

# Family Education Trust

(Family and Youth Concern)

A Company Limited by Guarantee No. 3503533; Registered Charity No. 1070500

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## **Saved sex and parental involvement are essential components of sexual health strategy, says leading doctor**

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In an editorial accompanying the publication of the outcomes of the SHARE sex education programme in this week's *British Medical Journal*, Lecturer in Healthcare Ethics at St Mary's University College and Family Education Trust trustee, Dr Trevor Stammers, suggests that unless the wider social influences affecting early sexual debut are taken into account, contraceptive promotion alone will not prevent unplanned teenage conceptions or reduce sexually transmitted infection rates among teenagers.

The editorial states: *'Counterintuitively, rather than improving sexual health, sex behaviour interventions can make it worse. Most studies on sex education programmes in schools examine intermediate outcomes only, such as pupil satisfaction or reported condom use. This often facilitates premature false claims of success, whereas more robust outcome measures such as rates of terminations, unplanned conceptions, and sexually transmitted infections show no benefit.'*

Dr Stammers recommends that the government funds programmes that communicate a 'saved sex' rather than a 'safer sex' message, in view of their proven success in reducing teenage pregnancy rates in other countries.

He writes: *'The false assumption that "young teens will have sex anyway" is an insult to many young people who have the capacity to rise to a far more effective challenge than just "use a condom every time."*

Dr Stammers also stresses the importance of parental involvement and co-operation in sex education which has been shown to lead to young people becoming sexually active at a later age.

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## **About Family Education Trust**

Family Education Trust is an educational charity committed to promoting stable family life and the welfare of children and young people.

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