnaires used by Davis and Harris (1982), Gebhard (1977), Kallen, Stephenson and Doughty (1983), Spanier (1977) and Thornburg (1970, 1972, 1975, 1981a, 1981b, 1985). Results are quantitative in nature, and are treated predominantly descriptively. Comparisons of the findings are made with regard to previous research of a similar nature. The investigation found that, as a source of information, books/magazines/pamphlets is the most important one. The other relatively important sources, in order of importance, are mothers, same-sex peers, television/movies and school programmes. The major source for the 126 males is books/magazines/pamphlets, and their other relatively important sources are same-sex peers, television/movies, mothers and school programmes. For the 134 females, mothers are the most important source, while books/magazines/pamphlets, same-sex peers, school programmes and television/movies are also regarded as relatively important by them. Furthermore, it was found that information pertaining to most behaviour-related sexual topics is acquired primarily by these pupils from same-sex peers, information regarding non-behaviour-related topics is acquired primarily from mothers, and books/magazines/pamphlets is the major source for so-called "controversial" sexual topics. The investigation also revealed that mothers are the most preferred source of information for the participants, with books/magazines/pamphlets, school programmes, fathers and same-sex

peers being the other sources preferred to a relatively important degree by them. When the sources of males and females are viewed separately, mothers are found to be the most preferred source for both sexes. Furthermore, for 9 of the 12 sexual topics investigated, mothers are found to be the most preferred source, and same-sex peers are found to be the most preferred source for the other three topics. These findings are discussed and compared, implications and limitations of the study are considered, and suggestions for further research, as well as some conclusions, are made.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Objectives

The increasing rate of sexual activity, unintended pregnancies, abortions and sexually transmitted diseases amongst adolescents (i.e., 12- to 19-year-olds) throughout the Western world over the past 25 years has been very well documented (Alan Guttmacher Institute, 1981; Allen, 1987; Black and DeBlassie, 1985; Davis and Harris, 1982; De Anda, 1983; Dreyer in Wolman, 1982; Family Policy Studies Centre in Sunday Tribune, 25 December 1988; Hayes, 1987; Jones, Forrest, Goldman, Henshaw, Lincoln, Rosoff, Westoff and Wulf, 1985; Kirby, 1985a, 1985b; Landry, Bertrand, Cherry and Rice, 1986; Planned Parenthood Federation of America, 1986; Stark, 1986; Thornburg, 1985; Zelnik and Kantner, 1980; Zuckerman, Walker, Frank, Chase and Hamburg, 1984). For example, it has been estimated that approximately 7 million male and 5 million female American adolescents are sexually active, and that this includes approximately half of males and a third of females aged 15 to 17 years. Of the approximately 1 million annual adolescent pregnancies, about half result in births, with 30 000 of them to girls younger than 15. Although the rate of adolescent pregnancies in other Western countries appears to be much lower than in the United States of America, the level of adolescent sexual activity and the median age at which intercourse is first experienced in these countries seems very similar to the United States (Jones et al., 1985).

Due to the sensitive and contentious issues related to the sexual education of children and adolescents, education departments in South Africa have been reluctant to allow investigations regarding pupils' sexual behaviour,

attitudes and values to be undertaken. This has resulted in the extent and nature of sexual behaviour, knowledge, attitudes and values among South African adolescents being difficult to specify. However, research conducted by Family Planning Associations, psychologists, state hospitals and clinics, various government departments and city councils has revealed that the extent of adolescent sexual activity, illegal abortions and unplanned pregnancies is vast, that adolescents are becoming sexually active at increasingly younger ages, and that their sexual knowledge is inadequate (Amod and Shmukler, 1986; Argus, 18 May 1988; Cape Times, 4 July 1987, 29 December 1988; Caret, 18 November 1988; Craig and Richter-Strydom, 1983; De Villiers, 1985; Prinsloo, 1984; Van Coeverden de Groot, Kewley and Isaacs, 1985; Weekend Argus, 8 June 1985, 16 May 1987). For example, De Villiers (1985) reported that of the 20 590 mothers who gave birth at the Paarl Hospital between 1973 and 1983, 31 percent of them were adolescents, of whom approximately 5 percent were 16-years-old or younger. Similarly, the Family Planning Association reported that in 1986, about 5 000 females in the Western Cape under the age of 16 became pregnant, and that an average of 300 000 South African adolescents become pregnant annually (quoted in Weekend Argus, 16 May 1987). A spokesperson for the Department of National Health and Population Development claimed in 1987 that female adolescents become sexually active at an average age of 14, and that most adolescent pregnancies occur amongst those aged 16 to 17 years (quoted in Sunday Times, 26 July 1987). Finally, the Medical Officer of Health in the Western Cape reported that in 1987, over 82 percent of the babies born to adolescents were illegitimate (quoted in Cape Times, 29 December 1988). What is also apparent is that these findings are pertinent to all South African adolescents, regardless of race, socio-economic status or culture (Amod and Shmukler, 1986; Cape Times, 29 December 1988; Craig and Richter-

Strydom, 1983; Van Coeverden de Groot et al., 1985).

Various writers have pointed out that adolescent pregnancies and births tend to lead to adverse consequences regarding the mother and/or infant's physiological, emotional, social and economic well-being (Black and De-Blassie, 1985; Davis and Harris, 1982; De Anda, 1983; Dreyer in Wolman, 1982; Herz, Goldberg and Reis, 1984; Landry et al., 1986; Stark, 1986; Zuckerman et al., 1984). As an attempt to reduce or prevent unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases among adolescents, school-based sex-education programmes have been introduced to varying degrees in many countries during the course of the twentieth century, but especially during the past 20 to 30 years (Fantini, 1983; Jones et al., 1985; Kirby, 1985a, 1985b; Penland, 1981; Zelnik and Kim, 1982). While Gordon (1986), Renshaw (1982) and Wattleton (1987) have questioned the meaningfulness, relevance and comprehensiveness of the school-based programmes, Kirby (1980, 1985a, 1985b), in an extensive review of the literature, has suggested that school-based sex-education programmes in the U.S.A. seem to have had relatively little effect on adolescents' sexual values, attitudes, behaviour and on the incidence of unplanned adolescent pregnancies and births. Nor were these programmes found to have had much impact on participants' self-esteem, decision-making and communication skills, or satisfaction with social and sexual relationships.

In order to maximise the effect of sex-education on the sexual behaviour, attitudes and values of adolescents, various writers have contended that various important sources of sexual information need to be involved in the provision of comprehensive, pertinent, relevant and accurate sexual information in an integrated, non-sensational and educational manner (Cassell, 1981; Fantini, 1983; Gilgun and Gordon, 1983; Jones et al., 1985; Kastner,

1984; Kirby, 1986; Kornfield, 1985; Wattleton, 1987; Zabin, Hirsch, Smith, Streett and Hardy, 1986). This becomes particularly important when viewed against the assertion that the actual sources of adolescents' sexual information appear to be crucial in influencing their sexual behaviour, attitudes and values (e.g., Allen, 1987; Fisher, 1986; Gordon, Scales and Everly, 1979; Herz et al., 1984). Furthermore, it has been recommended that the designing and implementation of sensitive and effective sex-education programmes should include an initial step whereby the prospective participants themselves are asked, *inter alia*, to indicate their needs and wants with regard to sexual information (Davis and Harris, 1982; Maslach and Kerr, 1983; Reichelt, 1977; Thornburg, 1985). It appears, then, that this initial process should include an investigation into the participants' actual and preferred sources of sexual information, as programmes which are designed and presented in ways consistent with the expressed needs of the participants are likely to have a greater effect on their behaviour, values and attitudes.

In South Africa, sex-education programmes at schools are not compulsory. It is only in some schools falling under the jurisdiction of certain education departments that any kind of sex-education programme (usually termed "Family Life Education") has been introduced (Brownell, 1988; Cape Education Department circular no.50/1987; Keech, 1988; Van Rooyen in Liebetrau, 1987). As has been pointed out in the foregoing paragraphs, however, research has revealed that the impact of school-based programmes appears to be relatively limited, and as a means of overcoming this, participation by the adolescents themselves in the designing and implementation of the programmes has been strongly recommended (Brownell, 1988).

In a study pertaining to the health of the pupils in standards 8, 9 and 10 at a private school in Cape Town, Disler (1985) found that the pupils were sexually active to varying degrees. She established the level of intrafamilial communication with regard to masturbation and "sex" (probably meaning sexual intercourse), but beyond this, no attempt was made to establish the pupils' actual and preferred sources of information regarding a variety of sexual topics. Sex-education programmes have been run at this school, and in an attempt to maximise the effect of future sex-education programmes at this school, this study was conducted in pursuance of the following objectives:

1. To investigate the sources from which the pupils in standards 9 and 10 have received their information about various sexual topics
2. To investigate the differences between males and females with respect to their sources
3. To establish the pupils' preferences regarding their sources of sexual information
4. To provide information to the school personnel which would enable them to devise sex-education programmes in accordance with the expressed needs and preferences of the pupils concerned.

CHAPTER TWO

A LITERATURE REVIEW OF THE SOURCES OF SEXUAL INFORMATION

2.1 Introduction

Research into the sources of sexual information in the Western world began approximately 70 years ago, but it is particularly since the so-called "sexual revolution" of the 1950s and 1960s that research into various aspects of adolescent sexuality, including sources of information, has become the focus of many researchers' attention (Darling and Hicks, 1982; Penland, 1981; Thornburg, 1975, 1981a, 1981b, 1985; Wagner, 1980). Various reviewers of the literature have found that, despite the differences in the participants' demographic characteristics and the sample size, the major sources of sexual information have been peers (usually same-sex), parents (especially mothers), schools and the media (which appears to have referred particularly to literature) (e.g., Darling and Hicks, 1982; Davis and Harris, 1982; Dickinson, 1978; Monge, Dusek and Lawless, 1977; Moore and Erikson, 1985; Strouse and Fabes, 1985; Thornburg, 1972, 1981a, 1981b; Walters and Walters, 1983). According to Walters and Walters (1983), peers, parents and literature were the major sources until the 1980s. The last decade has witnessed the growing importance of schools as a source of sexual information (Allen, 1987; Davis and Harris, 1982; Goldman and Goldman, 1981; Planned Parenthood Federation of America, 1986).

Factors such as culture, race, topic, sex, socio-economic status, religion and era have tended to influence the stated sources of sexual information. The researchers have largely tended to express their findings in general terms, usually without attempting to establish the relative importance of the different major sources for various sexual topics. Although no one

source has emerged as the major source until the present time, peers appear to have been the dominant source of information until the late 1970s (Darling and Hicks, 1982; Thornburg, 1985). Although various writers have questioned the comprehensiveness, accuracy and appropriateness of the sexual information being provided by different sources, these aspects will not be considered in this study (e.g., Gordon, 1986; Thornburg, 1975, 1981a; Zelnik, 1979).

2.2 Sources of Sexual Information in South Africa

In keeping with the paucity of research related to adolescent sexuality in South Africa, virtually no investigation into the sources of sexual information among South Africans has been conducted. Rostowsky (1982), in trying to establish differences in the sources amongst 299 adolescents in 73 white and 80 "coloured" families in the Transvaal, found that parents, peers, literature and "organised sex-education lectures" were reported as the main sources. The white adolescents had received more information from all the sources (especially their parents) than the 'coloured' participants. Disler (1985) found that 70 percent of females in her sample "could discuss sex" (probably refers to sexual intercourse) with one of their parents (usually the mothers), while 47 percent of males believed they could do so. This does not necessarily mean that they did discuss any sexual topics with their parents, nor were these adolescents asked to specify their main sources of sexual information. No other research related to sources of sexual information in South Africa was located by this writer.

2.3 Sources of Sexual Information in the Western World

A review of the literature has revealed changes in the relative importance

of the major sources during different eras. For this reason, the differences of the findings in the era before 1970, the era during the 1970s and during the 1980s is discussed in separate sections.

2.3.1 Sources of sexual information before 1970.

Research findings in the era leading up to the 1970s were characterised by peers being reported as the primary source of sexual information by participants of various ages and of both sexes (e.g., Angelino and Mech, 1954, 1955; Ehrmann, 1959; Elias and Gebhard, 1969; Exner, 1915; Kinsey, Pomeroy and Martin, 1948; Kirkendall and Calderwood, 1965; Landis and Landis, 1968; Poffenberger, 1961; Ramsey, 1943; Schofield, 1965). Other important sources of information were literature, and for females, mothers (Angelino and Mech, 1955; Ehrmann, 1959; Juhasz, 1969; Landis and Landis, 1968; Poffenberger, 1961).

These researchers did not attempt to differentiate the relative importance of different sources for different sexual topics. In an era where school-based sex-education programmes were largely non-existent, and most parents and teachers apparently unwilling or unable to discuss sexual topics with children, it seemed highly likely that young people would acquire their sexual information from literature (i.e., books and/or magazines), or their peers, with females apparently finding it easier to acquire information from their mothers (Juhasz and Sonnenshein-Schneider, 1980; Penland, 1981).

2.3.2 Sources of sexual information during the 1970s.

Dreyer in Wolman (1982) and Rutter (1979) have suggested that changes towards sexual behaviour, attitudes and values became increasingly apparent during the 1970s. Concomitant with these changes, an increasing amount of

research into the initial and major sources of sexual information among pre-adolescents, adolescents and young adults of varying cultures and socio-economic backgrounds was conducted (e.g., Athanizou, 1973; Dickinson, 1978; Farrell, 1978; Finkel and Finkel, 1975; Gebhard, 1977; Hunt, 1974; Inman, 1974; Schofield, 1973; Shipman, 1971; Sorenson, 1973; Spanier, 1977; Thornburg, 1970, 1972, 1975; Welbourne, 1977). Some of the findings are now discussed.

Thornburg (1970, 1972, 1975) asked undergraduate university students to recall their initial sources of information with regard to various sexual topics. Although differences may well exist between initial and major sources of information, Thornburg (1985) suggests that initial sources leave lasting and strong impressions on children, and are likely to last until late adolescence in most cases. In all three studies, Thornburg found that peers were the major source of information, while literature had become a particularly important source too. Mothers and schools were the other major sources of sexual information, but fathers, experience, doctors and ministers were viewed as insignificant by the participants.

Thornburg further analysed his data by comparing the relative importance of the various sources of sexual information for behaviour-related topics (e.g., petting, sexual intercourse, masturbation, homosexuality) as opposed to non-behavioural topics (e.g., origin of babies, menstruation, abortion, sexually transmitted diseases). He found that, in all three studies, peers, and to a lesser extent literature, were the major sources of behaviour-related information. He concludes, therefore, that parents and schools were largely reluctant to provide the participants with information regarding sexual behaviour. Furthermore, Thornburg (1975) found that females were more dependent than males on their mothers (19,3

percent as opposed to 5,4 percent), while males were more dependent on peers than were females (45,2 percent as opposed to 35,3 percent). With regard to behaviour-related topics, however, peers were more important than mothers for females too. Gebhard (1977) investigated the sources of initial sexual information among 114 students at Indiana University, and found that for males and females, same-sex peers were the most important single source of information (42 percent for males and 32 percent for females). Mothers, schools and the mass media were also viewed as important sources, but Gebhard found that many participants (30 percent of males and 36 percent of females) referred to more than one source as being of equal importance. Similarly to Thornburg (1970, 1972, 1975), Gebhard found that the relative importance of various sources depended largely on the particular sexual topic being investigated, with same-sex peers and the media being particularly important sources with regard to sexual behaviour-related topics (e.g., intercourse, homosexuality). He also reported that males and females seemed to be acquiring their information at the same ages, and that mothers appeared to be a relatively far more important source for females than males. Other sources (e.g., opposite-sex peers, fathers) were regarded by the students as unimportant.

Thirdly, Spanier (1977) analysed cross-sectional data from a national probability sample of 1 177 American university students. He asked the students to indicate which source(s) had been important by the time they entered high school, and found that 81 percent of males and 70 percent of females regarded their same-sex peers as a primary source of sexual information. For both males and females, 67 percent viewed literature as a primary source. Mothers were viewed as a primary source by 62 percent of females and 24 percent of males, while fathers were mentioned by 30 percent

of males, and 12 percent of females. Schools were viewed as important by 22 percent and 14 percent of females and males respectively, and other sources (e.g., siblings, opposite-sex peers, clergymen, doctors) were regarded as relatively unimportant.

The relative lack of importance of schools was probably due to the fact that the students had been at school during the 1960s, when school-based sex-education programmes in the U.S.A. were not at all widespread. Spanier did not investigate the relative importance of the various sources for behavioural as opposed to non-behavioural topics, but he contends that the importance attributed to various sources may well have been influenced by the individual's level of sexual activity. His finding that both males and females who were sexually active regarded male peers as a primary source of information suggests that peers were particularly important with regard to behaviour-related information. Spanier's findings were thus very similar to those of Thornburg (1970, 1972, 1975) and Gebhard (1977), all of whom concerned themselves with the important sources of sexual information as recalled by samples of tertiary students in the U.S.A. during the 1970s. It appears that peers were the most important source of information for males and females, and that literature, mothers and schools were of significance too. Both males and females viewed peers and literature as of particular importance when considering behaviour-related sexual topics, thus strongly suggesting that schools and parents were reluctant and/or unable to discuss sexual behaviour with young people. It appears, furthermore, that mothers were far more salient sources of sexual information for females than for males. The sample sizes, non-representative nature of the samples, and cross-sectional data do, however, emphasise the need for cautious interpretations of their findings.

Research carried out amongst high-school pupils during the 1970s revealed very similar findings to those studies which investigated the sources of tertiary students (e.g., Athanizou, 1973; Dickinson, 1978; Farrell, 1978; Finkel and Finkel, 1975; Inman, 1974; Miller, 1973; Reichelt and Werley, 1975; Schofield, 1973; Shipman, 1971; Sorenson, 1973; Welbourne, 1977). Some of these studies are now briefly discussed.

Dickinson (1978) compared the sources of sexual information as reported by black and white male and female adolescents in a North-East Texas community in 1964 (N = 367) and 1974 (N = 432). He found that, with the exception of 73 black females, peers were regarded as the major source in the 1974 study, although they had also become a far more important source for black females (25 percent as opposed to 2 percent in 1964). The most important source for these black females in 1974 was literature. For black males and white male and female participants in the 1974 study, literature was relatively important, but much less so than had been the case in the 1964 study. The other major source of information reported by the 1974 participants was mothers, particularly with regard to females. Mothers were unimportant for white males, while fathers were a more important source for males than for females, but still remained relatively insignificant. The participants were not asked to consider the relative importance of schools as sources of sexual information, nor were topic variabilities examined.

Inman (1974) investigated the sources amongst a sample of 417 high school pupils in Arizona, which included males and females; Protestants and Catholics; whites, blacks and Mexican-Americans. She found that peers were viewed as the single most important source of information, while the family as a whole (i.e. father, mother, father and mother equally, siblings) was regarded as the major source. When viewed separately, mothers were viewed

as far more important than fathers, and siblings as relatively unimportant. Schools were also reported to be an important source of information, but the importance of literature is unclear, as it appears that much of the information learned from peers was acquired by reading sexually-orientated books and magazines together. Inman did not compare males and females, nor did she investigate the relative importance of sources with regard to different topics, but her reported findings were very similar to those of other researchers investigating sources of sexual information during this era.

Welbourne (1977) distinguished between the initial and major sources of 19 sexual topics amongst a sample of younger adolescents in 150 intact families in New York City. For both males and females, mothers were the most important initial source of information, although for males, peers were important too. Schools were most frequently cited as the major source of information by both males and females. Welbourne also found that for all the participants, information relating to "personal-social issues" was primarily acquired from peers, while mothers seemed to be important sources for the non-behavioural topics. Fathers were viewed as insignificant sources of information, and literature was regarded as unimportant. It seems that as schools were playing an extremely important role as providers of information, there was less need for these young adolescents to acquire their information from books and magazines.

The primary importance of peers as a source of sexual information as viewed by adolescents was reported by, inter alia, Athanizou (1973), Finkel and Finkel (1975), Miller (1973), Reichelt and Werley (1975), Shipman (1971) and Sorenson (1973). Similar findings were reported by those investigating sources of information among British adolescents during the 1970s (Farrell,

1978; Schofield 1973). Literature, schools and mothers were reported as increasingly important sources by various samples of adolescents (e.g., Athanizou, 1973; Farrell, 1978; Miller, 1973).

In sum, it appears that various conclusions can be drawn with regard to research conducted during the 1970s. The differences in the demographic characteristics of the samples and the omission by some researchers to investigate the relative importance of various sources with regard to specific sexual topics suggest however, that conclusions need to be made cautiously. Nevertheless, the findings of those researching sources of sexual information during this decade were remarkably similar, regardless of the ages and sexes, as well as the socio-economic, religious and cultural backgrounds of the participants. Peers (usually same-sex) were consistently reported to be the major source of sexual information, while literature, schools and mothers (especially for females) were all regarded to varying degrees, as increasingly important sources. According to Gebhard (1977) and Thornburg (1972, 1975), this development was probably the result of the increase in the provision of school-based sex-education during the 1970s, more explicit exposure to sexual topics in the media, and an increased effort by mothers to discuss sexual topics (albeit those topics which were not related to sexual behaviour). For both males and females, fathers, clergymen, doctors and other possible sources seemed largely insignificant, while mothers and peers appeared to be relatively more important for females and males respectively. What is also apparent is that information pertaining to behaviour-related topics (e.g., sexual intercourse, petting, prostitution, homosexuality, masturbation) was being primarily acquired, by both males and females, from peers and literature. While the relative importance of schools and parents (especially mothers)

had increased during the 1970s, it seems as if these sources were still very reluctant to provide information with regard to sexual behaviour.

2.3.3 Sources of sexual information during the 1980s.

During the 1980s, school-based sex-education programmes have been introduced into many countries on an unprecedented scale, and various sexual topics have received considerably more attention in the media, either educationally or non-educationally (Jones et al., 1985; Strouse and Fabes, 1985). In addition, parents seem to have become increasingly supportive of their children receiving accurate information about a variety of sexual topics (Rink, Rudolph and Simkins, 1983; Scales, 1981; Silverstein and Buck, 1986; Turner, 1983). This has resulted in sources other than peers being reported as the most important source of information by some researchers (e.g., Allen, 1987; Goldman and Goldman, 1981; Kisker, 1985; Planned Parenthood Federation of America, 1986).

Amongst those researching major sources as recalled by older participants, Pope, Westerfield and Walker (1985) asked 340 undergraduate male and female students at a mid-western American university to specify their major sources of contraceptive information. The sources of males and females were not compared, but peers and the mass media were found to be the major sources, followed by home, school and "partners". Kallen et al. (1983) investigated the extent to which a random sample of 823 white, single, undergraduate students at Michigan State University regarded the sexual and contraceptive information they had acquired from various sources during their high school years as useful. They found that both males and females viewed peers, books and school programmes as the most useful sources, with those engaging in sexual intercourse viewing their "special other" as very

useful too. Mothers and fathers were regarded as providing relatively little useful information, and books and magazines were perceived as more useful by females than males. Although these researchers investigated the perceived utility of the sources, as opposed to the relative importance of the sources, it is very likely that those sources which were viewed as particularly useful had been providing most of the sexual and contraceptive information to these participants.

Although many researchers studying the sources of sexual information during the 1980s have not established the relative importance of the various sources with regard to specific topics, their findings have, in general terms, suggested a significant shift in the relative importance of the major sources. Thornburg's (1985) investigation into the initial sources of sexual information amongst 84 children aged 11 to 13 years revealed that, contrary to his previous studies (Thornburg, 1970, 1972, 1975, 1981a, 1981b), mothers were reported as the major source of information by 33 percent of the respondents. Peers, schools and literature were the other relatively important sources of information reported by both males and females. Thornburg points out, however, that these participants were younger than those who had participated in his previous research, and that the relative importance of the sources was based solely on the sexual information that they indicated they knew (i.e., 39,3 percent). It could therefore not be assumed that mothers were becoming the main source of information, because these early adolescents would most probably acquire much information from other sources as they grew older.

When analysed further, Thornburg found that, similar to his earlier findings, mothers seemed to be more important for females, while peers appeared more important for males. Schools and literature seemed more

important for females too, while fathers were still viewed as unimportant by both sexes. It was noticeable that, with regard to three topics which were receiving much attention in the media during the 1980s (i.e., prostitution, abortion, homosexuality), males acquired most of their information from their peers, while females viewed their mothers as their main source. This suggests that the mothers of these participants found it easier to discuss certain "controversial" topics with their daughters than their sons, although for information related to sexual intercourse, males and females viewed their peers and literature as the most important sources.

The shift away from peers as the dominant source of sexual information during the 1980s was clearly demonstrated in a study conducted by Goldman and Goldman (1981). They investigated the major sources of sexual information amongst a cross-sectional and cross-national sample of 838 children aged 5 to 15 years, who were attending state co-educational schools in urban and suburban parts of Australia, England, Sweden, Canada and the U.S.A. Mothers were cited as the major source of information (especially by females), while schools and the media (i.e., books, magazines, encyclopaedias, films, TV) were also regarded as major sources. Peers, fathers and siblings were found to be insignificant, while the importance of schools increased with age in all the countries, but were still seen as supplementary to the home.

In an era where sex-education programmes at school were becoming increasingly accepted, where the mass media was exposing people to various sexual topics on an enormous scale, and where the mothers of these children had themselves grown out of the "sexual revolution" of the 1960s, it is understandable that peers are no longer viewed as the primary and dominant source of information for pre-adolescents and young adolescents in the

Western democracies. Unfortunately, Goldman and Goldman did not differentiate between specific topics and various sources, but a clear shift in the relative importance of peers, mothers, schools and literature amongst this sample of young people is strongly suggested. Taking into consideration the fact that the 838 participants were interviewed and controlled for age, sex, social class, birth order, ability and other familial characteristics, it might well be that this sample was representative of young urbanised people in Western industrialised countries with well-developed systems of education (Goldman and Goldman, 1981).

Research conducted among high-school pupils in the 1980s strongly suggests the growing importance of schools, mothers and the media as stated sources of sexual information, while the importance of peers as a source, especially with regard to behaviour-related topics, is still very important (e.g., Allen, 1987; Amonker, 1980; Courtright and Baran, 1980; Davis and Harris, 1982; Kisker, 1985; Planned Parenthood Federation of America, 1986; Thornburg, 1981a, 1981b).

Thornburg's (1981a) investigation into initial sources of sexual information amongst 1 152 lower-middle to upper-middle class males and females at a mid-western high school in the U.S.A. revealed that peers were regarded as the most important source (37,1 percent), followed by literature (21,9 percent), mothers (17,4 percent) and schools (15,2 percent). Fathers, ministers, doctors and "experience" were seldom mentioned as sources of information. When topic variabilities were analysed, it was evident that peers were particularly important sources for behaviour-related topics (e.g., petting, intercourse, contraception, homosexuality, masturbation), while literature was important for the topics of prostitution, abortion, ejaculation and seminal emissions. Schools were particu-

larly important with regard to providing information on sexually transmitted diseases, and it was noted that while mothers continued to be the major source with regard to conception and menstruation, they were regarded by these adolescents as the second most important source in the area of sexual intercourse. While literature and schools seemed to be of equal importance to males and females, mothers were seen as far more important for females (22,3 percent) as opposed to males (6,9 percent), and peers were more important for males (49,1 percent) as opposed to females (33,4 percent).

Davis and Harris (1982) also investigated sources of sexual information amongst adolescents, and demonstrated that participants' demographic characteristics are likely to influence their stated sources. The sample of 288 males and females was drawn from three rural and two urban American public schools, comprised three different cultures and was largely 15-, 16- and 17-year-olds. While peers were regarded as the most common source of information, followed by schools, literature and parents, these researchers found that females, rural pupils and Anglo-Americans received more information from their parents than males, urban pupils, Hispanics and native Americans. For both males and females, peers and schools were the two major sources of information, while literature was an important source for both sexes, particularly for male participants. Furthermore, males regarded movies and siblings as more important sources than their parents. Various sexual topics were not differentiated by these researchers, but they showed that, despite differences in demographic characteristics, males and females tended to acquire most of their sexual information from specific sources, with peers and schools the major sources for the rural and urban adolescents from all three cultures.

The importance of schools and peers as sources of information was also reported by Kisker (1985). Adopting a qualitative approach, discussions about various sexual topics were held by carefully selected interviewers with single-sex groups of mostly white, lower- to middle-class 16- to 19-year-olds in five American cities. Schools and peers were viewed as the major sources of information, while literature, movies, television, doctors and parents were not viewed as important sources. Kisker (1985) points out that this technique has various limitations in that interpretations of the findings are very subjective, and the participants may have been prevented from expressing views due to the group dynamics. Also, the qualitative nature of the questions, non-random selection of participants and smallness of the sample size militate against generalisations being made. Furthermore, it is uncertain which topics were discussed, as "sex" was not defined in the report. Despite the limitations, however, Kisker maintains that

"...the responses help to explain the qualitative factors that lie behind the facts and figures garnered from quantitative research and add a certain vividness to the data" (Kisker, 1985, p.88).

In a national survey conducted for the Planned Parenthood Federation of America (1986), the adolescents overwhelmingly regarded their parents as their major source of information with regard to pregnancy, sexuality and contraception. Peers, schools and television were mentioned as the other relatively important sources. The term "sexuality" was not defined, and the relative importance of sources for each topic was not established, although it was found that males, younger adolescents and blacks were least likely to have acquired their information at school. Furthermore, while parents were cited as the most important source of information, only 33 percent had actually discussed contraception and sex with them. It appears, therefore, that sources other than peers have become far more

important for American adolescents, but information pertaining to behaviour-related topics still seems to be acquired largely from peers and television, especially with regard to males.

Allen (1987) also investigated the major sources of information on sex and contraception amongst 209 male and female 14- to 16-year-olds in three English cities, spanning the North-East, the Midlands and the South-East. She found that

"...most teenagers thought that school was their most important source of information about sex and contraception, with friends cited as more important about sex than contraception, and parents cited by only a minority as their most important source of information about sex and by only 10 percent about contraception" (Allen, 1987, p.144).

Allen also found that where two sources were cited by the participants, they tended always to include schools as one of the sources. Literature, television, movies, doctors and other "experts" were found to be unimportant sources of information. It might be that as schools were playing such an important role, the need to rely on the media was decreasing. The findings were limited in that they pertain to a sample of adolescents in three cities only, and "sex" was not defined. However, when compared with earlier British studies done by Schofield (1965, 1973) and Farrell (1978), it appears that schools had become a relatively far more important source of sexual information.

It can therefore be seen that research findings during the 1980s have by no means been unanimous. The lack of clarity with regard to terminology, the nature and size of the samples used, and the omission on the part of many researchers to establish the relative importance of various sources in relation to specific sexual topics has militated against the findings being generalised. However, when compared to research conducted in previous

eras, it appears that peers are no longer the dominant source of sexual information. Schools and mothers have become relatively far more important sources than they used to be, and this seems to include the provision of information pertaining to topics such as contraception and sexual intercourse. The relative importance of literature has also increased, but it appears to be particularly important when behaviour-related topics are being discussed. It seems that as schools and parents have become more willing and/or able to discuss a variety of sexual topics with pre-adolescents and adolescents, the relative importance of peers and the media as sources of information has diminished. Where it has been investigated, males and females still seem to show differences, but there appears to be greater similarity in their stated sources than existed previously (Allen, 1987; Davis and Harris, 1982; Kisker, 1985).

2.4 Preferred Sources of Sexual Information

Some researchers have also attempted to establish the participants' preferred sources of sexual information (e.g., Allen, 1987; Calderwood, 1965; Dickinson, 1978; Farrell, 1978; Goldman and Goldman, 1981; Inman, 1974; McCormick, Folcik and Izzo, 1985; Sorenson, 1973). The findings pertain to adolescents, with the exception of those participants investigated by Goldman and Goldman (1981), where pre-adolescents were included in the sample. Regardless of the sex, era and cultural and socio-economic background of those questioned, the preferred sources are very evident. According to Allen (1987), Calderwood (1965), Dickinson (1978) and Inman (1974), adolescents would prefer to acquire their sexual information from their parents. McCormick et al. (1985) and Sorenson (1973) found schools to be the preferred source, while Farrell (1978) and Goldman and Goldman (1981) reported that schools and parents were the preferred sources. It

might well be that participants' preferences would vary according to particular topics, but these researchers tended to establish the preferred sources in general terms. It is very noticeable that the two sources traditionally most closely associated with the acquisition of information pertaining to behaviour-related topics, i.e., literature and peers, are regarded as markedly unimportant when preferences have been stipulated.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL OVERVIEW OF THE SOURCES OF SEXUAL INFORMATION

In this chapter, the concept of "sexual information" is defined, limitations of the research pertaining to sources of sexual information are pointed out, and a theoretical consideration of the major sources of sexual information is given.

3.1 What is Sexual Information?

Various writers (e.g., Dreyer in Wolman, 1982; Gordon, 1986; Renshaw, 1982) have suggested that sexual development and behaviour are integral human processes, starting at birth and ending at death. Juhasz and Sonnenschein-Schneider (1980) and Wagner (1980) have pointed out that dealing with sexual emotions and drives in a socially-acceptable and self-enhancing manner is a major developmental task of adolescence. Viewed from a developmental perspective then, sexual information can be defined as

"... information about the physical, emotional and social aspects of human sexual development from conception to old age, including the nature of love, personal relationships and family life" (Went, 1985, p.19).

Sexual information therefore consists of a variety of topics, some concerned with physiological and theoretical aspects of sexuality, while others are concerned with behavioural and attitudinal aspects. Ideally, sexual information should be provided by a variety of sources in an educational, sensitive and comprehensive manner, so that ignorance and sexual exploitation may be combated, responsible decision-making and behaviour may be promoted, and communication and understanding of sexual matters throughout society may be facilitated and enhanced (Jones et al., 1985; Penland, 1981; Went, 1985).

3.2 Limitations of the Research on the Sources of Sexual Information

Methodological limitations have characterised much of the research conducted to establish sources of sexual information, thus militating against generalisations being made (Dreyer in Wolman, 1982; Kastner, 1984; Kirby, 1980, 1985a, 1985b; Kirby, Alter and Scales, 1979; Moore, Peterson and Furstenberg, 1986; Moore and Erikson, 1985). These limitations have been summarised as follows by Dreyer (Dreyer in Wolman, 1982).

Firstly, many of the studies have lacked theory and the stating of testable hypotheses. Secondly, the samples used have often been biased and unrepresentative. Studies have tended not to include adequate control groups, and generalisations to larger populations have often been implied. A third limitation pertains to the fact that much of the research has been carried out with pre-adolescents and adolescents, thus requiring parental consent for their participation. As this consent has often not been given, the sample attrition has often been large.

Dreyer has also pointed out that the constructs used have often been defined in different ways by different researchers, or not defined at all. Fifthly, the instruments used to collect data have been regarded as potentially invalid and unreliable. As paper and pencil questionnaires or personal interviews have been the usual ways of acquiring data from participants, Dreyer contends that the accuracy of this information has been questionable. Insufficient use of longitudinal studies has been regarded as a further limitation, and lastly, there appears to have been an emphasis on non-parametric analyses, where multivariate statistical analyses would assist researchers in developing a greater understanding of adolescent sexuality. Despite the limitations, much research has suggested that the

major sources of sexual information have different effects on adolescents' behaviour, attitudes and values. Some of these findings are now considered.

3.3 Effects of the Major Sources of Sexual Information

As has been indicated above, schools, peers, parents and the media have been of particular importance as sources of sexual information. A brief theoretical consideration of the effects of these four sources is now given.

3.3.1 Schools

In South Africa, school-based sex-education programmes are largely non-existent, and where they do exist, the relevance, approach and comprehensiveness of the programmes are questionable (Brownell, 1988; Burns in Young and Burns, 1987; Rostowsky, 1982; Sarzin, 1988; Van Coeverden de Groot et al., 1985; Van Rooyen in Liebetrau, 1987). In many other countries, sex-education programmes have been introduced into schools during the past 20 to 30 years, either on a compulsory or optional basis, with the ages of the participants varying from 8 to 18 years (Black and DeBlasie, 1985; Davis and Harris, 1982; Jones et al., 1985; Kirby, 1985a, 1985b; Renshaw, 1982; Zelnik and Kim, 1982). Although writers (e.g., Gordon, 1986; Proctor, 1986; Wolpe, 1987) have questioned the relevance, format and comprehensiveness of many of these programmes, the aim has been to provide pre-adolescents and adolescents with accurate information about various sexual topics. It has been assumed that on the basis of accurate sexual knowledge, the participants would engage in responsible sexual and social behaviour, develop caring and understanding sexual attitudes and values towards others, and enhance their communication, decision-making and

interpersonal skills (Strouse and Fabes, 1985).

Various researchers have reported on the effects of school-based sex-education programmes, and have concluded that these programmes have had limited effects on changing and/or ensuring responsible sexual behaviour, attitudes and values among the participants (e.g., Chilman, 1979; Kirby, 1980, 1985a, 1985b; Parcel and Luttmann, 1981; Pope et al., 1985; Zelnik and Kim, 1982). For example, in an extensive review of the effects of these programmes in American Schools, Kirby (1980, 1985a, 1985b) concludes that the programmes increased participants' knowledge regarding various sexual topics, but seemed to have relatively little effect on their values and attitudes, sexual behaviour and use of contraception, as well as on the incidence of unwanted adolescent pregnancies. Nor were school-based programmes found to have much impact on the participants' self-esteem, decision-making and communication skills, or reported satisfaction with sexual and social relationships. It appears therefore, that where the aim of school-based sex-education programmes has been to reduce the incidence of sexual activity, or to increase responsible sexual behaviour, this source of sexual information has not produced the desired effects.

Various explanations have been suggested for the lack of the impact of knowledge acquired from school-based programmes on participants' sexual attitudes and behaviour (e.g., Gordon, 1986; Kirby, 1985b; Kisker, 1985). In a succinct analysis of the lack of impact of knowledge on behaviour, Kirby (1985b) suggests that

"Youth learn about sexuality from other sources, they may not apply knowledge to their own behaviour, ... they may not expect to have sex ... and other innumerable internal and external factors affect their decisions" (Kirby, 1985b, p.423).

These internal and external factors include the actual availability of

sexual partners and contraception, the adolescents' cognitive and moral development, motivation to use contraception, attitudes towards parents and society, family structure, and factors such as physical development and attractiveness, sexual desires, desire to have a baby, desire to have a boy/girlfriend and emotional needs (Herz and Reis, 1987; Juhasz and Sonnenshein-Schneider, 1987; Kirby, 1985b; Landry et al., 1986; Miller, McCoy, Olson and Wallace, 1986; Moore et al., 1986; Namerow, Lawton and Philliber, 1987; Newcomer and Udry, 1984; Pestrak and Martin, 1985; Proctor, 1986; Schinke, Blythe and Gilchrist, 1981; Scott, Shifman, Orr, Owen and Fawcett, 1988; Thomas, Long, Whitten, Hamilton, Fraser and Askins, 1985; Yarber and Greer, 1986).

While Jones et al. (1985) have questioned the conclusions of some writers, it seems that the expectations and assumptions related to school-based sex-education programmes need to be re-evaluated. It has been suggested that it is inappropriate and unrealistic to expect these programmes on their own to change sexual attitudes, values and behaviour, as they may be badly designed, not in keeping with the participants' needs, and lacking in cognizance of the various factors referred to above (Hammonds and Schultz, 1984; Herz et al., 1984; Strouse and Fabes, 1985; Zelnik, 1979).

3.3.2 Peers

Various researchers have contended that the sexual information acquired from peers is likely to be inaccurate and filled with misconceptions and myths (e.g., Gordon, 1986; Kisker, 1985; Renshaw, 1982; Thornburg, 1975, 1985). According to Renshaw (1982), obtaining information from one's peers tends to result in pre-adolescents and adolescents developing distorted, unhealthy and unrealistic ideas about sexuality because

"... when children are the prime teachers of sex, they emphasise the mechanics of performance - how to do 'it', and to keep it secret from parents. No one, therefore, tells the child about personal integrity; his or her right to privacy; right to refusal; the meaning of affection, touch, caring, and commitment in a sexual relationship, or the basic biology" (Renshaw, 1982, p.97).

In a review of the relationship between sexual knowledge and behaviour, Gordon et al. (1979) conclude that, for both males and females, adolescents seemed to be more sexually active where peers, as opposed to parents, had been the main source of information. It appears that as long as information is being acquired from peers, and this information is not being countered or supplemented with accurate knowledge from other sources, adolescents are likely to act on the information. The possible consequences of irresponsible sexual behaviour have become particularly devastating in contemporary society, as AIDS becomes increasingly widespread throughout the world.

In an attempt to urge sexually active adolescents to use contraceptives, Zuehlke and Rogel (1981) have suggested that peers of the at-risk adolescents should be used to lead programmes which deal with sexuality in an open, honest and relevant manner. It has been assumed that the peers will be perceived as positive models for responsible sexual behaviour and for adopting caring attitudes and values based on accurate and pertinent information. It seems that including peers as the educators in programmes may well contribute towards increasing knowledge and, albeit to small degrees, increase the likelihood of responsible behaviour, attitudes and values. Walters and Walters (1983) have pointed out, however, that peers are unlikely to have much influence with older adolescents.

Although the influence of peers will differ depending on the sexual topic

being discussed, as well as the demographic characteristics of various pre-adolescents and adolescents, it seems that the information obtained from peers is likely to be inaccurate and distorted. Furthermore, it appears that it is extremely unrealistic and inappropriate to expect peers to be the transmitters of reliable sexual information and to encourage responsible sexual behaviour. However, the possible and established influence of peers as sources of information, where they lead pertinent sex-education programmes, needs to be investigated very carefully in the future.

3.3.3 Parents

The impact that parents have on the sexual attitudes, values and behaviour of their children has been investigated by many researchers (e.g., Baker, Thalberg and Morrison, 1988; Darling and Hicks, 1982; De Anda, 1983; Fisher, 1986, 1987; Fox, 1979; Gordon et al., 1979; Inazu and Fox, 1980; Lewis, 1973; Moore et al., 1986; Miller et al., 1986; Walters and Walters, 1983). The findings have been inconsistent, and open to various interpretations.

In a brief review of the literature pertaining to the effects of parents as sources of sexual information on the sexual behaviour of their children, Fisher (1986) concludes that those who obtained most of their information from their parents appeared to engage in pre-marital sex much less than those who had obtained most of their information from other sources, and to have had fewer sexual partners. These adolescents also seemed to use contraceptives relatively consistently and effectively. Similarly, a review by Darling and Hicks (1982) led to the conclusion that the effective use of contraception, and the initiation of sexual activity, seems to depend on the parents, especially the mothers, discussing sexual topics with their daughters, while Lewis (1973) found that the fewer the sexual topics discussed with parents, the more likely the adolescents were to have had

coital and promiscuous sexual experiences.

Although many researchers have suggested a causal link between adolescent contraceptive and sexual behaviour and parental communication regarding sexual topics, these findings need to be interpreted with much caution (Fox, 1979; Miller et al., 1986; Moore et al., 1986; Yarber and Greer, 1986). Various writers have pointed out that where parents are reported to have been an important source of information, it may well have been attitudes and values, as opposed to knowledge, which was transmitted, either verbally and/or non-verbally (Darling and Hicks, 1982; Dickinson, 1978; Fisher, 1986; Miller et al., 1986; Moore et al., 1986; Newcomer and Udry, 1984). In an investigation into the relationship between the occurrence of early sexual activity and parental attitudes towards adolescent sexual activity among white 15- and 16-year-olds interviewed in the American 1981 National Survey of Children, Moore et al. (1986) found that parental communication about sexual topics was associated with less frequent initiation of sexual activity only where the parents held traditional beliefs and attitudes, and where the adolescent was a female. They conclude that in addition to being aware of the possible implications of the child's gender

"...future investigators should collect data not only on whether parents and teens discuss sex, but also on topics they cover, the type of parental advice and the parents' attitudes towards sex and family life. Information on the timing of the discussions and timing of first and subsequent intercourse are also needed in order to establish the causal order of events" (Moore et al., 1986, p.781).

It appears, then, that it is very difficult to make generalisations and causal inferences regarding the influence of parents as sources of sexual information, but that parents do seem to play an important role regarding the transmission of sexual attitudes and values. The extent to which parents and their children have similar attitudes and values may well

determine the nature and extent of the communication (Fisher, 1986, 1987). Yet, despite the inconsistencies, the small and unrepresentative nature of the samples, and the lack of longitudinal studies, research has suggested that parents do not only influence adolescents' sexual attitudes and values, but also their sexual behaviour (Darling and Hicks, 1982; Walters and Walters, 1983). In order to clarify the situation, further research is required to establish the influence of parents on their childrens' sexual attitudes, values and behaviour, as well as the extent to which other socialising sources negate or enhance the effect of sexual information acquired from parents.

3.3.4 Mass media

In the technological, consumer-orientated culture of contemporary society, the media (especially television) has assumed an increasingly important rôle in the sexual socialisation of pre-adolescents and adolescents (Allen, 1987; Courtright and Baran, 1980; Jones et al., 1985; Darling and Hicks, 1982; Dickinson, 1978; Gordon, 1986; Peterson, Moore and Furstenberg, 1985; Planned Parenthood Federation of America, 1986; Strouse and Fabes, 1985; Thornburg, 1985).

Research into the effects of the media on the sexual behaviour of adolescents has centred on television viewing, as watching this sex-saturated medium appears to be a major activity of many young people (Liebert, Sprafkin and Davidson, 1982; Reed, 1983). Results have been inconclusive. For example, in a review of the literature, Strouse and Fabes (1985) point out that inferential conclusions must be guarded against, but the reviewed research suggests that an almost ongoing bombardment of explicit and implicit sexual messages, particularly when it in-

cludes violence, appears to influence peoples' sexual behaviour. They contend that young people appear to be learning about sexual topics from the sexual content of television programmes, and to be influenced by the behaviour of their preferred television characters. Secondly, in an investigation into the relationship between television viewing and the early initiation of sexual activity amongst 15- and 16-year-old Americans interviewed for the 1981 National Survey of Children, Peterson et al. (1985) found that viewing was a weak predictor of sexual activity amongst males and females, and that where the correlation appeared significant, it could not be assumed that the viewing preceded the behaviour. Furthermore, they found that certain mediating variables, such as gender, the participants' intelligence and/or self-esteem level, their educational aspirations, whether they were watching with or without their parents, the extent of discussions with their parents and their parents' attitudes, appeared to affect their vulnerability to the effects of television viewing. Peterson et al. (1985) suggest that, in order to test the hypothesised relationship further, future research designs need to be improved. These should include wider measures of sexual activity, such as age at which intercourse was initiated, precoital sexual behaviour, and frequency and number of partners, as well as using more specific measures of exposure to the sexual content of television programmes. Thirdly, in comparing adolescent pregnancy and child-bearing rates in the United States, Canada, England, Wales, France, Sweden and the Netherlands, Jones et al. (1985) reported that frank, realistic and pertinent presentation of all sexual topics in the media seemed to contribute to relatively responsible sexual behaviour, although the influence of other variables, such as school-based programmes and clinics, community and parental support and availability of contraceptives, was not investigated.

The effects of the media on sexual attitudes, values and behaviour thus appears difficult to specify, but Jones et al. (1985) and Wattleton (1987) have pointed out that where the media is presenting sexual information, either formally or informally, in exploitative, sensationalist, non-educational ways, adolescents may well be tempted to believe that what they observe and hear is accurate and informative, especially where this information is not being countered with accurate, pertinent information from other sources. Believing that information is accurate may well lead to adolescents acting in accordance with their distorted information. No research into the particular effects of books and magazines on sexual behaviour, values and attitudes was located by this researcher.

CHAPTER FOUR

EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

In this chapter, the nature of the interpretations of the sources of sexual information as revealed by this study is pointed out, and the methodology used in the investigation is described. The description encompasses the sample and the instrument used, as well as the procedure by which the research was conducted.

4.1 Introduction

It has been shown that sexual information is acquired from various sources, both formally and informally, and that certain sources are far more important than others. It has also become evident that different sources appear to have different effects on sexual behaviour, attitudes and values. Researchers have tended to investigate sources of sexual information in general terms, without paying much attention to the relative importance of different sources for different sexual topics. Research has suggested that parents (especially mothers) and schools have become increasingly important sources during the 1980s. However, it remains unclear to what extent the relative importance of the four major sources differs with regard to behaviour-related as opposed to non-behaviour-related topics. The extent to which male and female differences exist with regard to particular sexual topics is also unclear.

In order to establish the major sources of sexual information, as well as the preferred sources and differences between males and females among the sample under investigation, it was decided to attempt not only to draw conclusions in general terms, but to attempt to specify the relative impor-

tance of sources in both general terms and with regard to specific topics. Being exploratory in nature, no formal hypotheses were formulated.

4.2 Methodology

4.2.1 Sample

The sample consisted of 260 pupils in standards 9 and 10 at a private school in Cape Town. Due to the sensitive nature of the research, it was felt that permission to conduct the investigation at (a) state school(s) would have been difficult to obtain. At a private school permission from the principal was sufficient, and this was readily obtained. The 260 pupils constituted 76,7 percent of the 339 pupils in standards 9 and 10. The remaining 23,3 percent were absent from school or involved with other activities. Of the 260 pupils, 56,54 percent (N=147) were in standard 9 and 43,46 percent (N=113) were in standard 10. Males constituted 48,46 percent (N=126) and females 51,54 percent (N=134) of the sample. Pupils in standards 9 and 10 were chosen as the sample because it was assumed that they were old enough to have already acquired sexual information about all the topics.

Of the 260 pupils, 249 indicated that they had fathers, of whom 46,18 percent (N=115) were described as businessmen, 39,36 percent (N=98) as professionals or semi-professionals, 8,03 percent (N=20) as managers, 4,82 percent (N=12) as salesmen or representatives, and 1,61 percent (N=12) as skilled workers. Of the 254 pupils who indicated that they had mothers, 27,17 percent (N=69) of the mothers were described as professionals or semi-professionals, 15,35 percent (N=39) as businesswomen, 16,14 percent (N=41) as secretaries, saleswomen, public relations officers or representatives, and 3,15 percent (N=8) as managers. Of the mothers, 38,19

percent (N=97) were not working. There were six pupils who indicated that they had neither a mother nor a father. This indication might have been the result of not wishing to supply the information, forgetting to do so, or a true reflection of the pupils' situations. Considering the fact that these pupils did complete the questionnaire, and that they comprised only 2,31 percent of the sample, it was decided to include them in the study.

Being a private school catering for a particular religious group, the participating pupils, with very few exceptions, could be described as white, belonging to the same religious/cultural group, and middle-to-upper-middle class. It could therefore be assumed that these pupils would have been exposed to a variety of potential sources of sexual information.

4.2.2 Instrument

A self-administered four-part questionnaire was used to conduct the research. A copy of the questionnaire is presented as Appendix 1. The questionnaire is based on those used by Davis and Harris (1982), Gebhard (1977), Kallen et al. (1983), Spanier (1977) and Thornburg (1970, 1972, 1975, 1981a, 1981b, 1985). In section I, the pupils were asked to supply demographic data pertaining to their sex, age and the occupations of their fathers and mothers.

In section 2, the pupils were requested to complete a table. Twelve sexual topics (i.e., origin of babies, pregnancy and childbirth, abortion, contraception, wet dreams, masturbation, menstruation, petting, sexual intercourse, homosexuality/lesbianism, prostitution, sexually transmitted diseases) were provided on the left side of the table, and for three of the topics synonyms were provided. The 12 topics included behaviour-related as well as non-behaviour-related ones, and were very similar to the topics

used by Thornburg (1970, 1972, 1975, 1981a, 1981b, 1985). Across the top of the table, 14 possible sources of sexual information were provided (i.e., mother, father, brother/sister, other relatives, same-sex friend(s), opposite-sex friend(s), boy/girlfriend, books/magazines/pamphlets, television/movies, school programme, psychologists/doctors/nurses/social workers, synagogue, experience, other). As opposed to using general sources (e.g., parents, mass media, friends), specific sources were provided, as this should provide a clearer perspective with regard to the relative importance of the various sources. The pupils were requested to indicate, by placing a tick in the relevant block, from which source they had received most of their information about each topic. The following provisions were added:

- "1. If you are ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN that you have received your information about a particular topic to an EQUAL EXTENT from more than one source, you MUST MAKE TICKS IN ALL THE RELEVANT BLOCKS.
2. If you have received your information from any other source, please SPECIFY THE SOURCE IN THE 'OTHER' BLOCK."

Section 3 contained the same table, and the pupils were asked to indicate, by placing a tick in the relevant block, from which source they would prefer to have received their information about each of the 12 topics. The following provisions were also added:

- "1. If you would like to have received the information from both of your parents, i.e. your mother and your father, put ticks in the 'mother' and 'father' blocks.
2. In all other cases, choose the ONE SOURCE of preference (i.e. the most preferred source)."

In section 4, they were asked to indicate the approximate age at which they had acquired their information about each of the 12 topics. A table was

provided with the 12 topics listed on the left side, and a choice of four age-groups was provided across the top of the table (i.e., before 9-years-old, 10 to 12 years, 13 to 14 years and 15 to 17years). A tick had to be placed in the relevant block for each topic. The ages were chosen to coincide with the approximate ages of pupils in sub A to standard 2, standards 3 to 5, standards 6 and 7 and standards 8 to 10. This aspect of the research was later not included in the findings of this study, as it was decided to concentrate solely on the actual and preferred sources of the participants. It is intended that the data regarding their ages at acquisition of the information will be used in a separate study.

4.2.3 Procedure.

A letter was sent to the principal of the school, in which the aims of the research were explained and a copy of the questionnaire was provided. His permission to carry out the investigation at his school was requested, and a meeting followed, at which the necessary permission was obtained.

A pilot-study was conducted with 5 pupils, of whom 2 males were in standard 9, 1 male was in standard 10, and of the 2 females, 1 was in standard 9 and the other was in standard 10. They were asked to complete a questionnaire in which sections 1, 3 and 4 were identical to those sections described in 4.2.2. In section 2 of the questionnaire, these pupils were asked to indicate how much information they had received from the 14 sources for each of the 12 topics. Where no information had been received, they were instructed to leave the relevant block blank; where a little information had been received, they had to write "1" in the relevant block; and if they had received most of their information from a particular source, they were instructed to write "2" in the relevant block. They were also asked to

specify the source if they had received information from any other source. The pupils found this section problematic, and it was thus modified and included in the questionnaire in a format described in 4.2.2. This revamped questionnaire was then completed by a male and female pupil in standard 9, and no difficulties were reported.

A week before the research was conducted, a meeting was held with the class-teachers of the pupils in standards 9 and 10. The study was explained to them, and they agreed to allow their pupils to complete the questionnaires in their presence on a designated day during one 35-minute period. All their queries were answered by the researcher, and each teacher was provided with a sufficient number of questionnaires to hand out to the pupils in his/her class. On the day the research was conducted, the pupils in standards 9 and 10 were told to go to their classrooms to meet with their class-teachers for the last period of the day, where the questionnaires were handed out to them, and read through with them by their class-teachers. The pupils then filled in the questionnaires anonymously and were informed that they had the right to refuse to participate. Not one of them refused. While the questionnaires were being completed, the researcher was available to deal with any problems, and visited every class to ensure that the questionnaires were being completed, and to thank the pupils for their participation. At the end of the 35 minutes, all the participating pupils had completed the task, and the questionnaires were handed in to their class-teachers. The teachers immediately brought the questionnaires to the researcher, who was also provided with a class-list, so that it would be possible to differentiate between those pupils in standards 9 and 10. No teachers reported any problems with which they could not deal.

Due to the fact that once the participants had completed the questionnaires, this would have influenced their subsequent completion of the questionnaires, it was regarded as impractical to conduct test-retest reliability and validity studies as part of this research. The pupils were asked to be as honest as possible, and this was stressed to them by their teachers when the questionnaires were given to them.

In order to score sections 2 and 3, the maximum score awarded to each topic was 1 point. If more than one source was indicated, the 1 point was divided between the sources in a proportionate manner. For example, where one source was given as a response, it was accorded 1 point; two sources were each accorded a score of 0,5; three sources were each accorded 0,33; etc. The points were then added up in order to establish the importance of each source for each topic.

CHAPTER FIVE

SOURCES OF SEXUAL INFORMATION AS REVEALED BY THIS INVESTIGATION

In this chapter, the results of the study with regard to the sources of information as revealed by the males (N = 126), females (N = 134) and all the pupils (N = 260) are given. Tables and bar diagrams are used to demonstrate the findings, and a brief commentary and summary regarding the results as they pertain to all 12 topics, as well as each of the topics, are provided. In all cases, the figures stated have been rounded off to one decimal point.

5.1 Sources of Sexual Information for all 12 Topics

It was pointed out in Chapter 4 that various researchers have investigated sources of sexual information in general terms, but that attempts to establish the relative importance of different sources for different sexual topics have been neglected. Furthermore, it was pointed out that male and female differences with regard to the acquisition of sexual information have also been largely neglected, especially with regard to particular sexual topics. It was therefore indicated that this investigation would try to establish the relative importance of sources in both general terms, i.e., with regard to all 12 topics together, as well as with regard to each of the 12 topics individually. The differences between males and females would also be investigated. In this section then, the percentages of males, females and all pupils who received their information about the 12 topics from the various sources are shown. The results are presented in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Percentages of males, females and all pupils receiving information from various sources.

Source	Males (percent)	Females (percent)	All pupils (percent)
Mother	15,1	27,5	21,5
Father	5,1	1,9	3,5
Brother/sister	1,6	2,8	2,2
Other relatives	0,3	0,5	0,4
Peers (same-sex)	17,7	12,8	15,2
Peers (opposite-sex)	2,2	3,8	3,0
Boy/girlfriend	0,6	2,0	1,3
Books/magazines/pamphlets	21,9	22,4	22,1
Television/movies	16,2	9,3	12,7
School programmes	11,1	12,1	11,6
Psychologists/doctors/ nurses/social workers	3,7	3,1	3,6
Synagogue	0,2	0,2	0,2
Experience	4,1	1,3	2,7
Other	0,2	0,3	0,2
TOTAL	100,0	100,0	100,0

These findings are represented in a bar diagram in Figure 5.1.

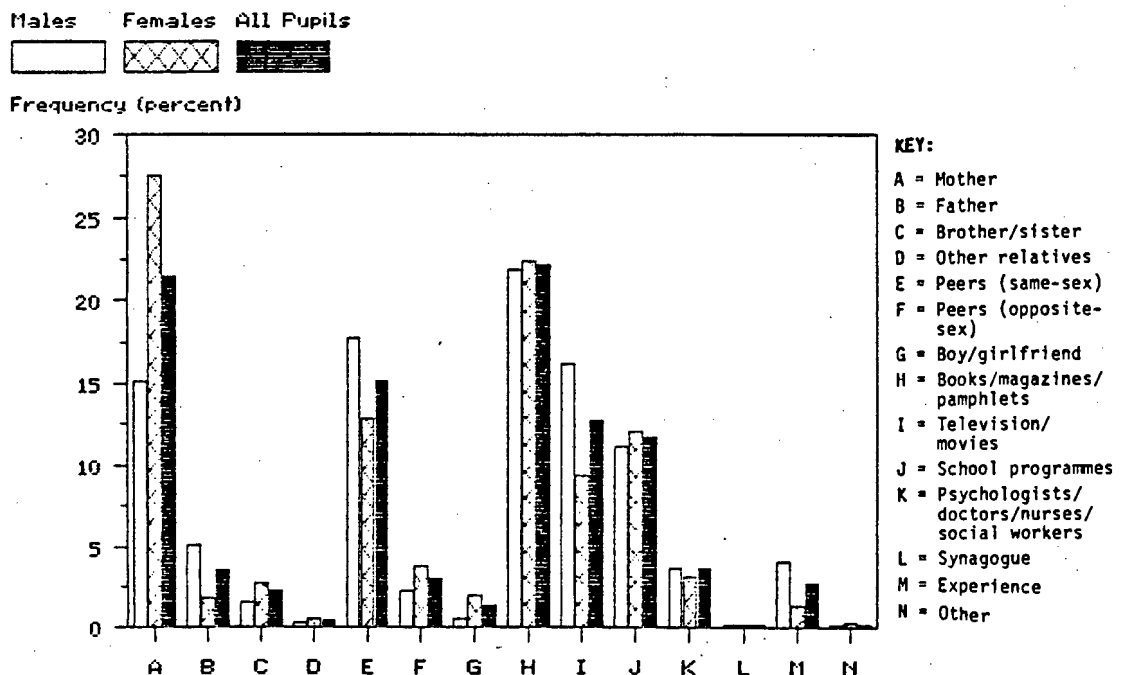


Figure 5.1 Bar diagram for males, females and all pupils, by sources of sexual information (percent)

This investigation has revealed that five of the sources were far more important than the others for males, females and all the participants when all 12 topics were viewed together. Males regarded books/magazines/pamphlets as their most important source, while their other relatively important sources were same-sex peers, television/movies, mothers and school programmes.

For females, mothers were the most important source, while books/magazines/pamphlets, same-sex peers, school programmes and television/movies were the other relatively important sources. When males and females were viewed together, books/magazines/pamphlets were found to be their most important source, with mothers, same-sex peers, television/movies and school programmes being reported as relatively important sources of information too. None of the other sources were found to be of any relative importance to the pupils.

5.2 Sources of Sexual Information for Each Topic

In this section, the relative importance of the different sources for each of the 12 topics as they pertain to males, females and all pupils is shown. Table 5.2 shows the percentages of males, females and all pupils who received their information about the origin of babies from the various sources.

Table 5.2 Percentages of males, females and all pupils receiving information about the origin of babies from various sources

Source	Males (percent)	Females (percent)	All pupils (percent)
Mother	48,3	63,8	56,1
Father	10,1	3,9	7,0
Brother/sister	1,4	2,8	2,1
Other relatives	0	0,3	0,2
Peers (same-sex)	10,7	2,5	6,5
Peers (opposite-sex)	0	0	0
Boy/girlfriend	0,8	0	0,4
Books/magazines/pamphlets	15,7	17,0	16,3
Television/movies	0	2,1	1,1
School programmes	12,2	5,9	9,0
Psychologists/doctors/ nurses/social workers	0,8	0,9	0,9
Synagogue	0	0	0
Experience	0	0	0
Other	0	0,8	0,4
TOTAL	100,0	100,0	100,0

These findings are represented in a bar diagram in Figure 5.2.

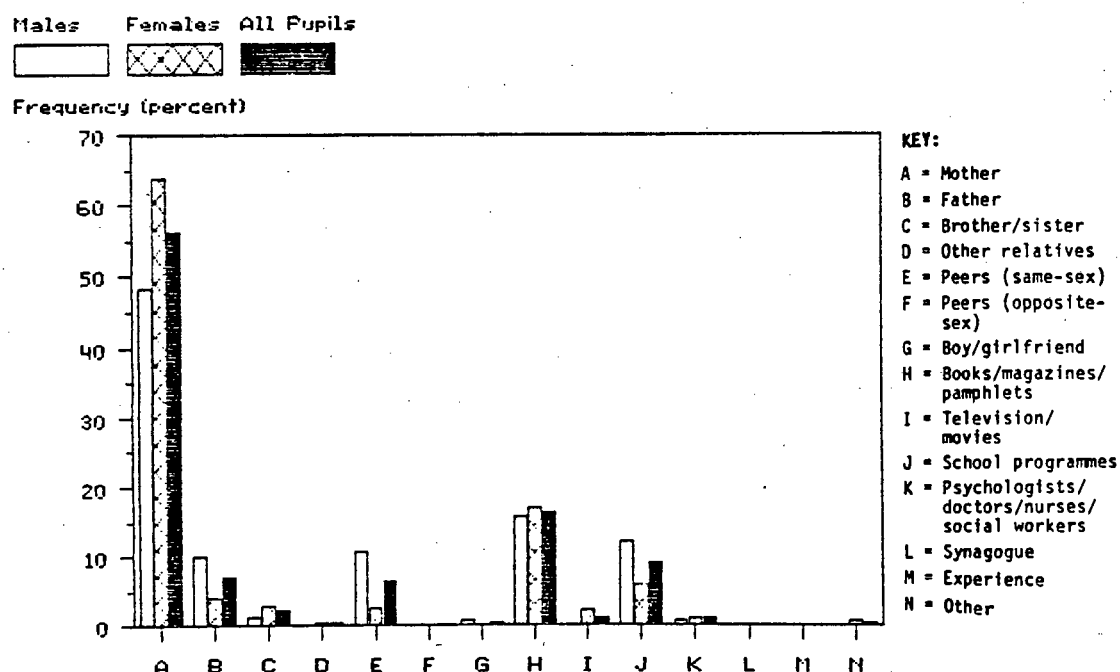


Figure 5.2 Bar diagram for males, females and all pupils, by sources of information for origin of babies (percent)

Mothers were by far the most important source of information for males, females and all pupils when viewed together. The second and third most important sources for all three groups were books/magazines/pamphlets and school programmes, although school programmes were not particularly important for females. While same-sex peers and fathers were relatively important to males, neither these, nor any other sources, were of any relative importance to females, nor all the pupils.

Table 5.3 shows the percentage of males, females and all pupils who received their information about pregnancy and childbirth from the various sources.

Table 5.3 Percentages of males, females and all pupils receiving information about pregnancy and childbirth from various sources

Source	Males (percent)	Females (percent)	All pupils (percent)
Mother	44,1	59,7	52,1
Father	7,5	2,0	4,8
Brother/sister	1,1	2,6	1,8
Other relatives	0	0	0
Peers (same-sex)	3,3	1,6	2,4
Peers (opposite-sex)	0	0	0
Boy/girlfriend	0,8	0	0,4
Books/magazines/pamphlets	20,7	18,7	19,7
Television/movies	7,4	2,2	4,7
School programmes	13,9	13,0	13,4
Psychologists/doctors/ nurses/social workers	1,2	0,2	0,7
Synagogue	0	0	0
Experience	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
TOTAL	100,0	100,0	100,0

These findings are represented in a bar diagram in Figure 5.3.

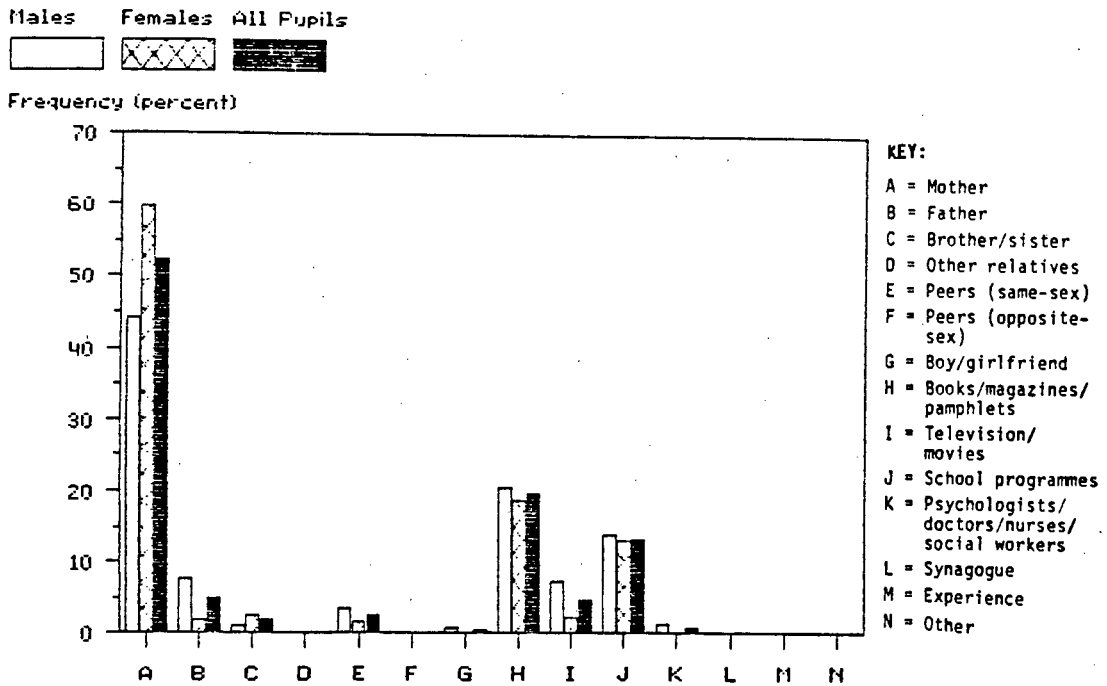


Figure 5.3 Bar diagram for males, females and all pupils, by sources of information for pregnancy and childbirth (percent)

For males, females and all pupils, the three major sources of information were, in order of importance, mothers, books/magazines/pamphlets and school programmes. Only for males were any of the other sources of any relative importance, i.e., fathers and television/movies.

Table 5.4 shows the percentages of males, females and all pupils who received their information about abortion from the various sources.

Table 5.4 Percentages of males, females and all pupils receiving information about abortion from various sources

Source	Males (percent)	Females (percent)	All pupils (percent)
Mother	15,2	24,7	20,0
Father	5,0	1,0	3,0
Brother/sister	0,4	3,0	1,7
Other relatives	0,8	0,4	0,6
Peers (same-sex)	6,0	8,8	7,4
Peers (opposite-sex)	1,2	0	0,6
Boy/girlfriend	0,4	0	0,2
Books/magazines/pamphlets	29,1	29,3	29,2
Television/movies	30,0	20,0	25,0
School programmes	10,3	10,1	10,2
Psychologists/doctors/ nurses/social workers	1,6	1,9	1,7
Synagogue	0	0	0
Experience	0	0	0
Other	0	0,8	0,4
TOTAL	100,0	100,0	100,0

These findings are represented in a bar diagram in Figure 5.4.

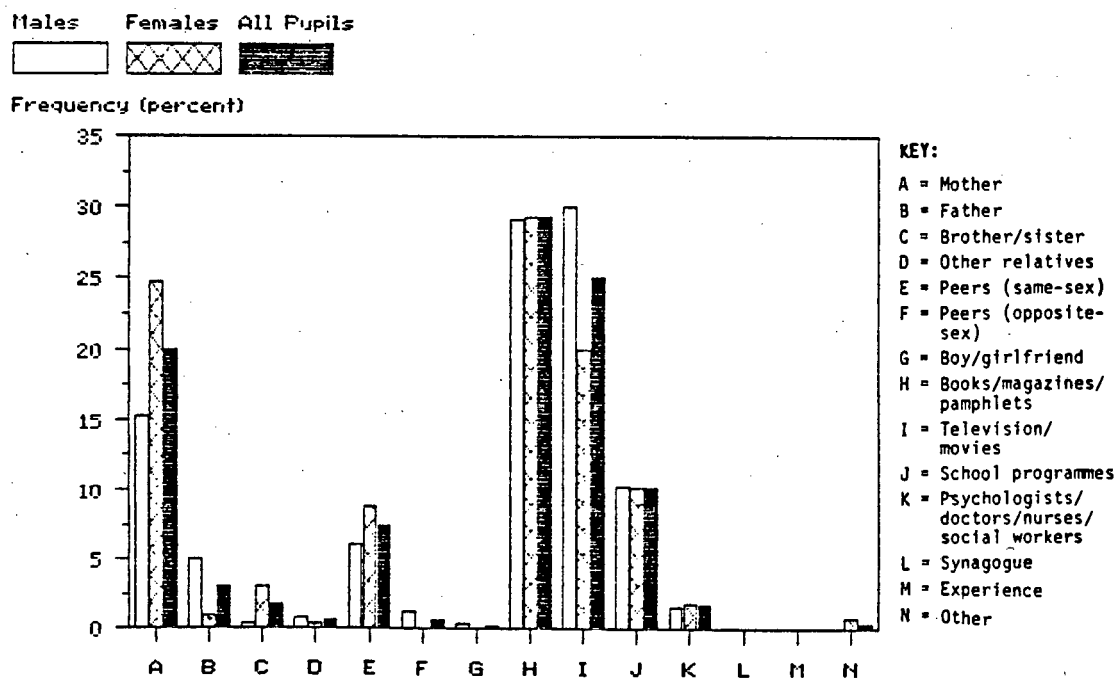


Figure 5.4 Bar diagram for males, females and all pupils, by sources of information for abortion (percent)

Males regarded television/movies and books/magazines/pamphlets as their two major sources, while mothers and school programmes were also relatively important sources for them. While books/magazines/pamphlets were also very important to females, their mothers were regarded as the second most important source. Television/movies, school programmes and same-sex peers were the other relatively important sources identified by females. When viewed together, books/magazines/pamphlets, television/ movies and mothers were clearly the three major sources, with school programmes and same-sex peers the only other sources of relative importance.

Table 5.5 shows the percentages of males, females and all pupils who received their information about contraception from the various sources.

Table 5.5 Percentages of males, females and all pupils receiving information about contraception from various sources

Source	Males (percent)	Females (percent)	All pupils (percent)
Mother	9,7	24,9	17,5
Father	6,5	1,9	4,1
Brother/sister	3,6	5,2	4,4
Other relatives	0	0	0
Peers (same-sex)	22,9	14,1	18,4
Peers (opposite-sex)	1,2	1,6	1,4
Boy/girlfriend	0	0,4	0,2
Books/magazines/pamphlets	27,0	22,5	24,7
Television/movies	12,8	4,7	8,6
School programmes	12,7	16,2	14,5
Psychologists/doctors nurses/social workers	3,6	7,2	5,5
Synagogue	0	1,3	0,7
Experience	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
TOTAL	100,0	100,0	100,0

These findings are represented in a bar diagram in Figure 5.5.

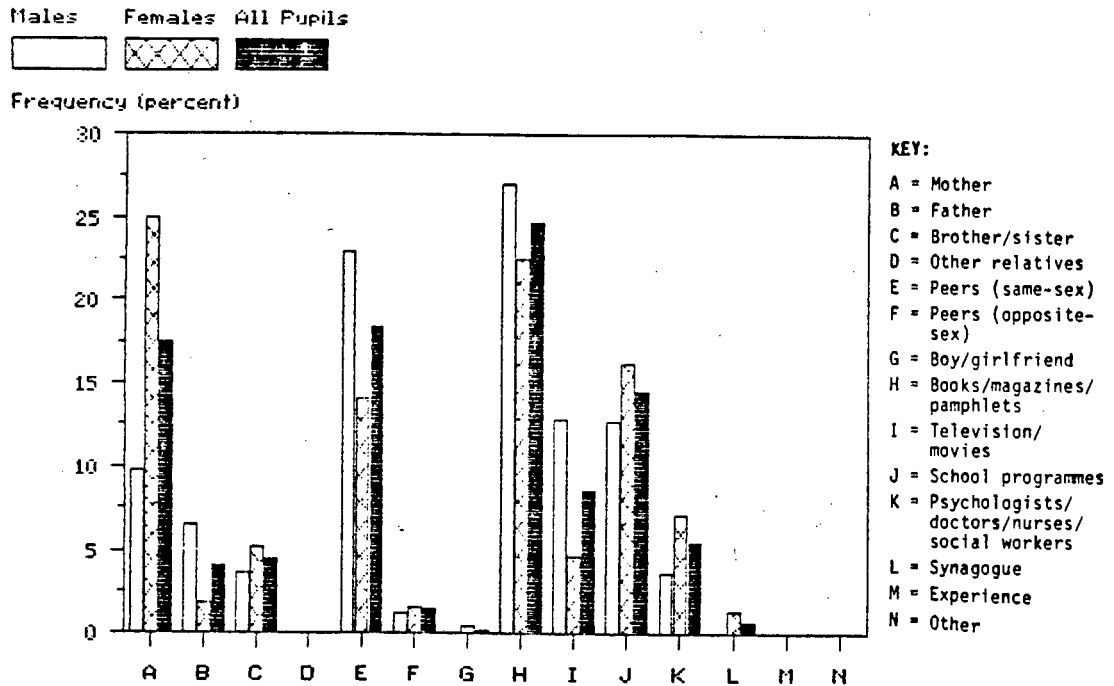


Figure 5.5 Bar diagram for males, females and all pupils, by sources of information for contraception (percent)

For males there were five relatively important sources, i.e., books/magazines/pamphlets, same-sex peers, television/movies, school programmes and mothers. Their two major sources were books/magazines/pamphlets and same-sex peers. Females regarded their mothers as their most important source, while books/magazines/pamphlets, school programmes and same-sex peers were their other relatively important sources. None of the other sources were of any significant importance, although it should be noted that fathers and television/movies were far more important for males than females, while mothers were more important for females than for males. When viewed together, books/magazines/pamphlets was the most important source, while the other relatively important sources were, in order of importance, same-sex peers, mothers, school programmes and television/movies.

Table 5.6 shows the percentages of males, females and all pupils who received their information about wet dreams from the various sources.

Table 5.6 Percentages of males, females and all pupils receiving information about wet dreams from various sources

Source	Males (percent)	Females (percent)	All pupils (percent)
Mother	4,8	4,1	4,4
Father	3,5	0,3	1,9
Brother/sister	1,6	3,0	2,3
Other relatives	0,8	0	0,4
Peers (same-sex)	35,1	20,8	27,7
Peers (opposite-sex)	0,7	15,3	8,2
Boy/girlfriend	0	2,6	1,3
Books/magazines/pamphlets	20,8	26,4	23,7
Television/movies	2,6	0,8	1,7
School programmes	16,5	20,4	18,5
Psychologists/doctors nurses/social workers	3,7	6,3	5,1
Synagogue	0	0	0
Experience	9,9	0	4,8
Other	0	0	0
TOTAL	100,0	100,0	100,0

Figure 5.6 is a bar diagram representation of these findings.

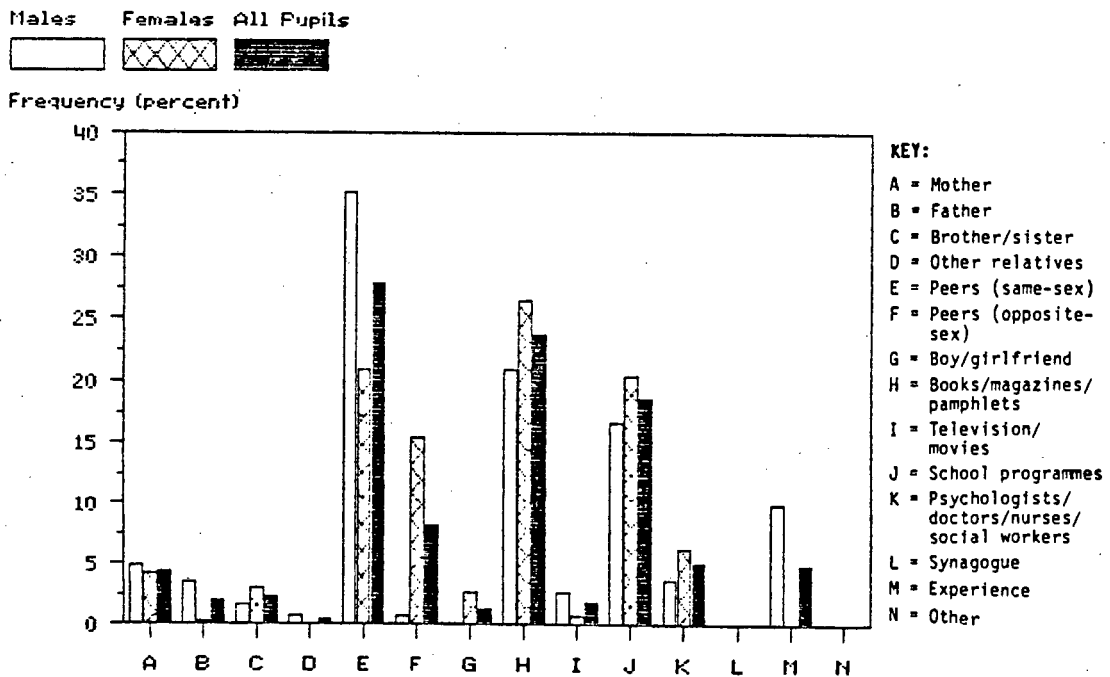


Figure 5.6 Bar diagram for males, females and all pupils, by sources of information for wet dreams (percent)

Males regarded their same-sex peers as their most important source, while books/magazines/pamphlets and school programmes were also relatively important sources. It should be noted that the only other source of any significance for them was experience. Books/magazines/pamphlets, same-sex peers, school programmes and opposite-sex peers were the relatively important sources for females, the influence of opposite-sex peers being noticeably more important than for males. When viewed together, the major sources of information were same-sex peers, books/magazines/pamphlets and school programmes.

Table 5.7 shows the percentages of males, females and all pupils who received their information about masturbation from the various sources.

Table 5.7 Percentages of males, females and all pupils receiving information about masturbation from various sources

Source	Males (percent)	Females (percent)	All pupils (percent)
Mother	1,2	9,0	5,2
Father	2,1	0,8	1,4
Brother/sister	0,4	0	0,2
Other relatives	0	0,8	0,4
Peers (same-sex)	46,2	18,8	32,3
Peers (opposite-sex)	0,8	10,1	5,5
Boy/girlfriend	0	2,6	1,3
Books/magazines/pamphlets	16,7	34,2	25,6
Television/movies	3,6	0	1,8
School programmes	9,8	17,8	13,9
Psychologists/doctors nurses/social workers	6,1	4,5	5,3
Synagogue	0	0	0
Experience	13,1	1,4	7,1
Other	0	0	0
TOTAL	100,0	100,0	100,0

These findings are represented in a bar diagram in Figure 5.7.

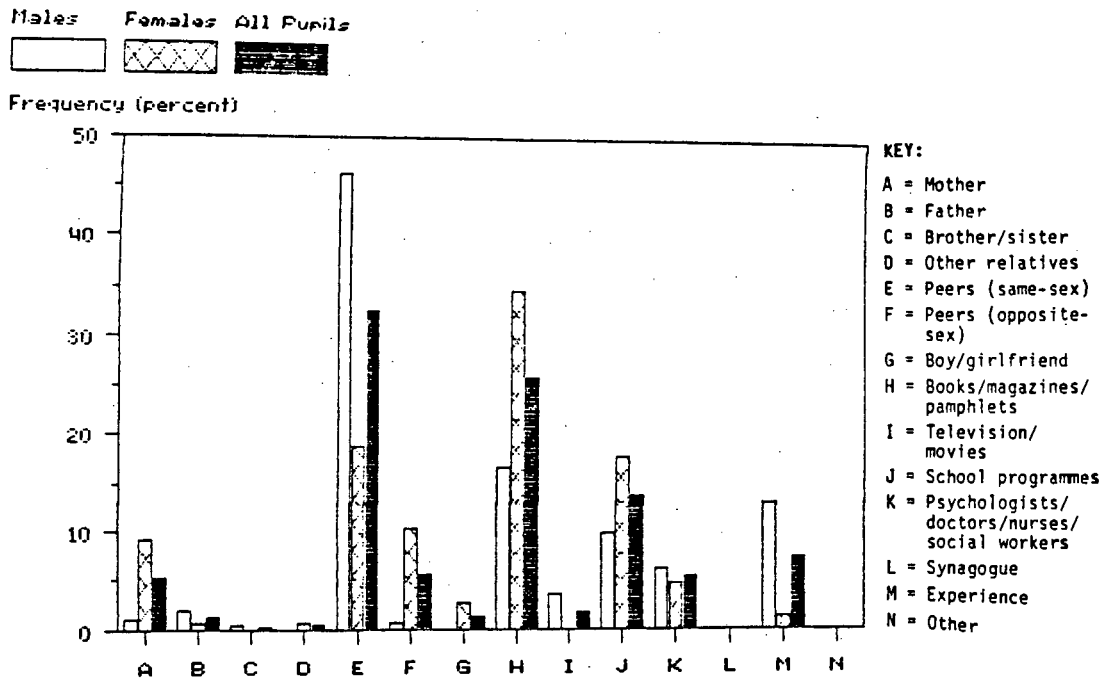


Figure 5.7 Bar diagram for males, females and all pupils, by sources of information for masturbation (percent)

Males overwhelmingly regarded their same-sex peers as their major source, while books/magazines/pamphlets, experience and school programmes were relatively important sources too. For females, the primary source was books/magazines/pamphlets, while same-sex peers, school programmes, opposite-sex peers and mothers were relatively important sources too. For both males and females therefore, the two major sources were same-sex peers and books/magazines/pamphlets, although the importance of each source was noticeably different for males and females. These two sources, as well as school programmes, were the relatively important sources when males and females were viewed together.

Table 5.8 shows the percentages of males, females and all pupils who received their information about menstruation from the various sources.

Table 5.8 Percentages of males, females and all pupils receiving information about menstruation from various sources.

Source	Males (percent)	Females (percent)	All pupils (percent)
Mother	33,5	62,5	48,3
Father	1,2	0,4	0,8
Brother/sister	2,0	5,5	3,8
Other relatives	0	1,1	0,6
Peers (same-sex)	8,5	9,9	9,2
Peers (opposite-sex)	11,1	0	5,4
Boy/girlfriend	0	0	0
Books/magazines/pamphlets	15,7	6,7	11,1
Television/movies	2,8	0,6	1,6
School programmes	18,9	8,9	13,7
Psychologists/doctors nurses/social workers	6,3	1,9	4,1
Synagogue	0	0	0
Experience	0	2,5	1,3
Other	0	0	0
TOTAL	100,0	100,0	100,0

These findings are represented in a bar diagram in Figure 5.8.

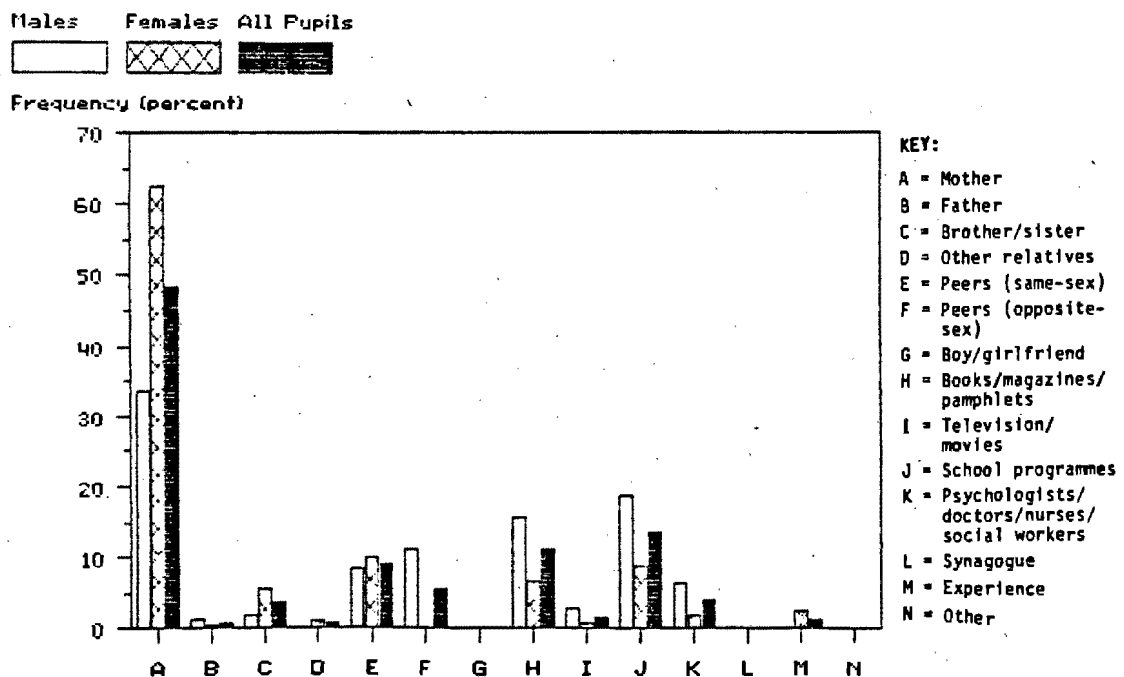


Figure 5.8 Bar diagram for males, females and all pupils, by sources of information for menstruation (percent)

Mothers were the major source for males, while school programmes, books/magazines/pamphlets and opposite-sex peers were their other relatively important sources. Females regarded their mothers as their major source of information, and the only other sources of any importance to them were same-sex peers and school programmes. The particularly important influence of mothers for both males and females was evident when both sexes were viewed together, while school programmes, books/magazines/pamphlets and same-sex peers were the other relatively important sources.

Table 5.9 shows the percentages of males, females and all pupils who received their information about petting from the various sources.

Table 5.9 Percentages of males, females and all pupils receiving information about petting from various sources.

Source	Males (percent)	Females (percent)	All pupils (percent)
Mother	0,2	4,2	2,2
Father	0	0,4	0,2
Brother/sister	2,6	2,5	2,6
Other relatives	1,6	1,5	1,5
Peers (same-sex)	31,6	30,4	31,0
Peers (opposite-sex)	4,8	9,1	7,0
Boy/girlfriend	0,8	14,3	7,6
Books/magazines/pamphlets	17,5	11,4	14,5
Television/movies	15,0	6,5	10,6
School programmes	4,6	8,4	6,5
Psychologists/doctors nurses/social workers	1,2	0,8	1,0
Synagogue	0	0	0
Experience	20,1	10,5	15,3
Other	0	0	0
TOTAL	100,0	100,0	100,0

Figure 5.9 is a bar diagram representation of these findings.

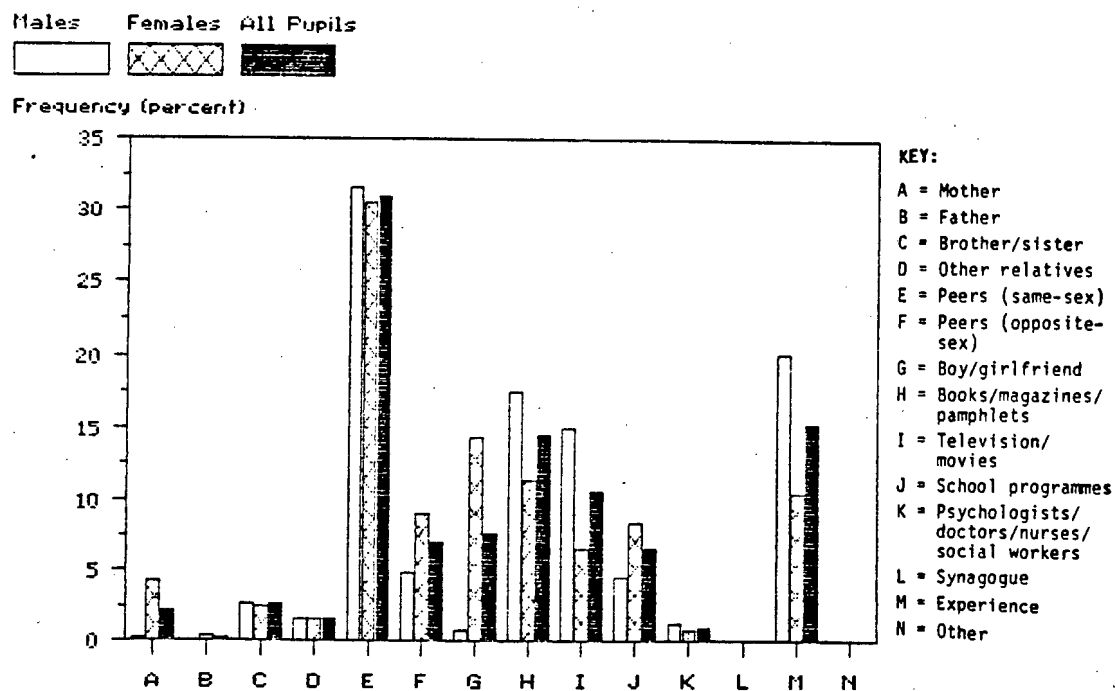


Figure 5.9 Bar diagram for males, females and all pupils, by sources of information for petting (percent)

Both males and females regarded their same-sex peers as the most important source, while experience, books/magazines/pamphlets and television/movies were the other relatively important sources for males. Boyfriends were females' second most important source, while books/magazines/pamphlets and experience were important for them too. The importance of boyfriends to females was noticeably greater than the role played by girlfriends with regard to males. When viewed together, same-sex peers, experience, books/magazines/pamphlets and television/movies were the relatively important sources.

Table 5.10 shows the percentages of males, females and all pupils who received their information about sexual intercourse from the various sources.

Table 5.10 Percentages of males, females and all pupils receiving information about sexual intercourse from various sources.

Source	Males (percent)	Females (percent)	All pupils (percent)
Mother	10,5	32,2	21,6
Father	8,6	3,0	5,8
Brother/sister	1,5	3,8	2,7
Other relatives	0	1,9	1,0
Peers (same-sex)	18,5	17,4	17,9
Peers (opposite-sex)	1,7	2,1	1,9
Boy/girlfriend	2,0	2,6	2,3
Books/magazines/pamphlets	19,8	19,1	19,4
Television/movies	15,8	5,8	10,6
School programmes	11,3	10,9	11,1
Psychologists/doctors nurses/social workers	5,4	1,2	3,3
Synagogue	0	0	0
Experience	4,9	0	2,4
Other	0	0	0
TOTAL	100,0	100,0	100,0

These findings are represented in a bar diagram in Figure 5.10.

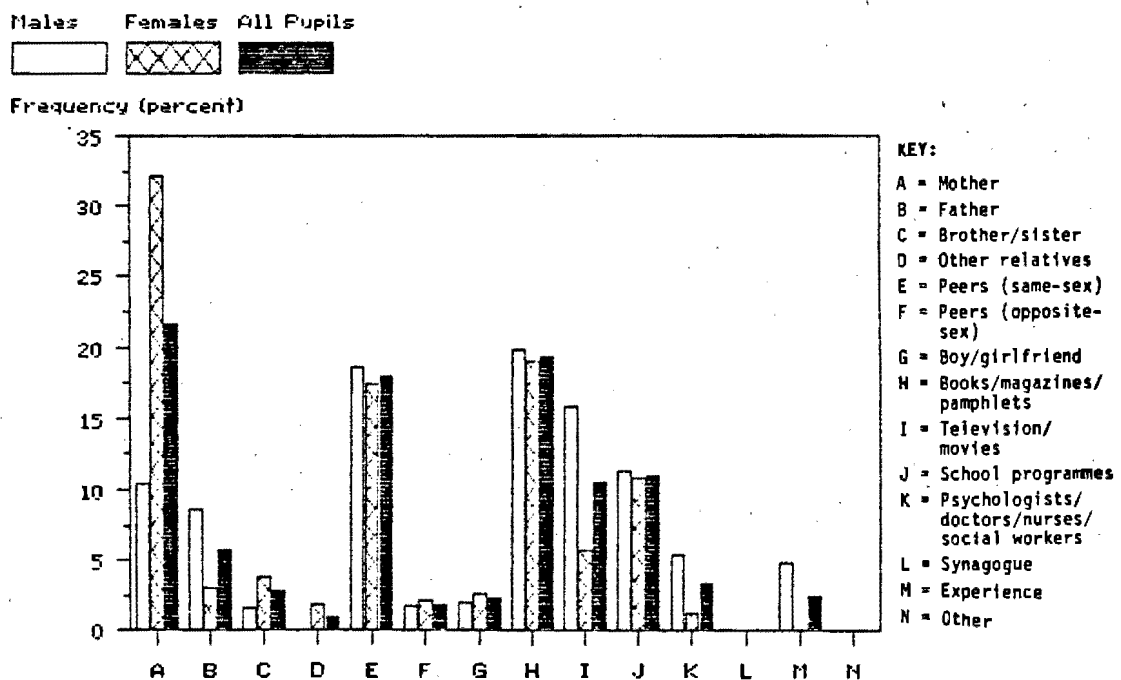


Figure 5.10 Bar diagram for males, females and all pupils, by sources of information for sexual intercourse (percent)

There were five relatively important sources for males, i.e., in order of importance, books/magazines/pamphlets, same-sex peers, television/movies, school programmes and mothers. For females, however, mothers were by far the most important source, with books/magazines/pamphlets, same-sex peers and school programmes also being regarded as relatively important. For them, television/movies did not appear to be a source of any significance. When viewed together, mothers were the major source, while books/magazines/pamphlets, same-sex peers, school programmes and television/movies were the other relatively important sources.

Table 5.11 shows the percentages of males, females and all pupils who received their information about homosexuality/lesbianism from the various sources.

Table 5.11 Percentages of males, females and all pupils receiving information about homosexuality/lesbianism from various sources

Source	Males (percent)	Females (percent)	All pupils (percent)
Mother	8,7	16,3	12,5
Father	7,1	1,9	4,5
Brother/sister	2,0	1,6	1,8
Other relatives	0	0,8	0,4
Peers (same-sex)	14,9	15,2	15,1
Peers (opposite-sex)	2,0	3,6	2,8
Boy/girlfriend	0	0,5	0,3
Books/magazines/pamphlets	26,5	28,0	27,2
Television/movies	26,5	20,4	23,3
School programmes	7,5	10,2	8,9
Psychologists/doctors nurses/social workers	3,2	1,5	2,4
Synagogue	0,8	0	0,4
Experience	0	0	0
Other	0,8	0	0,4
TOTAL	100,0	100,0	100,0

Figure 5.11 is a bar diagram representation of these findings.

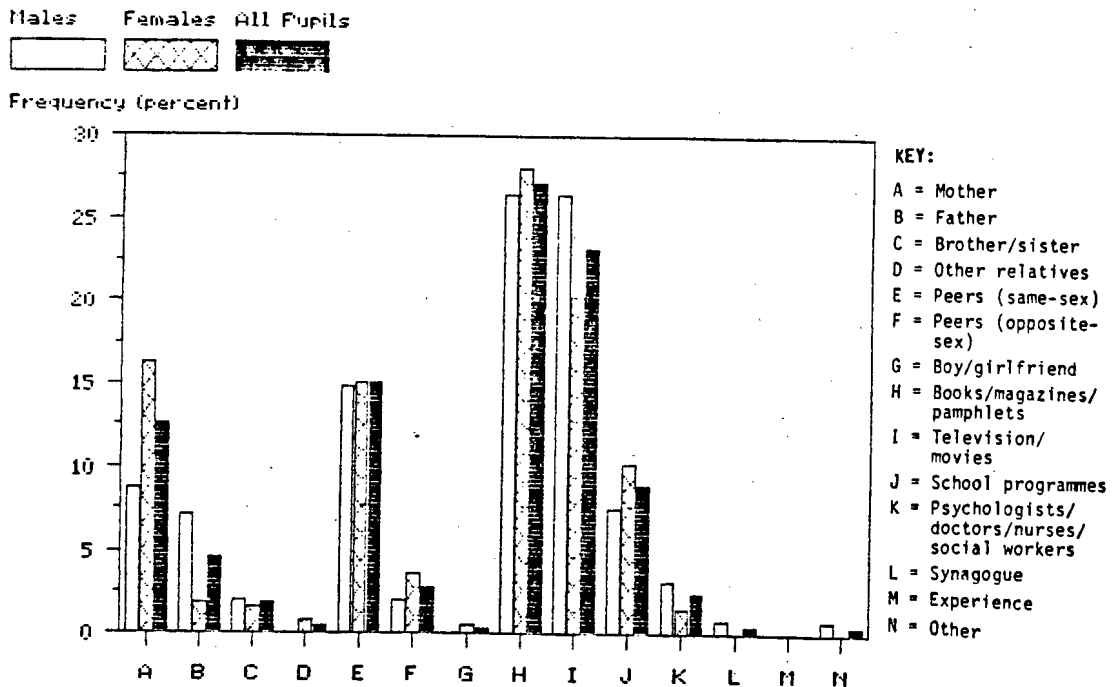


Figure 5.11 Bar diagram for males, females and all pupils, by sources of information for homosexuality/lesbianism (percent)

Both males and females regarded books/magazines/pamphlets as their major source of information, although television/movies was equally important for males. Their only other relatively important source was same-sex peers, while television/movies, mothers, same-sex peers and school programmes were regarded by females as their other relatively important sources of information. When viewed together, the relatively important sources for all pupils were books/magazines/pamphlets, television/movies, same-sex peers and mothers.

Table 5.12 shows the percentages of males, females and all pupils who received their information about prostitution from the various sources.

Table 5.12 Percentages of males, females and all pupils receiving information about prostitution from various sources

Source	Males (percent)	Females (percent)	All pupils (percent)
Mother	4,9	15,2	10,1
Father	5,1	4,4	4,7
Brother/sister	1,5	2,2	1,8
Other relatives	0,4	0	0,2
Peers (same-sex)	11,6	10,1	10,9
Peers (opposite-sex)	1,8	2,6	2,2
Boy/girlfriend	0,8	0	0,4
Books/magazines/pamphlets	15,5	18,7	17,1
Television/movies	52,9	38,5	45,6
School programmes	3,6	4,1	3,9
Psychologists/doctors nurses/social workers	1,9	2,7	2,3
Synagogue	0	0	0
Experience	0	1,5	0,8
Other	0	0	0
TOTAL	100,0	100,0	100,0

These findings are represented in a bar diagram in Figure 5.12.

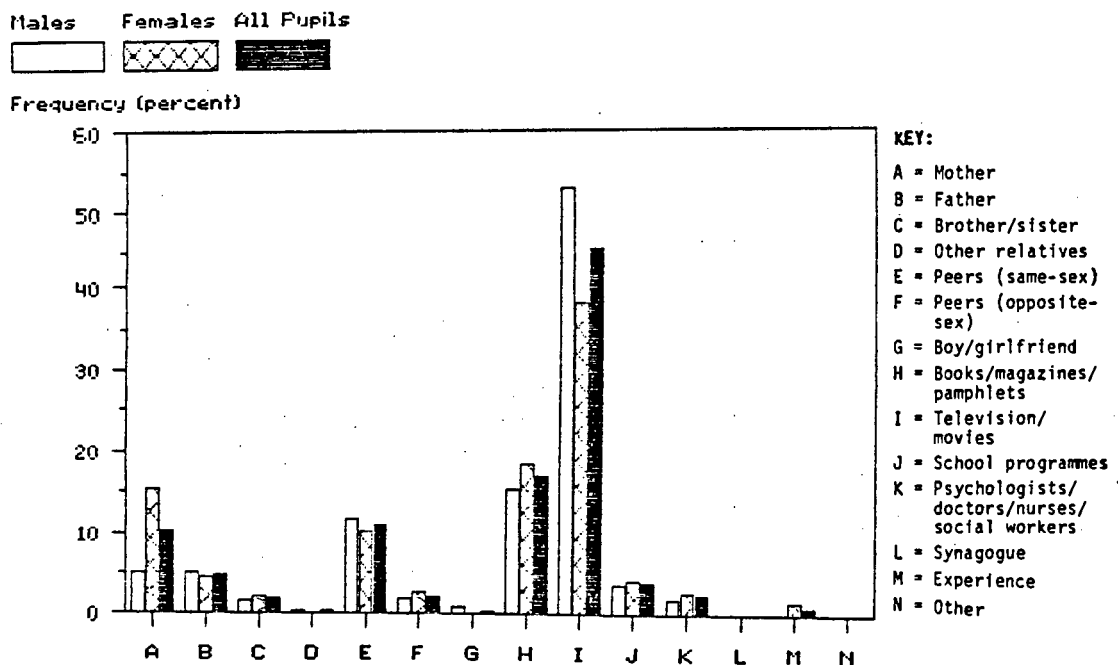


Figure 5.12 Bar diagram for males, females and all pupils, by sources of information for prostitution (percent)

Both males and females overwhelmingly regarded television/movies as their major source, and books/magazines/pamphlets as their second most important source. For males, same-sex peers were the only other relatively important source, and for females, mothers and same-sex peers were also of relative importance. The relatively important sources for the pupils when viewed together were thus television/movies, books/magazines/pamphlets, same-sex peers and mothers.

Finally, Table 5.13 shows the percentages of males, females and all pupils who received their information about sexually transmitted diseases from the various sources.

Table 5.13 Percentages of males, females and all pupils receiving information about sexually transmitted diseases from various sources

Source	Males (percent)	Females (percent)	All pupils (percent)
Mother	3,4	13,2	8,4
Father	5,4	2,1	3,7
Brother/sister	0,7	1,3	1,0
Other relatives	0	0,4	0,2
Peers (same-sex)	4,6	4,8	4,7
Peers (opposite-sex)	0,6	0,9	0,8
Boy/girlfriend	1,2	0	0,6
Books/magazines/pamphlets	40,3	37,6	39,0
Television/movies	21,6	13,1	17,2
School programmes	13,3	19,0	16,2
Psychologists/doctors nurses/social workers	8,9	7,6	8,2
Synagogue	0	0	0
Experience	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
TOTAL	100,0	100,0	100,0

These findings are represented in a bar diagram in Figure 5.13.

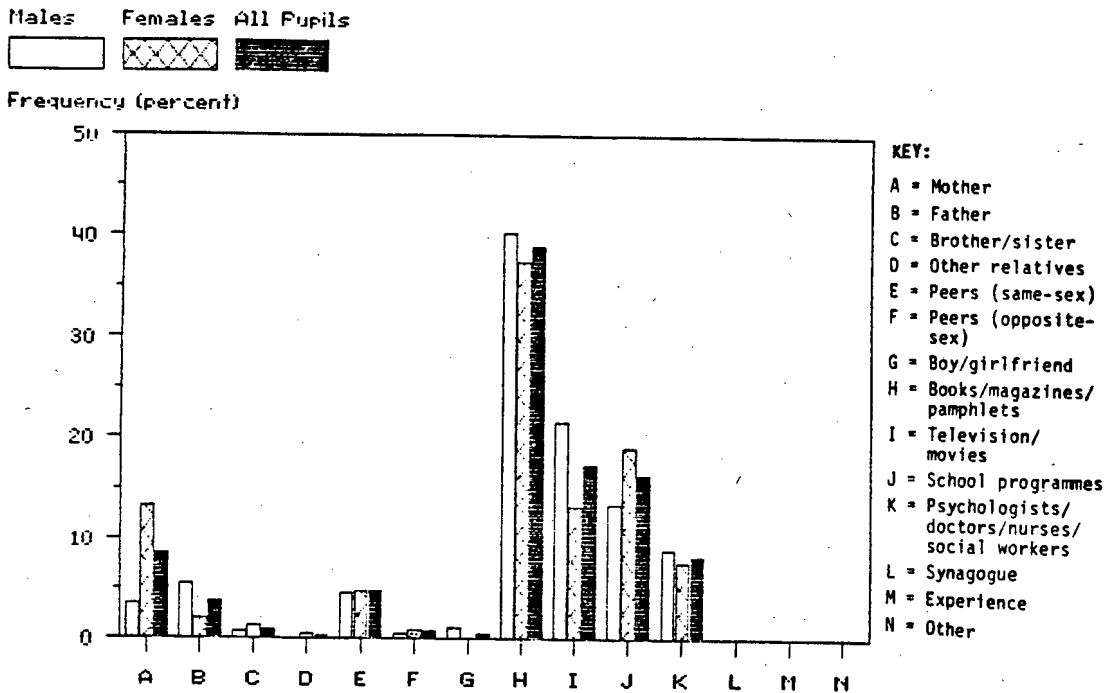


Figure 5.13 Bar diagram for males, females and all pupils, by sources of information for sexually transmitted diseases (percent)

Books/magazines/pamphlets were the most important source for both males and females. While television/movies and school programmes were the only other relatively important sources for males, these two sources and mothers were relatively important for females. When viewed together, books/magazines/pamphlets, television/movies and school programmes were the relatively important sources for these pupils.

This investigation into the actual sources of sexual information has therefore revealed that reading material, i.e., books/magazines/pamphlets, was the major source for these pupils. The other relatively important sources, in order of importance, were mothers, same-sex peers, television/movies and school programmes. The nine other sources were found to be relatively unimportant. When males and females were viewed separately, it was found that books/magazines/pamphlets, mothers, same-sex peers, television/movies and school programmes were the five major sources for

both males and females. However, the major source for males was books/magazines/pamphlets, followed, in order of importance, by same-sex peers, television/movies, mothers and school programmes. Females, on the other hand, regarded mothers as their primary source of information, with the other relatively important sources being books/magazines/pamphlets, same-sex peers, school programmes and television/movies. This study has therefore found that the media and same-sex peers were of particular importance to males, while females regarded their mothers and reading material as particularly important sources of sexual information. For both males and females, all the other sources were regarded as having relatively minor importance.

With regard to specific topics, it was found that same-sex peers were the most important source for most behaviour-related topics (i.e., wet-dreams, masturbation, petting), and mothers were the major source regarding sexual intercourse. Mothers were also found to be the most important source for non-behaviour-related topics (i.e., origin of babies, pregnancy and childhood, menstruation). Books/magazines/pamphlets was found to be the major source for so-called "controversial" topics (i.e., abortion, contraception, homosexuality / lesbianism, sexually transmitted diseases), while knowledge about prostitution was primarily acquired from television/movies.

Both males and females received most of their information about seven of the topics from the same sources. This included both behaviour- and non-behaviour-related topics, as well as so-called "controversial" ones. For both sexes, the most important source for origin of babies, pregnancy and childbirth and menstruation was mothers; for petting, it was same-sex peers; for prostitution, it was television/movies; and for homosexu-

ality / lesbianism and sexually transmitted diseases, it was books/magazines/pamphlets. With regard to the other five topics, males regarded same-sex peers, books/magazines/pamphlets and television/movies as the most important sources, while females regarded mothers and books/magazines/pamphlets as the major sources. These findings pertaining to pupils' actual sources of information will be discussed in Chapter 7.

CHAPTER SIX

PREFERRED SOURCES OF SEXUAL INFORMATION AS REVEALED BY THIS INVESTIGATION

In this chapter, the results of the investigation with regard to the preferred sources of information as revealed by the males, females and all pupils are given. The findings are presented in tables and bar diagrams, and a brief commentary and summary regarding the results as they pertain to the 12 topics, as well as individual topics, are also given. In all cases, figures have been rounded off to one decimal point.

6.1 Preferred Sources of Sexual Information for all 12 Topics

In the previous chapter, it was pointed out that this study sought to establish the relative importance of sources in both general terms, i.e., with regard to all 12 topics together, as well as with regard to the 12 topics individually. It was also pointed out that an investigation into the differences between males and females would be undertaken. In a similar manner, this study aimed to establish the relative importance of the participants' preferred sources in both general, as well as specific terms. The differences between males' and females' preferences were also investigated.

In this section, the percentages of males, females and all pupils as they indicated their preferred sources with regard to the acquisition of their sexual information about all 12 topics are shown. The results are presented in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 Percentages of males, females and all pupils preferring information from various sources

Source	Males (percent)	Females (percent)	All pupils (percent)
Mother	23,2	46,1	34,7
Father	16,4	3,9	10,0
Brother/sister	2,5	2,7	2,6
Other relatives	0,2	0,2	0,2
Peers (same-sex)	9,4	10,3	9,9
Peers (opposite-sex)	2,0	2,3	2,1
Boy/girlfriend	1,9	1,5	1,7
Books/magazines/pamphlets	14,2	11,9	13,0
Television/movies	6,8	2,6	4,7
School programmes	10,8	10,1	10,5
Psychologists/doctors nurses/social workers	8,2	7,4	7,8
Synagogue	0,2	0,2	0,2
Experience	4,2	0,6	2,4
Other	0	0,2	0,2
TOTAL	100,0	100,0	100,0

These findings are presented in a bar diagram in Figure 6.1.

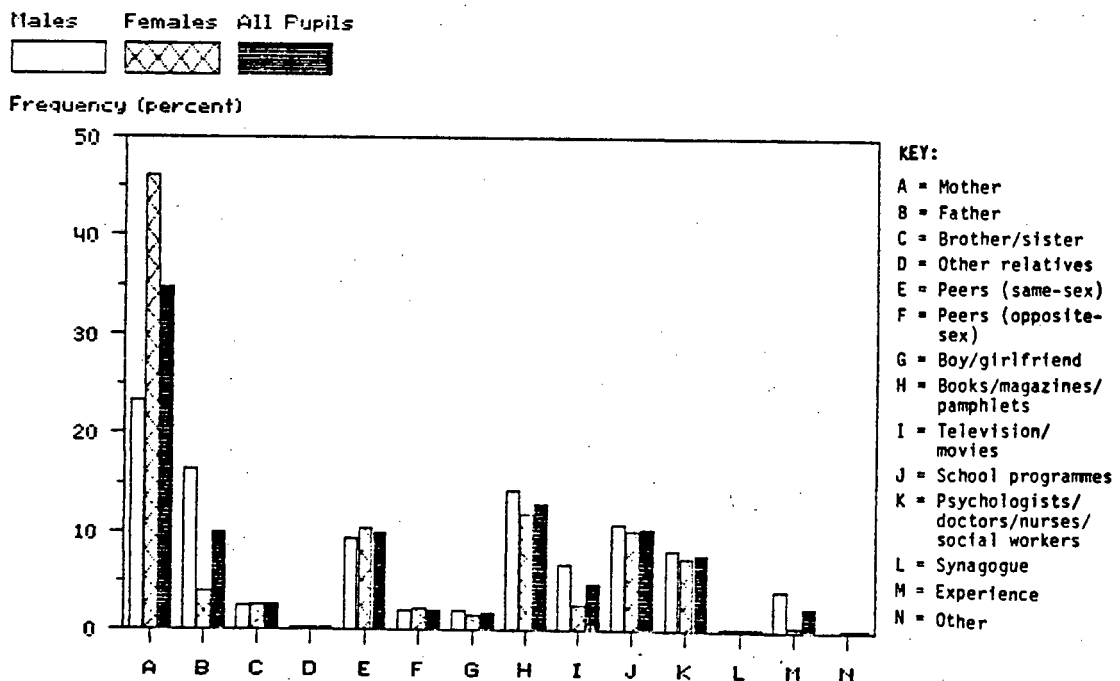


Figure 6.1 Bar diagram for males, females and all pupils, by preferred sources of sexual information (percent)

For both males and females, and therefore for all the pupils when viewed together, mothers were the most preferred source of information when the 12 topics were viewed together. The other sources preferred by males to a relatively significant extent were fathers, books/magazines/pamphlets, school programmes and same-sex peers. Fathers were not preferred to any important extent by females, for whom the other relatively important preferred sources were books/magazines/pamphlets, same-sex peers and school programmes. When viewed together the preferred sources of importance, in addition to mothers, were books/magazines/pamphlets, school programmes, same-sex peers and fathers. None of the other sources were preferred by these pupils to any relatively significant degree.

6.2 Preferred Sources of Sexual Information for Each Topic

In this section, the extent to which the different sources were preferred for each topic by males, females and all pupils is shown. Table 6.2 shows the percentages of males, females and all pupils who preferred to receive their information about the origin of babies from the various sources.

Table 6.2 Percentages of males, females and all pupils preferring information about the origin of babies from various sources

Source	Males (percent)	Females (percent)	All pupils (percent)
Mother	44,6	76,8	60,7
Father	23,1	7,0	15,1
Brother/sister	0,8	1,1	1,0
Other relatives	0	0	0
Peers (same-sex)	2,6	1,9	2,3
Peers (opposite-sex)	1,6	0	0,8
Boy/girlfriend	0,8	0	0,4
Books/magazines/pamphlets	8,1	3,0	5,5
Television/movies	4,8	1,2	3,0
School programmes	9,0	5,0	6,9

Table 6.2 (cont.)

Source	Males (percent)	Females (percent)	All pupils (percent)
Psychologists/doctors nurses/social workers	4,6	4,0	4,3
Synagogue	0	0	0
Experience	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
TOTAL	100,0	100,0	100,0

The findings are represented in a bar diagram in Figure 6.2.

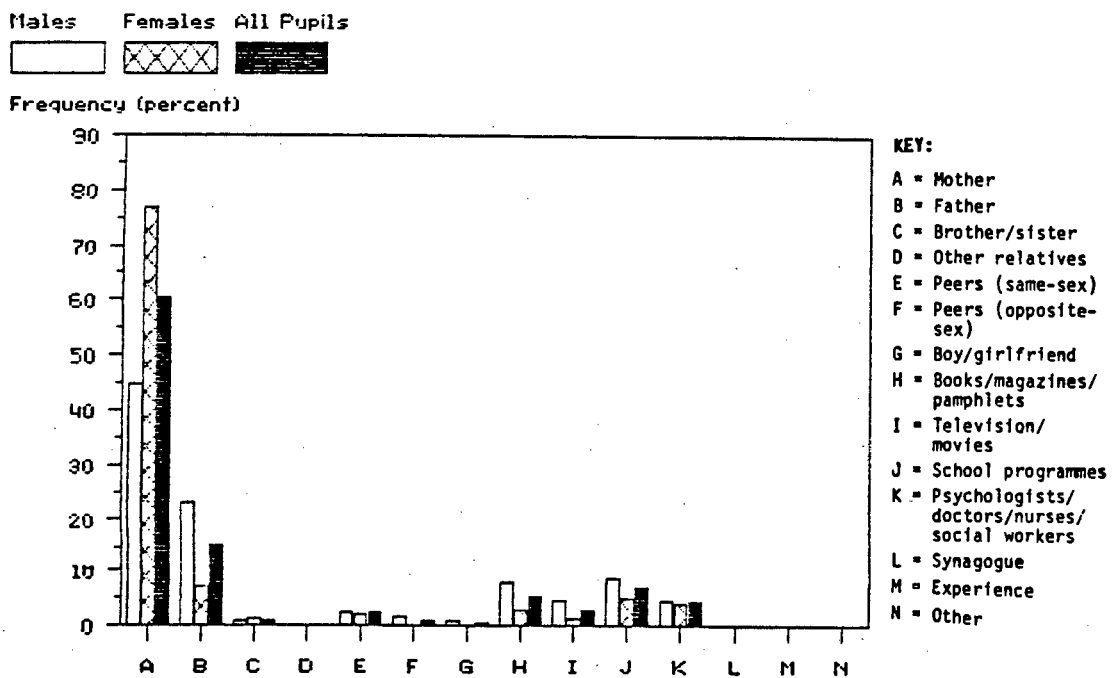


Figure 6.2 Bar diagram for males, females and all pupils, by preferred sources of information for origin of babies (percent)

For males, females, and thus all pupils, mothers were overwhelmingly the preferred source. Fathers and school programmes were the other relatively important preferred sources for males. Fathers were the second most pre-

ferred source for females too, although of relatively minor importance. When the pupils' preferences were viewed together, fathers were the only other source preferred by the pupils to any relatively important extent. It should be noted that the preferences given to mothers and fathers by males and females respectively were very different.

Table 6.3 shows the percentages of males, females and all pupils who preferred to receive their information about pregnancy and childbirth from the various sources.

Table 6.3 Percentages of males, females and all pupils preferring information about pregnancy and childbirth from various sources

Source	Males (percent)	Females (percent)	All pupils (percent)
Mother	49,3	73,7	61,6
Father	20,5	4,9	12,7
Brother/sister	0,8	2,2	1,5
Other relatives	0	0	0
Peers (same-sex)	3,2	1,7	2,4
Peers (opposite-sex)	1,1	0,2	0,6
Boy/girlfriend	2,4	0	1,2
Books/magazines/pamphlets	9,4	4,7	7,0
Television/movies	1,6	1,2	1,4
School programmes	7,1	5,2	6,2
Psychologists/doctors nurses/social workers	4,6	6,2	5,4
Synagogue	0	0	0
Experience	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
TOTAL	100,0	100,0	100,0

These findings are represented in a bar diagram in Figure 6.3.

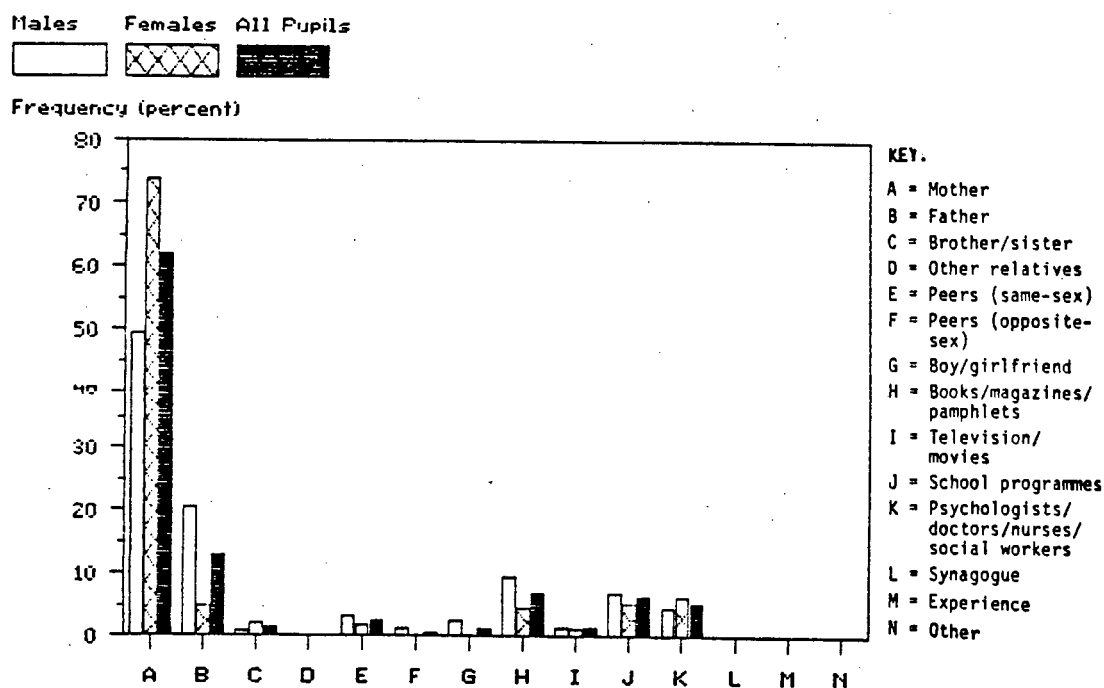


Figure 6.3 Bar diagram for males, females and all pupils, by preferred sources of information for pregnancy and childbirth (percent)

Mothers, fathers and books/magazines/pamphlets were the only sources preferred to a relatively important extent by males, and the only relatively important preferred source for females was mothers. When viewed together, the sources preferred by the pupils to a relatively significant degree were only mothers and fathers, but overwhelmingly mothers.

Table 6.4 shows the percentages of males, females and all pupils who preferred to receive their information about abortion from the various sources.

Table 6.4 Percentages of males, females and all pupils preferring information about abortion from various sources

Source	Males (percent)	Females (percent)	All pupils (percent)
Mother	32,4	53,2	42,8
Father	16,0	4,2	10,1
Brother/sister	0,4	1,2	0,8
Other relatives	1,1	0	0,6
Peers (same-sex)	3,2	3,2	3,2
Peers (opposite-sex)	0,4	0,2	0,3
Boy/girlfriend	0,8	0,8	0,8
Books/magazines/pamphlets	16,3	13,0	14,6
Television/movies	6,8	4,0	5,4
School programmes	13,2	12,2	12,7
Psychologists/doctors nurses/social workers	9,4	8,0	8,7
Synagogue	0	0	0
Experience	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
TOTAL	100,0	100,0	100,0

These findings are represented in a bar diagram in Figure 6.4

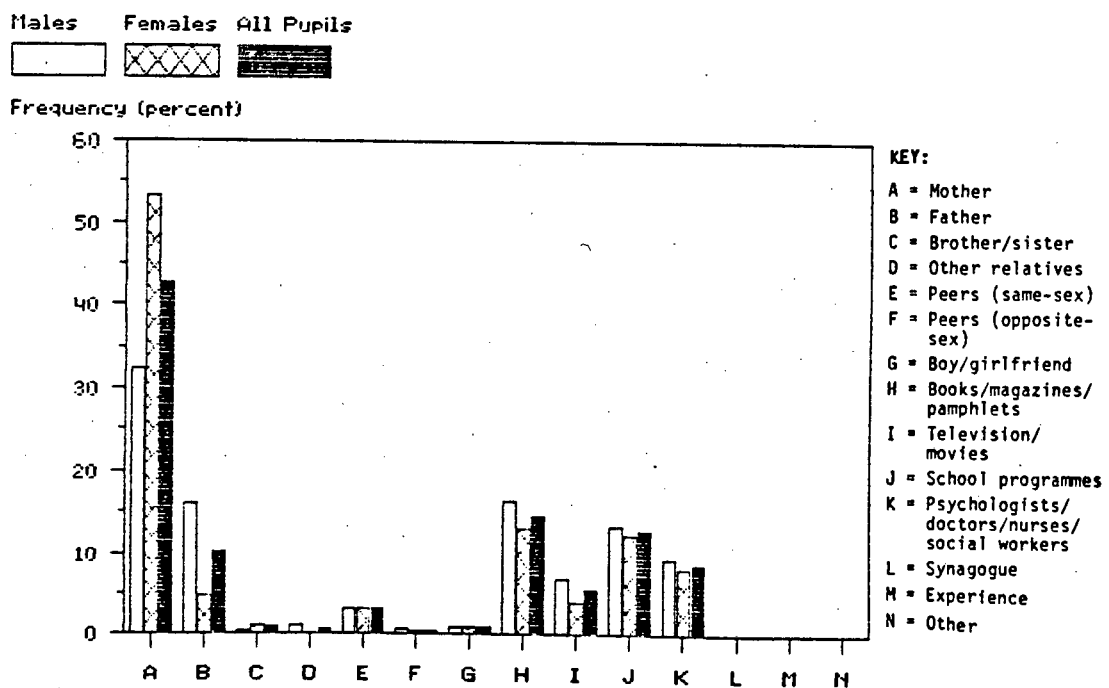


Figure 6.4 Bar diagram for males, females and all pupils, by preferred sources of information for abortion (percent)

Mothers were the most preferred sources for both males and females. The other sources preferred by males to a relatively important extent were books/magazines/pamphlets, fathers and school programmes. Books/magazines/pamphlets and school programmes were also preferred by females relatively significantly, but they did not regard fathers as an important preferred source. When viewed together, mothers, books/magazines/pamphlets, school programmes and fathers were the only sources preferred to a relatively important degree by the pupils.

Table 6.5 shows the percentages of males, females and all pupils who preferred to receive their information about contraception from the various sources.

Table 6.5 Percentages of males, females and all pupils preferring information about contraception from various sources

Source	Males (percent)	Females (percent)	All pupils (percent)
Mother	22,1	54,2	38,2
Father	17,7	4,5	11,1
Brother/sister	2,4	5,3	3,9
Other relatives	0	0	0
Peers (same-sex)	6,8	5,8	6,3
Peers (opposite-sex)	1,0	1,0	1,0
Boy/girlfriend	1,6	0	0,8
Books/magazines/pamphlets	19,1	7,2	13,2
Television/movies	6,4	0,8	3,5
School programmes	11,4	9,0	10,1
Psychologists/doctors nurses/social workers	9,9	11,4	10,7
Synagogue	0	0	0
Experience	1,6	0	0,8
Other	0	0,8	0,4
TOTAL	100,0	100,0	100,0

These findings are represented in a bar diagram in Figure 6.5

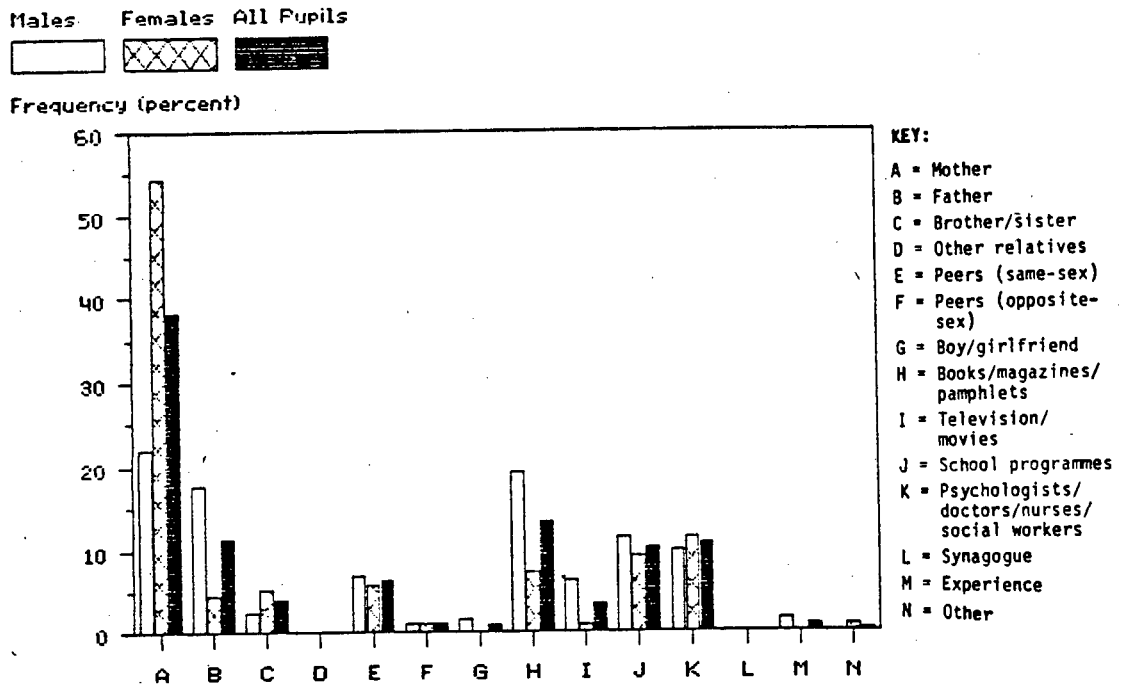


Figure 6.5 Bar diagram for males, females and all pupils, by preferred sources of information for contraception (percent)


Both males and females regarded their mothers as their most preferred source. For males, other relatively important preferred sources were books/magazines/pamphlets, fathers, school programmes and psychologists/doctors/nurses/social workers. Only two of the sources, i.e., psychologists/doctors/nurses/social workers and school programmes, were regarded by females as relatively significant preferred sources, as mothers were preferred to an overwhelming extent by them. When viewed together, mothers, books/magazines/pamphlets, fathers, psychologists/doctors/nurses/social workers and school programmes were the sources preferred by the pupils to a relatively important extent. It should once again be noted that mothers and fathers were preferred to a very different degree by females and males respectively.

Table 6.11 shows the percentages of males, females and all pupils who preferred to receive their information about wet dreams from the various sources.

Table 6.6 Percentages of males, females and all pupils preferring information about wet dreams from various sources

Source	Males (percent)	Females (percent)	All pupils (percent)
Mother	10,4	20,1	15,5
Father	22,8	1,1	11,6
Brother/sister	2,8	6,3	4,6
Other relatives	0	0	0
Peers (same-sex)	17,3	18,7	18,0
Peers (opposite-sex)	0,4	11,6	6,2
Boy/girlfriend	3,2	3,4	3,3
Books/magazines/pamphlets	12,2	16,0	14,1
Television/movies	3,2	0,8	1,9
School programmes	12,6	12,9	12,8
Psychologists/doctors nurses/social workers	6,8	9,1	8,0
Synagogue	0	0	0
Experience	8,3	0	4,0
Other	0	0	0
TOTAL	100,0	100,0	100,0

Figure 6.6 is a bar diagram representation of these findings.

Males Females All Pupils

 Frequency (percent)

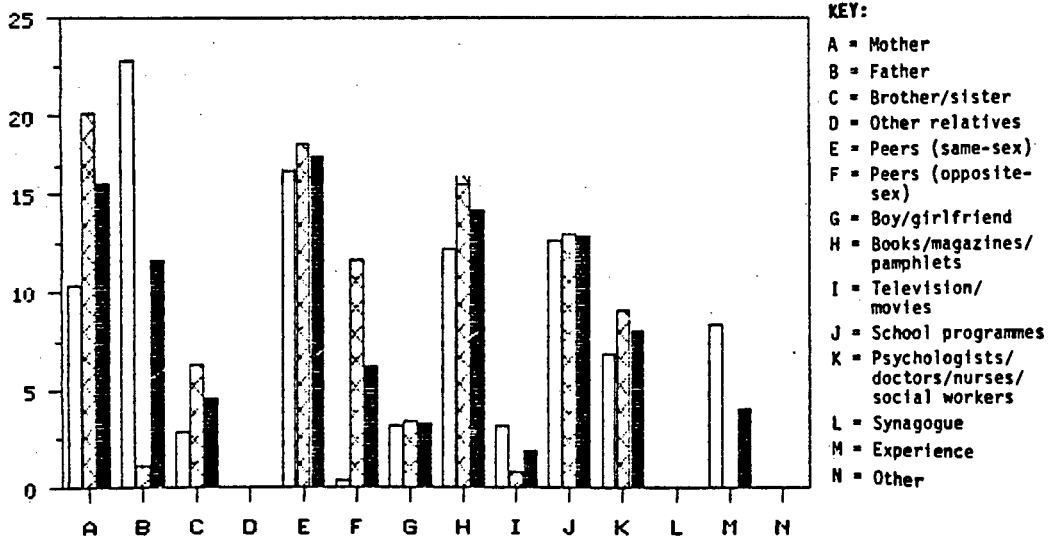


Figure 6.6 Bar diagram for males, females and all pupils, by preferred sources of information for wet dreams (percent)

Various sources were preferred to a relatively significant degree by both males and females. For males, fathers were the most preferred source, while same-sex peers, school programmes, books/magazines/pamphlets and mothers were also preferred to a relatively important extent. Mothers were the source mostly preferred by females, and the other relatively important preferred sources were same-sex peers, books/magazines/pamphlets, school programmes and opposite-sex peers. There was thus a big difference in the relative preference ascribed to mothers, fathers and opposite-sex peers by males and females. When viewed together, same-sex peers were the most preferred source, with mothers, books/magazines/pamphlets, school programmes and fathers being preferred to a relatively important extent too.

Table 6.7 shows the percentages of males, females and all pupils who preferred to receive their information about masturbation from the various sources.

Table 6.7 Percentages of males, females and all pupils preferring information about masturbation from various sources

Source	Males (percent)	Females (percent)	All pupils (percent)
Mother	11,1	21,9	16,5
Father	13,2	1,5	7,4
Brother/sister	4,8	4,1	4,4
Other relatives	0	0,8	0,4
Peers (same-sex)	24,2	23,6	23,9
Peers (opposite-sex)	1,6	4,2	2,9
Boy/girlfriend	2,8	4,0	3,4
Books/magazines/pamphlets	15,5	16,6	16,1
Television/movies	3,6	0	1,8
School programmes	8,9	13,7	11,3
Psychologists/doctors nurses/social workers	8,7	8,8	8,8
Synagogue	0	0	0
Experience	5,6	0,8	3,1
Other	0	0	0
TOTAL	100,0	100,0	100,0

These findings are represented in a bar diagram in Figure 6.7

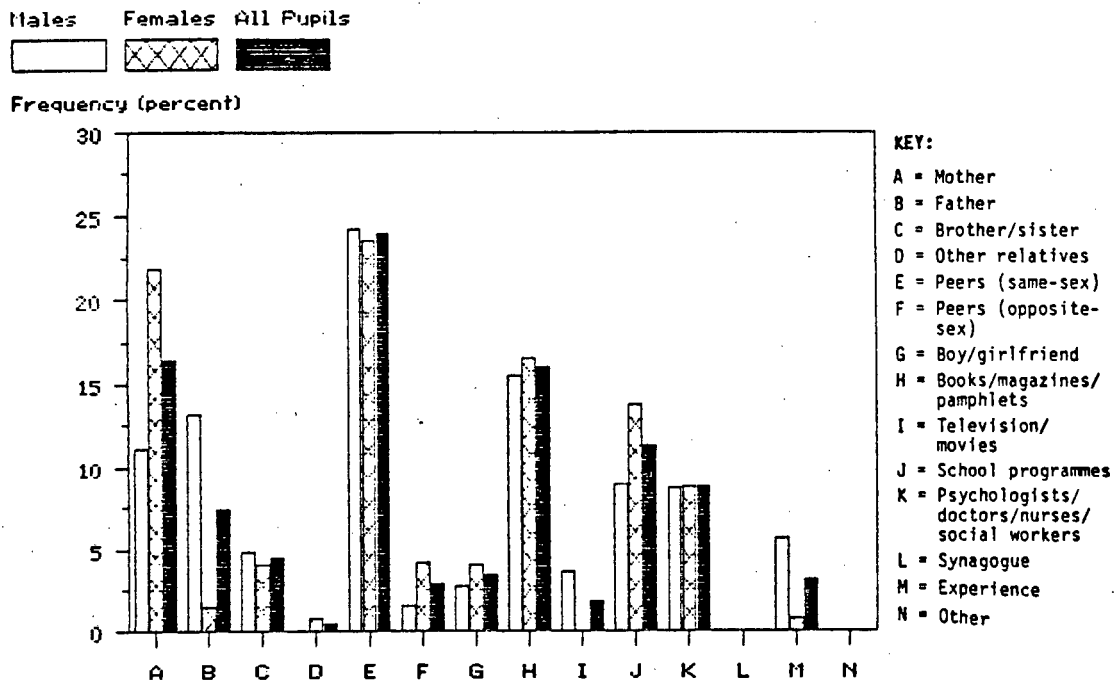


Figure 6.7 Bar diagram for males, females and all pupils, by preferred sources of information for masturbation (percent)

Same-sex peers were the most preferred source for both males and females. For males, other sources preferred to a relatively important degree were books/magazines/pamphlets, fathers and mothers, while mothers, books/magazines/pamphlets and school programmes were the other sources largely preferred by females. Fathers were thus not preferred to any significant extent by females. When viewed together, the sources preferred by the pupils to a relatively important extent were same-sex peers, mothers, books/magazines/pamphlets and school programmes.

Table 6.8 shows the percentages of males, females and all pupils who preferred to receive their information about menstruation from the various sources.

Table 6.8 Percentages of males, females and all pupils preferring information about menstruation from various sources

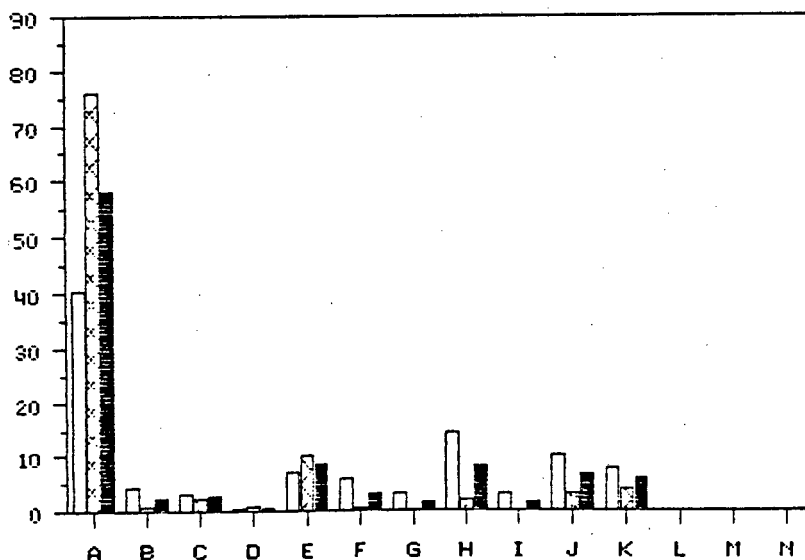
Source	Males (percent)	Females (percent)	All pupils (percent)
Mother	40,3	76,2	58,3
Father	4,2	0,8	2,5
Brother/sister	3,2	2,5	2,9
Other relatives	0,4	0,8	0,6
Peers (same-sex)	7,1	10,0	8,6
Peers (opposite-sex)	6,0	0,2	3,1
Boy/girlfriend	3,2	0	1,6
Books/magazines/pamphlets	14,3	2,2	8,2
Television/movies	3,2	0	1,5
School programmes	10,2	3,2	6,7
Psychologists/doctors nurses/social workers	7,9	4,1	6,0
Synagogue	0	0	0
Experience	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
TOTAL	100,0	100,0	100,0

These findings are represented in a bar diagram in Figure 6.8.

Males Females All Pupils



Frequency (percent)



KEY:

- A = Mother
- B = Father
- C = Brother/sister
- D = Other relatives
- E = Peers (same-sex)
- F = Peers (opposite-sex)
- G = Boy/girlfriend
- H = Books/magazines/pamphlets
- I = Television/movies
- J = School programmes
- K = Psychologists/doctors/nurses/social workers
- L = Synagogue
- M = Experience
- N = Other

Figure 6.8 Bar diagram for males, females and all pupils, by preferred sources of information for menstruation (percent)

Mothers were overwhelmingly preferred by both males and females, and therefore also when the pupils were viewed together. The only other sources preferred to a relatively significant extent by males were books/magazines/pamphlets and school programmes, and for females, same-sex peers. Same-sex peers and books/magazines/pamphlets were the other sources receiving some relatively important preferences when these pupils were viewed together.

Table 6.9 shows the percentages of males, females and all pupils who preferred to receive their information about petting from the various sources.

Table 6.9 Percentages of males, females and all pupils preferring information about petting from various sources

Source	Males (percent)	Females (percent)	All pupils (percent)
Mother	8,3	23,3	15,9
Father	9,5	1,0	5,2
Brother/sister	4,8	5,6	5,2
Other relatives	0	0	0
Peers (same-sex)	18,3	30,5	24,6
Peers (opposite-sex)	6,0	4,2	5,1
Boy/girlfriend	2,8	7,6	5,3
Books/magazines/pamphlets	10,6	11,0	10,8
Television/movies	6,2	0,8	3,4
School programmes	8,3	4,9	6,5
Psychologists/doctors nurses/social workers	7,5	4,9	6,2
Synagogue	0	0	0
Experience	17,7	6,2	11,8
Other	0	0	0
TOTAL	100,0	100,0	100,0

These findings are represented in a bar diagram in Figure 6.9.

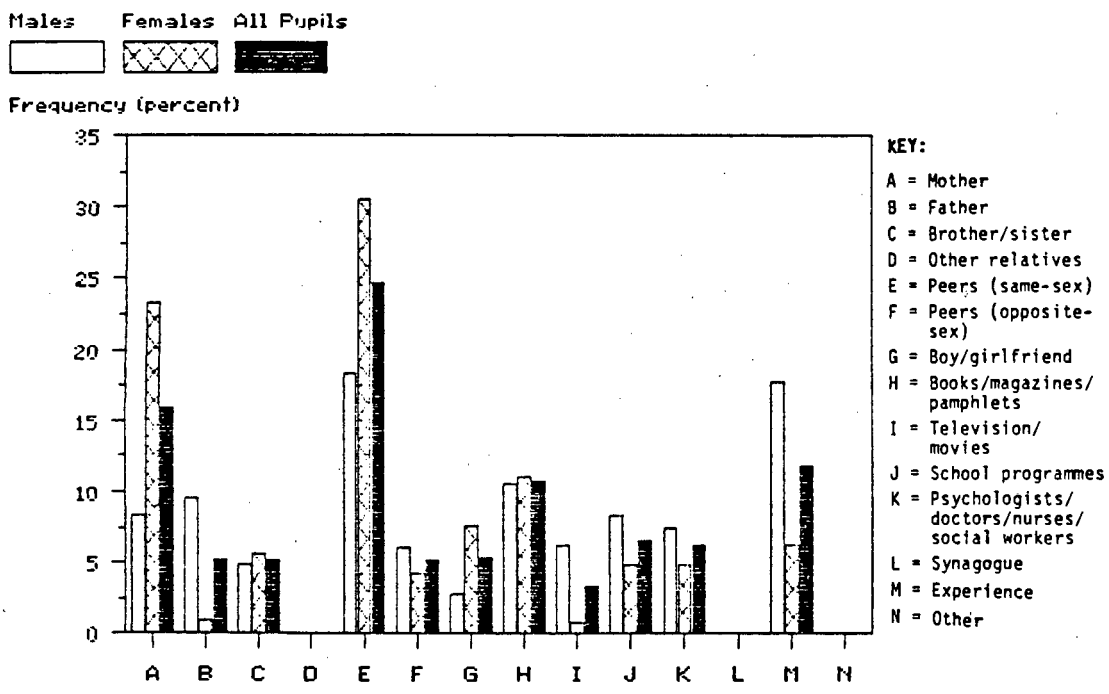


Figure 6.9 Bar diagram for males, females and all pupils, by preferred sources of information for petting (percent)

Same-sex peers were the most preferred source for both males and females. For males, the other sources preferred to a relatively important degree were experience, books/magazines/pamphlets and fathers. Mothers and books/magazines/pamphlets were the only relatively important preferred sources for females, thus indicating a clear difference in the preferences of males and females regarding experience, mothers and fathers. When viewed together, same-sex peers, mothers, experience and books/magazines/pamphlets were the sources preferred by these pupils to a relatively significant extent.

Table 6.10 shows the percentages of males, females and all pupils who preferred to receive their information about sexual intercourse from the various sources.

Table 6.10 Percentages of males, females and all pupils preferring information about sexual intercourse from various sources

Source	Males (percent)	Females (percent)	All pupils (percent)
Mother	14,2	46,2	30,2
Father	18,2	3,5	10,9
Brother/sister	2,0	2,7	2,4
Other relatives	0	0	0
Peers (same-sex)	12,7	13,5	13,1
Peers (opposite-sex)	4,4	2,8	3,6
Boy/girlfriend	1,6	1,5	1,5
Books/magazines/pamphlets	10,2	10,9	10,6
Television/movies	9,2	1,7	5,3
School programmes	9,3	12,0	10,7
Psychologists/doctors nurses/social workers	5,9	4,4	5,1
Synagogue	0	0	0
Experience	12,3	0,8	6,6
Other	0	0	0
TOTAL	100,0	100,0	100,0

These findings are represented in a bar diagram in Figure 6.10.

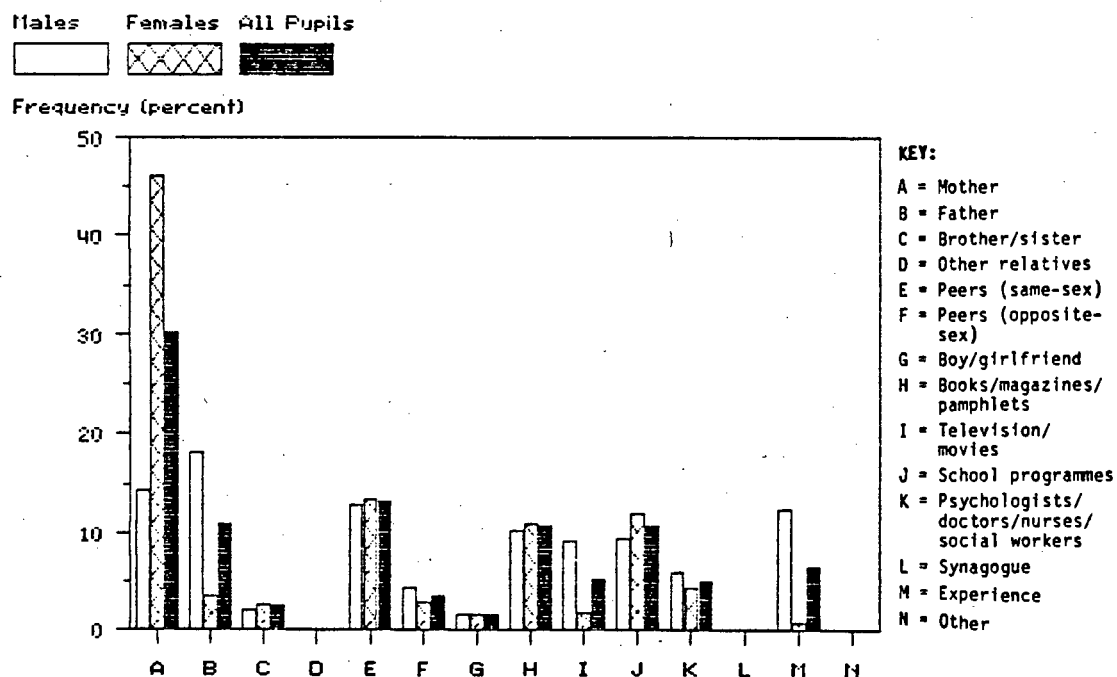


Figure 6.10 Bar diagram for males, females and all pupils, by preferred sources of information for sexual intercourse (percent)

Fathers were the source mostly preferred by males, while the other sources preferred to a relatively important degree by them were mothers, same-sex peers, experience and books/magazines/pamphlets. Females regarded their mothers as their most preferred source, while same-sex peers, school programmes and books/magazines/pamphlets were their other relatively important preferred sources. The difference in the preferences of males and females regarding mothers, fathers and experience should be noted. When viewed together, the sources preferred by the pupils to a relatively significant extent were mothers, same-sex peers, fathers, school programmes and books/magazines/pamphlets.

Table 6.11 shows the percentages of males, females and all pupils who preferred to receive their information about homosexuality/lesbianism from the various sources.

Table 6.11 Percentages of males, females and all pupils preferring information about homosexuality/lesbianism from various sources

Source	Males (percent)	Females (percent)	All pupils (percent)
Mother	19,0	37,4	28,3
Father	16,6	6,2	11,3
Brother/sister	1,4	1,0	1,2
Other relatives	0	0	0
Peers (same-sex)	4,4	6,2	5,3
Peers (opposite-sex)	0,4	1,9	1,2
Boy/girlfriend	1,6	0	0,8
Books/magazines/pamphlets	22,2	22,0	22,1
Television/movies	11,8	4,4	8,0
School programmes	10,3	11,6	10,9
Psychologists/doctors nurses/social workers	9,9	7,8	8,9
Synagogue	0,8	1,5	1,2
Experience	1,6	0	0,8
Other	0	0	0
TOTAL	100,0	100,0	100,0

Figure 6.11 is a bar diagram representation of these findings.

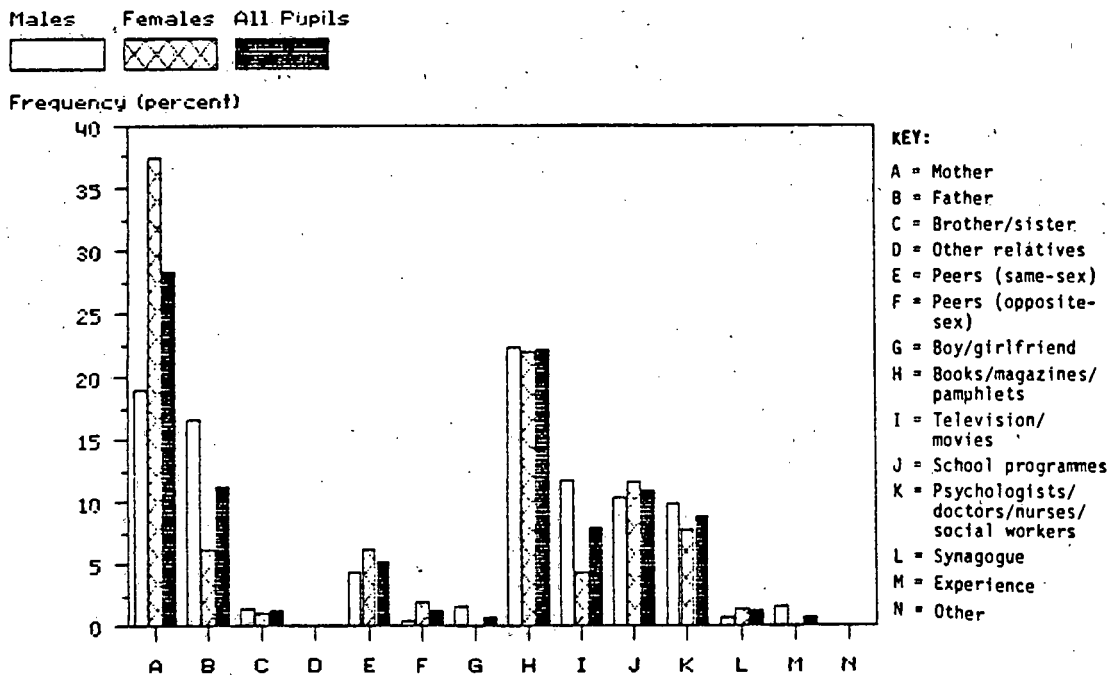


Figure 6.11 Bar diagram for males, females and all pupils, by preferred sources of information for homosexuality/lesbianism (percent)

The most preferred source for males was books/magazines/pamphlets, and there were various other sources preferred by them to a relatively significant extent too, i.e., mothers, fathers, television/movies, school programmes and psychologists/doctors/nurses/social workers. Unlike males, females preferred three sources only to a relatively important extent, i.e., mothers, books/magazines/pamphlets and school programmes, with the main preference being mothers. Fathers were once again preferred far more by males than females, and mothers preferred to a far greater extent by females than males. When their preferences were viewed together, mothers were the most preferred source, while books/magazines/pamphlets, fathers and school programmes were the only other sources preferred to a relatively important extent by the pupils.

Table 6.12 shows the percentages of males, females and all pupils who preferred to receive their information about prostitution from the various sources.

Table 6.12 Percentages of males, females and all pupils preferring information about prostitution from various sources

Source	Males (percent)	Females (percent)	All pupils (percent)
Mother	16,3	39,2	28,1
Father	19,0	4,6	11,6
Brother/sister	2,0	0	1,0
Other relatives	0,8	0	0,4
Peers (same-sex)	8,7	7,5	8,1
Peers (opposite-sex)	1,3	0,4	0,8
Boy/girlfriend	2,0	0	1,0
Books/magazines/pamphlets	13,4	21,5	17,5
Television/movies	15,7	11,2	13,4
School programmes	13,4	10,0	11,6
Psychologists/doctors nurses/social workers	5,0	5,6	5,3
Synagogue	0	0	0
Experience	2,4	0	1,2
Other	0	0	0
TOTAL	100,0	100,0	100,0

These findings are represented in a bar diagram in Figure 6.12.

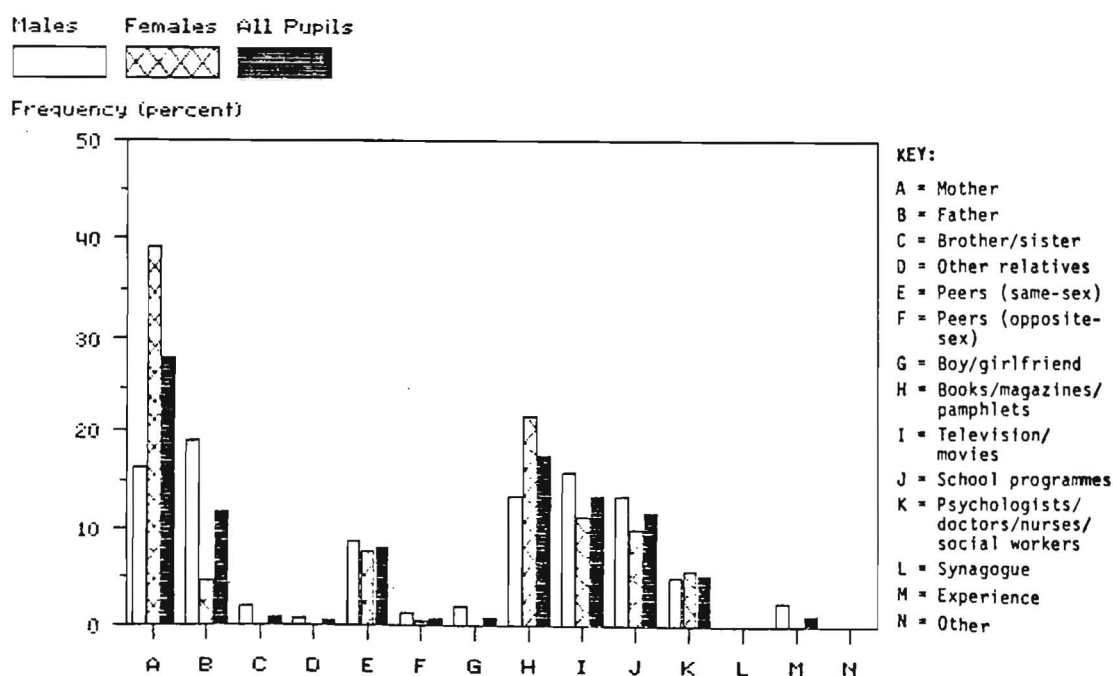


Figure 6.12 Bar diagram for males, females and all pupils, by preferred sources of information for prostitution (percent)

There were five sources preferred to a relatively important extent by males, i.e., fathers, mothers, television/movies, books/magazines/pamphlets and school programmes, the major preferred source being fathers. Books/magazines/pamphlets, television/movies and school programmes were also preferred to a relatively important degree by females, while their major source of preference was mothers. Unlike males, females' preference for fathers was relatively unimportant. When viewed together, mothers were the most preferred source for these pupils, while the only other sources preferred to a relatively significant degree were books/magazines/pamphlets, television/movies, school programmes and fathers.

Finally, Table 6.13 shows the percentages of males, females and all pupils who preferred to receive their information about sexually transmitted diseases from the various sources.

Table 6.13 Percentages of males, females and all pupils preferring information about sexually transmitted diseases from various sources

Source	Males (percent)	Females (percent)	All pupils (percent)
Mother	11,5	33,0	22,3
Father	17,8	4,8	11,3
Brother/sister	3,2	0,5	1,8
Other relatives	0	0	0
Peers (same-sex)	5,0	2,2	3,6
Peers (opposite-sex)	0	0,8	0,4
Boy/girlfriend	1,0	0,8	0,9
Books/magazines/pamphlets	17,7	16,7	17,2
Television/movies	9,6	5,6	7,5
School programmes	16,2	20,3	18,3
Psychologists/doctors nurses/social workers	18,0	15,3	16,7
Synagogue	0	0	0
Experience	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
TOTAL	100,0	100,0	100,0

These findings are represented in a bar diagram in Figure 6.13.

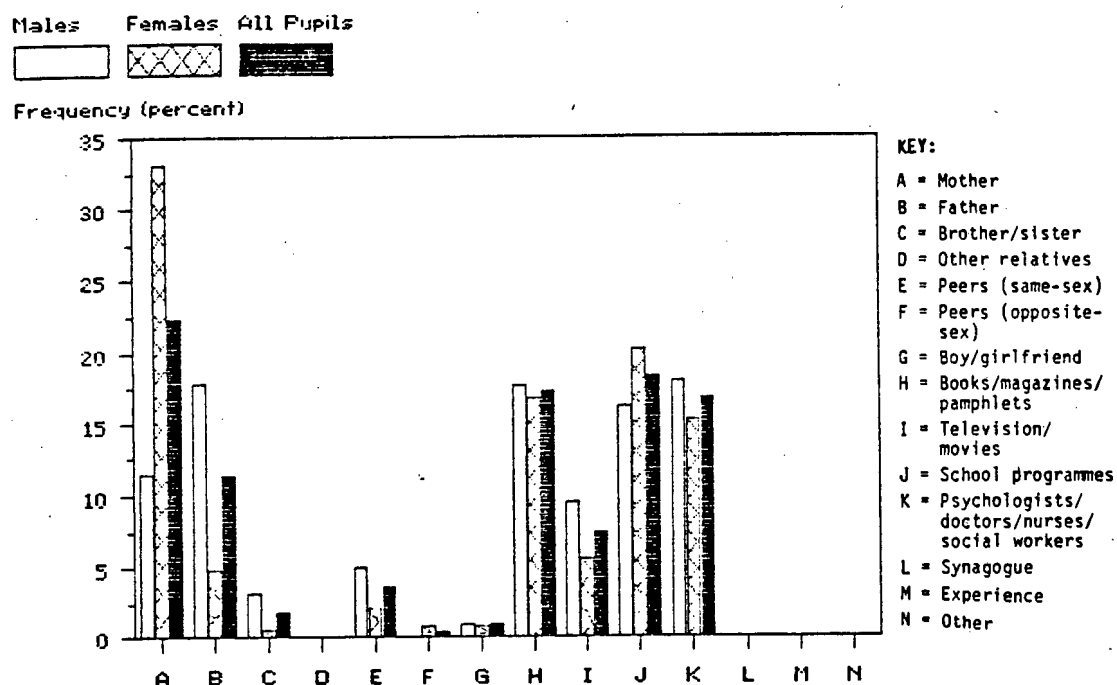


Figure 6.13 Bar diagram for males, females and all pupils, by preferred sources of information for sexually transmitted diseases (percent)

Psychologists/doctors/nurses/social workers was the most preferred source for males, while fathers, books/magazines/pamphlets, school programmes and mothers were also preferred by them to a relatively important extent. School programmes, books/magazines/pamphlets and psychologists/doctors/nurses/social workers were preferred to a relatively important degree by females too, while their major preferred source was mothers. Fathers were not preferred to any important extent by females, and the difference in the relative importance of mothers to males and females should be noted. When viewed together, mothers were the major preferred source of these pupils, with school programmes, books/magazines/pamphlets, psychologists/doctors/nurses/social workers and fathers being preferred to a relatively important degree too.

With regard to preferred sources, this investigation has revealed that mothers were very clearly the most preferred source of sexual information. The other sources preferred to a relatively important degree were, in order of preference, books/magazines/pamphlets, school programmes, fathers and same-sex peers. The other nine sources were not preferred to any relatively significant extent. When males and females were viewed separately, mothers were the most preferred source for both sexes, while books/magazines/pamphlets, school programmes and same-sex peers were also preferred to a relatively important extent by both sexes. The relative preference ascribed to fathers was notably different for the sexes, where females preferred this source to a relatively unimportant extent, and males regarded fathers as their second most preferred source. The other sources were viewed as relatively unimportant in terms of males' and females' preferences.

With regard to specific topics, the study found that mothers were the most preferred source for 9 of the 12 topics (i.e., origin of babies, pregnancy and childbirth, abortion, contraception, menstruation, sexual intercourse, homosexuality/lesbianism, prostitution, sexually transmitted diseases), while the most preferred source for the other three topics (i.e., wet dreams, masturbation, petting) was same-sex peers. The second most important source for the three topics was mothers, thus further suggesting that mothers were the source overwhelmingly preferred by these adolescents.

For 7 of the 12 topics, both males and females preferred to receive most of their information from the same sources. For both sexes, the most preferred source of information for origin of babies, pregnancy and childbirth, abortion, contraception and menstruation was mothers, while for masturbation and petting it was same-sex peers. Mothers were females'

most preferred source for the five other topics, while for three of the topics (i.e., wet dreams, sexual intercourse, prostitution), fathers were the most preferred source for males. For homosexuality/lesbianism and sexually transmitted diseases, the most preferred sources for males were books/magazines/pamphlets and psychologists/doctors/nurses/social workers respectively. The findings pertaining to pupils' preferred sources of sexual information will be discussed in Chapter 7.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, the findings of the investigation are discussed, and comparisons are made with the findings of other researchers. The findings regarding actual and preferred sources are compared. The implications and limitations of the study are considered, and suggestions for further research are made.

7.1 Discussion of Sources of Sexual Information as revealed by this Investigation

As was pointed out at the end of chapter 5, books/magazines/pamphlets was found to be the most important source of information (i.e., 22,1 percent). The other relatively important sources, in order of importance, were found to be mothers (21,5 percent), same-sex peers (15,2 percent), television/movies (12,7 percent) and school programmes (11,6 percent). Minor importance was thus attached to the other nine sources of information.

The relative importance of five sources to the pupils is consistent with the growing importance of various sources other than peers reported during the 1970s and 1980s (e.g., Allen, 1987; Gebhard, 1977; Goldman and Goldman, 1981; Inman, 1974; Kisker, 1985; Planned Parenthood Federation of America, 1986; Spanier, 1977; Thornburg, 1975, 1985; Welbourne, 1977). The particularly important role ascribed to reading material by the participants in this study is, however, not reported by other researchers, although Davis and Harris (1982), Goldman and Goldman (1981), Spanier (1977) and Thornburg (1981a, 1985) found reading material to be a very important source. Some researchers, on the other hand, found reading

material to be a relatively unimportant source (Allen, 1987; Planned Parenthood Federation of America, 1986). It should also be noted that Goldman and Goldman (1981) and Thornburg (1985) included pre-adolescents in their samples, and that Thornburg was investigating initial sources of sexual information, thus militating against direct comparisons of findings. Furthermore, the participants in this study were from middle to upper-middle class backgrounds, where books, magazines and pamphlets were probably much more available than in the homes of participants in some other investigations, where the demographic characteristics were different.

The great importance of mothers to the pupils is consistent with the findings of various writers (e.g., Goldman and Goldman, 1981; Planned Parenthood Federation of America, 1986; Thornburg, 1981a, 1985), although this source was regarded as relatively unimportant by Allen (1987) and Kisker (1985). The finding that same-sex peers were the third most important source is strongly indicative of the change in the primary role played by peers in the decades before the 1980s, and the early 1980s. It is consistent with the findings of Allen (1987), Planned Parenthood Federation of America (1986) and Thornburg (1985), where peers were found to be an important source of sexual information, but no longer the most important source. It should be noted that even when opposite-sex peers were considered together with same-sex peers (i.e., 3,0 percent and 15,2 percent), peers were still found to be the third most important source.

The relative importance of television/movies found in this study was only reported by Goldman and Goldman (1981) and Planned Parenthood Federation of America (1986). The finding that school programmes were the fifth most important source of these pupils is also largely inconsistent with the findings of most other writers, who found schools to be of much greater

importance during the 1980s (e.g., Allen, 1987; Davis and Harris, 1982; Goldman and Goldman, 1981; Kisker, 1985; Thornburg, 1985). The relatively unimportant part played by other sources, including fathers, as reported in this study is consistent with other investigations conducted during the 1980s, and in preceding decades.

The results of this study suggest, therefore, that with regard to significant adults as sources of sexual information, it is only mothers who were playing an important role. Schools are far less important sources than peers and the media (i.e., books/magazines/pamphlets/television/movies), while fathers and other adults are relatively minor sources. With the media playing such an important role, it can be assumed that much of the sexual information acquired by these pupils is distorted and inaccurate.

This investigation also found that the same five sources, i.e., books/magazines/pamphlets, mothers, same-sex peers, television/movies and school programmes, were the only relatively important sources for both males and females. The primary importance of mothers (27,5 percent) to females, and the relatively important role played by books/magazines/pamphlets (22,4 percent) for them, is consistent with the findings of various researchers during the 1970s and 1980s (e.g., Dickinson, 1978; Gebhard, 1977; Goldman and Goldman, 1981; Planned Parenthood Federation of America, 1986; Thornburg, 1975, 1981a, 1985; Welbourne, 1977). The findings during the 1980s of Allen (1987), Davis and Harris (1982) and Kisker (1985) that schools and peers had become the major sources of information for female adolescents are, however, not supported by this study. Females in this study regarded peers and schools as their third and fourth most important sources (i.e., 16,6 and 12,1 percent respectively). This is probably due to the fact that, in a society where sexual topics are not yet discussed in

a comfortable, educational and open manner, females have stereotypically acquired their sexual information from their mothers, and/or from reading material. The extent to which females' sources differed with regard to particular sexual topics is discussed below.

The most important source of sexual information for males was books/magazines/pamphlets (i.e., 21,9 percent), and this finding is very surprising when compared with other studies. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, researchers have consistently found peers to be the primary source of information for males, and where this has differed, it has been schools which have been regarded as a particularly important source (e.g., Allen, 1987; Davis and Harris, 1982; Kisker, 1985; Spanier, 1977; Thornburg, 1975, 1981a, 1985; Welbourne, 1977). Peers were an important source to males in this study (19,9 percent), but schools were only regarded as the fifth most important source (11,1 percent). The finding that television/movies was males' third most important source (16,2 percent) is supportive of the findings of Planned Parenthood Federation of America (1986), where peers and television were the major sources of male adolescents. It might be that reading material pertaining to sexual topics was relatively freely available to males in this study, and that they found this source of information less embarrassing or threatening a source than peers or adults.

When the sources of males and females in this study are thus compared in terms of the 12 topics being viewed together, it becomes apparent that males and females have acquired their sexual information primarily from different sources (i.e., books/magazines/pamphlets and mothers respectively). The far greater reliance of males on the media (i.e., books, magazines, pamphlets, movies and television) and peers than on mothers, and the particular importance of mothers and reading material for females is largely

consistent with previous findings regarding differences between males and females, and supportive of stereotypical expectations regarding sex-roles of males and females.

The results of this study regarding the relative importance of various sources in terms of specific sexual topics are very consistent with the findings of other researchers (e.g., Gebhard, 1977; Planned Parenthood Federation of America, 1986; Spanier, 1977; Thornburg, 1970, 1972, 1975, 1981a, 1981b, 1985; Welbourne, 1977). Similarly to these studies, this investigation revealed that mothers were the main source of information for non-behaviour-related topics (e.g., origin of babies, pregnancy and child-birth, menstruation). Furthermore, same-sex peers were found to be the most important source for most of the behaviour-related topics (e.g., wet dreams, masturbation, petting). Surprisingly, mothers were the major source of information regarding sexual intercourse, although this was largely due to the high percentage of females who had received their information about intercourse from their mothers. This suggests that mothers deemed it necessary to discuss sexual intercourse with their children, possibly because of the potential consequences, but were less prepared to discuss other aspects of sexual behaviour with them. Thornburg (1981a) had also found mothers to be a very important initial source of information about intercourse, but same-sex peers had been found to be more important. This finding may have been directly affected by the proportion of males and females participating in this study.

While Thornburg (1985) reported that mothers and peers were the major initial sources of information for so-called "controversial" topics (i.e., prostitution, abortion, homosexuality/lesbianism), this study found that the media (i.e., books, magazines, pamphlets, television and movies) are

the main sources of information for these three topics, as well as sexually transmitted diseases and contraception. This finding suggests that sensitive, contentious sexual topics were not being adequately addressed by the parents and school personnel of these adolescents, and that they were largely being left to acquire their information about behaviour-related and "controversial" sexual topics from the sensationalist mass media and their ill-informed peers.

As was pointed out in Chapter 5, this study found that the major sources of information for 7 of the 12 topics were the same for males and females (i.e., origin of babies, pregnancy and childbirth, menstruation, petting, prostitution, homosexuality/lesbianism, sexually transmitted diseases). Where the major sources for the other five topics differed for males and females, these differences are largely in keeping with stereotypical sex-role expectations, and the findings of other writers. While females' most important sources for the five topics were mothers and reading material, males' reported sources were same-sex peers, books/magazines/pamphlets and television/movies.

Finally, the study revealed that for females, the most important source for five of the topics was mothers, for five other topics, it was books/magazines/pamphlets, and for the remaining two topics, television/movies and same-sex peers were the most important sources. For males, on the other hand, books/magazines/pamphlets was the most important source for four of the topics, mothers and same-sex peers were each the most important source for three of the topics, and television/movies was the most important source for two of the topics. This finding suggests that females were particularly dependent on two sources for their sexual information, while males were more reliant on various sources. It seems, therefore,

that males and females in this study had experienced different socialisation processes in terms of the acquisition of their sexual information, based on their different sexes.

7.2 Discussion of Preferred Sources of Sexual Information as revealed by this Investigation

The results of the study showed that mothers were overwhelmingly the most preferred source of information (i.e., 34,7 percent), while the other sources preferred to a relatively important extent were books/magazines/pamphlets (13,0 percent), school programmes (10,5 percent), fathers (10,0 percent) and same-sex peers (9,9 percent). Relatively minor importance was thus attached to the other nine sources regarding their preference.

The overwhelming preference attached to mothers by these pupils is consistent with the findings of Allen (1987), Calderwood (1965), Dickinson (1978) and Inman (1974). Although these researchers found "parents" to be the most preferred source, it seems likely that mothers were preferred to a very large extent. Considering the fact that fathers were found to be the fourth most preferred source in this study, the preference attached to parents is thus very supportive of other researchers' findings. The finding that school programmes were the third most preferred source of these pupils is supportive of the results of McCormick et al. (1985) and Sorenson (1973), as well as Farrell (1978) and Goldman and Goldman (1981), who found parents and schools to be the two most preferred sources.

The particular preference given to reading material by these pupils is, however, inconsistent with the findings of others. It indicates that these adolescents would rather acquire their sexual information from reading material than acquire it from schools, fathers, other adults, peers or

other forms of the media. The results suggest, therefore, that these pupils primarily wanted their mothers to equip them with the appropriate sexual information, and rather than rely on other adults for their information, they would prefer to acquire it from reading material, if not from their mothers. It must be noted, however, that their stated preferences may well have been influenced by their experiences of acquiring their sexual information thus far in their lives.

Both males and females wanted to acquire their information primarily from mothers (23,2 and 46,1 percent respectively), and both sexes also viewed same-sex peers (9,4 and 10,3 percent respectively), reading material (14,2 and 11,9 percent respectively) and school programmes (10,8 and 10,1 percent respectively) as preferred sources to a relatively important extent. Where they differed markedly was in their preferences attached to fathers, as they were preferred to an insignificant extent by females (3,9 percent), but were the second most preferred source of males (16,4 percent). This suggests that females found it difficult to perceive their fathers playing an important role in their sex-education.

The finding that both males and females regarded schools as their fourth most preferred source suggests that neither males nor females had had particularly worthwhile and meaningful sex-education programmes presented to them in the past. Alternatively, both sexes may have come to believe that, regardless of the quality of the school-based programmes, their preferences regarding the acquisition of their sexual information lay in their homes, in reading material or with their peers. Schools were therefore not viewed as having to play a particularly important role in this regard. The lack of preference shown for television/movies also suggests that both males and females have recognised the distorted and

uneducational nature of the manner in which sexual topics are dealt with by that particular medium. The extent to which books/magazines/pamphlets was a particularly important preference for these pupils (i.e., the second most preferred source) was revealed in the finding that for females, this source was the second most preferred one, while for males, the third most preferred one. The finding regarding males' and females' preferences cannot be compared to other researchers, as they have tended not to differentiate between males' and females' preferences.

The results of this investigation with regard to the relative preference of various sources in terms of specific topics revealed that mothers and same-sex peers were the preferred sources for all 12 topics. For information related to non-coital sexual behaviour (i.e., wet dreams, masturbation, petting), same-sex peers were the most preferred source of these pupils. For all other topics, which therefore included theoretical, behaviour-related and so-called "controversial" ones, mothers were the most preferred source. It appears, then, that these adolescents wanted to learn about various behaviour-related and "controversial" topics from their mothers, and were probably finding it very difficult to initiate questions and discussions.

Furthermore, this study revealed that, as was pointed out in Chapter 6, the preferred sources of males and females were the same for 7 of the 12 topics. Information about origin of babies, pregnancy and childbirth, abortion, contraception and menstruation was preferred to have been acquired from mothers by both sexes, while both sexes also preferred to receive their information pertaining to masturbation and petting from the same source, i.e., same-sex peers. Where differences between the sexes were found with the other five topics, these are once again in keeping with

stereotypical expectations. Females' preferences for all five topics were mothers, while for males, fathers were preferred for three of the five topics.

In sum, the findings of this study suggest very strongly that males and females have similar preferred sources with regard to the acquisition of their sexual information. The information, furthermore, pertains to behaviour-related, non-behaviour-related and so-called "controversial" sexual topics. It is also strongly suggested that females wanted primarily to acquire their information about almost all of the topics from their mothers, while males wanted primarily to acquire their information about almost all of the topics from their mothers, fathers and same-sex peers, but mostly mothers and fathers.

7.3 Implications of the Study

This study has shown that females in standards 9 and 10 at the school would prefer to receive their sexual information primarily from their mothers, while males in the sample would prefer to receive their information primarily from their mothers and fathers. Books/magazines/pamphlets, same-sex peers and schools were the other sources shown a relatively important preference by both males and females. The preferences were pertinent to topics covering so-called "controversial", behavioural and non-behavioural sexual areas. When compared to their actual sources, it is notable that, when the pupils were viewed together, the two major preferred sources, i.e., mothers and books/magazines/pamphlets, were in fact the two most important sources of information, although the relative order of importance was reversed. The females' first four preferences were in fact identical to their four actual major sources, i.e., mothers, books/magazines/

pamphlets, same-sex peers and school programmes. The males' preferences, however, showed a distinct difference from their actual major sources. For them, in order of preference, mothers, fathers, books/magazines/pamphlets, school programmes and same-sex peers were their preferences, but their actual sources, in order of importance, were books/magazines/pamphlets, same-sex peers, television/movies, mothers, school programmes and fathers. It can therefore be deduced that females were largely satisfied with their sources of sexual information, while males' sources were largely contrary to their choices. When looked at in terms of specific sexual topics, however, it has been shown that both males and females would have liked their mothers to have been a more important source, while male pupils would have liked their fathers to be far more involved in their sexual socialisation too.

A very clear implication of these findings is that either one or both of these pupils' parents need to have provided them with accurate, comprehensive, meaningful and relevant information regarding a variety of sexual topics. This finding regarding the primary and crucial role of parents is consistent with the conclusions of various writers during the 1980s (e.g., Allen, 1987; Black and DeBlassie, 1985; Goldman and Goldman, 1981; Gordon, 1986; Jones et al., 1985; Kirby, 1985; Strouse and Fabes, 1985; Thornburg, 1985; Wattleton, 1987). The primary responsibility accorded to parents by these pupils implies that these parents need to become actively and appropriately involved in the sex-education of their children, especially with regard to males. Considering the finding that school programmes were the fourth most preferred source for both males and females, it implies that the school needs to assume responsibility for playing an important supplementary role to parents. Furthermore, both

parents and school personnel need to ensure that the literature available to children regarding the provision of sexual information is of an appropriate and informative type. It seems that whether parents, schools and other adults should be providing children with adequate and accurate sexual information is not the issue, but that how these sources can best co-operate and provide the children with the sexual knowledge they need in the most effective way, is the central issue.

Furthermore, the findings imply that the school personnel should consider providing in-service training for parents and teachers who will be in need of learning how best to become significant sex-educators of the children. The representative nature of the sample suggests that the findings for those in standards 9 and 10 at the time of the research would be similar for the other pupils in the school. Fathers in particular would require much help in how to become far more involved in providing their sons (and hopefully daughters) with the required information. The school personnel also need to design programmes in consultation with parents, other professionals and pupils, so that the various topics can be appropriately dealt with, and so that the various sources can continually supplement each other. Where peers will continue to be the preferred source of information for certain topics, it will be important to check through school-based programmes and parental involvement that the information being provided is accurate and sufficient. While it is very important to try to facilitate the pupils' acquisition of sexual information from their preferred sources, it seems that where this is not happening (i.e., where mothers and fathers are not playing the role their children want them to be playing), it becomes the responsibility of the school to try to fulfil the pupils' needs as far as possible. The findings of this study strongly imply that the

pupils at the school want relevant and accurate information regarding all sexual topics, and these parents and other adults involved with the total development of these pupils should therefore become involved with the pupils' sex-education in a positive, meaningful and relevant way.

7.4 Limitations of the Study

When interpreting the results of this investigation, there are various factors which need to be taken into consideration, for they place limitations on the findings. In the first place, only 76,7 percent of the eligible participants completed the questionnaires, and the remaining 23,3 percent may well have influenced the results. It seems unlikely that the recognised major sources would have differed, but the relative importance of the major sources may have been influenced by greater participation. All the pupils in standards 9 and 10 were invited to participate, and those who did not were either absent or involved with other school-based activities at the time. The sample can thus be viewed as representative of the population under investigation.

A second factor pertains to the generalisability of the findings. These participants were attending a private school, and their religious, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds were very similar. The attitudes of significant adults and peers in their lives were likely to have influenced their responses, and comparisons with samples of adolescents coming from different backgrounds must be made with caution. The findings must therefore be viewed as pertinent to these pupils only.

Thirdly, the findings of this study may be regarded as limited as a result of the possibility of the participants' responses being dishonest or inaccurate. The research design did not lend itself to the reliability of

the responses being tested by the test-retest method, and the questionnaires may have been completed without sufficient thought and effort. Some pupils may have found it difficult to remember their sources of information or have completed the questionnaires unwillingly, deciding to simply randomly tick blocks in the process. The pupils were asked and encouraged to complete the questionnaires honestly, but there was no control over the extent to which this was done.

The pupils individually completed the questionnaires in the presence of their fellow-class pupils and class teachers, and this also may have influenced their performance, thus placing a limit on the validity of the findings. The extent to which individual class-teachers clarified any confusion and allowed the pupils to interact with each other during the completion of the questionnaires may have varied, which may have influenced the reliability of responses. The researcher was on hand to deal with any problems, and no teacher reported difficulties or confusion amongst the pupils.

Finally, variables such as pupils' sexual attitudes and/or levels of sexual activity were not controlled, which may also have limited the findings of the study. These variables may have influenced the participants' responses, and were not taken into account when interpreting the findings. Despite the limitations of the study, it is noticeable that the findings are largely consistent with those of other researchers working during the 1980s, and it is suggested that the findings are largely representative of the actual and preferred sources of sexual information of the adolescents under investigation.

7.5 Suggestions for Further Research

This study has shown that parents need to be at the forefront of their children's sex-education, and that other potentially reliable sources need to play an important supplementary role. The lack of generalisability of the findings implies that investigations into the actual and preferred sources of sexual information amongst adolescents from diverse cultural, religious and socio-economic backgrounds should be undertaken throughout South Africa. It is necessary to establish with other samples of adolescents the relative importance and preferences regarding their sources of information, as this would greatly assist planners of programmes in ensuring the relevance and effectiveness of such programmes. Education departments are thus to be urged to allow such investigations to be undertaken in state-controlled schools.

It is also suggested that the investigations be so designed that variables such as sexual attitudes and behaviour can be controlled, as these may greatly vary amongst adolescents, and may well influence the results of the studies. An attempt to increase the honesty and accuracy of participants' responses is also suggested.

7.6 Conclusion

This investigation has revealed that the pupils used in this study have obtained their information from sources which have not always been their preferred ones. An holistic, integrated and co-operative approach is thus suggested when dealing with the sex-education of adolescents at this school, and parents need to be encouraged to be actively and honestly involved in the sexual socialisation of their children. The differences between males and females also need to be acknowledged and seriously

considered, as this study has revealed some important differences regarding their preferred sources with regard to particular topics. The sources of sexual information may be a single component of a complex and controversial aspect of an individual's growth and development, but it appears to be extremely crucial if the problem of unwanted adolescent pregnancy, irresponsible and hurtful sexual behaviour and attitudes, and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (especially AIDS) is to be earnestly addressed in South Africa. By establishing and incorporating the specific needs of adolescents into the designing and implementing of sex-education programmes, children from diverse backgrounds can be provided with relevant, comprehensive, accurate and pertinent information required by them to deal with this difficult aspect of their psycho-sexual development. In order to heighten the relevance, and appropriately involve the major sources of sexual information, further research in this area amongst a variety of samples of South African adolescents is strongly recommended.

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APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Student,

I am an intern educational psychologist, and am involved in devising a sex education programme for children and adolescents. In order to do so, I am conducting an investigation into the sources from whom and/or where the std. 9 and 10 students at your school have received information about various sexual topics. I also wish to find out at what age the information has been acquired, whether the students would prefer to have received the information from a different source, and whether males and females display significant differences.

This questionnaire has been drawn up in order for the data to be obtained by me, and your completion of the questionnaire will greatly assist me in doing so. It is divided into 4 sections, and you are requested to complete all the sections as honestly as possible. PLEASE NOTE THAT YOUR NAME IS NOT REQUIRED, AND THAT YOU ARE NOT BEING ASKED TO REVEAL INFORMATION REGARDING YOUR SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR OR ATTITUDES.

Thank you very much for your participation.

JEFFREY KAGAN.

SECTION 1

Please answer the following questions:

- (1) Are you a male or a female?
- (2) How old are you?
- (3) What is your father's occupation?
- (4) What is your mother's occupation?

SECTION 2

Below (see Table 1) you will find a list of 12 sexual topics on the left side of the page, as well as various possible sources from whom/where the information could have been obtained, which are listed across the page. You are asked to indicate, by means of a tick (✓), from which source you have received MOST of your information about EACH TOPIC. (i.e. the ONE SOURCE from which most of your information about each topic has been acquired).

1. If you are ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN that you have received your information about a particular topic to an EQUAL EXTENT from more than one source, YOU MUST MAKE TICKS (✓) IN ALL THE RELEVANT BLOCKS.

2. If you have received your information from any other source, please SPECIFY THE SOURCE IN THE 'OTHER' BLOCK.

SECTION 3

Below (see Table 2) you will find the same table as the one you have completed in section 2. Simply indicate, by means of a tick (✓), from which source you would like to have received your information about each topic (i.e., from which source you would PREFER to receive your information, regardless of the actual source of your information).

1. If you would like to have received the information from both of your parents, i.e. your mother and your father, put ticks (✓) in the 'mother' and 'father' blocks.
2. In all other cases, choose the ONE SOURCE of preference (i.e. the most preferred source).

TABLE 1

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

	Mother	Father	Brother/ Sister	Other Rela- tives	Friend(s) same sex	Friend(s) opp. sex	Boy/ Girl- friend	Books, Maga- zines, Pamph- lets	TV, Movies	School Pro- gramme	Psycho- logists, doctors, nurses, social workers	Syna- gogue	Expe- rience	Other
Origin of babies														
Pregnancy and childbirth														
Abortion														
Contraception (birth control)														
Wet dreams														
Masturbation														
Menstruation (monthly period)														
petting (sexual behaviour which does not involve intercourse)														
Sexual intercourse														
Homosexuality/ Lesbianism														
Prostitution														
Sexually transmitted diseases														

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SECTION 4

In this section, you are asked to indicate HOW OLD you were when you received the information regarding the various sexual topics. SIMPLY PLACE A TICK (✓) IN THE APPROPRIATE BLOCK.

	Before 9 years old	10-12	13-14	15-17
Origin of babies				
Pregnancies & childbirth				
Abortion				
Contraception (birth control)				
Wet dreams				
Masturbation				
Menstruation (monthly period)				
Petting (sexual behaviour which does not include intercourse)				
Sexual intercourse				
Homosexuality/ Lesbianism				
Prostitution				
Sexually transmitted diseases				