Age Norms and Timetables about Sexual Behaviors among Japanese University Students.

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Introduction

Among Japanese adolescent, the experience rate of sexual behaviors has drastically changed for the past few decades (Fig. 1 ; The Japanese Association for Sex Education, 2018).

Fig.1 The experienced rate of sexual behaviors among Japanese university students.

It can be considered that the change in sexual behaviors reflects the change in the consciousness about the appropriate age and timing for sexual experiences.

We focused on the change of age norms and timetables about sexual behaviors among Japanese adolescent.

Age norms and Timetables

Age norms: the expectations regarding age-appropriate behavior. (Neugarten, Moore, & Lowe, 1965).

Timetables: The social clocks that operate in various areas of lives. (Neugarten, Moore, & Lowe, 1965).

Previous research

- Deadlines for family transitions, and educational and work transitions (Settersten, & Hagestad, 1996a, 1996b)
- Timetables for sexual behaviors in Australia adolescent (Rosenthal & Smith, 1997)

Two aspect of age norms

We proposed two aspect of age norms.

Upper limit: The consciousness of the deadlines for experiencing some sexual behaviors.

Lower limit: The consciousness about the age that it is not permitted to experience certain sexual behavior prior to that.

Purposes

We report the surveys conducted in 2008 and 2015 that investigated the age norms and timetables of sexual behaviors among Japanese university students.

Method

Participants

2008: 349 Japanese university students (224 men, 115 women, 10 unknown). The mean age was 19.5 years ($SD = 0.99$).

2015: 663 Japanese university students (300 men, 345 women, 18 unknown). The mean age was 19.8 years ($SD = 3.19$).

Questionnaire

We investigated age norms and timetables for three romantic and sexual behaviors:

Date: going on a date with friend.

Steady: Having a steady partner.

Sex: Having a sexual intercourse.

(1) Approval of age norms:

whether participants approve these norms.

- lower limit age: "It is not good to have [sexual behavior] at such an early age."

- upper limit age: "It is not good not to have [sexual behavior] beyond that age."

(2) Recognition of age norms:

whether participants recognize that these norms are approved by those who around them

(3) Timetables:

Upper and lower limit age for sexual behaviors that participants thought being shared around them.

Results

The approval rate of the lower limit age (Fig2, 3)

Compared to the 2008 survey, the approval rate of age norms have increased in 2015, except for male steady.

Fig2. The approval rate of the lower limit age (male)

Fig3. The approval rate of the lower limit age (female)

The approval rate of the upper limit age (Fig4, 5)

Compared to the 2008 survey, the approval rate of the upper limit age has not changed in 2015.

Fig4. The approval rate of the upper limit age (male)

Fig5. The approval rate of the upper limit age (female)

The Recognition rate of the lower limit age (Fig6, 7)

In 2015, Participants recognize that these norms are less approved by those who around them than 2008.

Fig6. The recognition rate of the lower limit age (male)

Fig7. The recognition rate of the lower limit age (female)

The Recognition rate of the upper limit age (Fig8, 9)

In 2015, Participants recognize that these norms are less approved by those who around them than 2008.

Fig8. The recognition rate of the upper limit age (male)

Fig9. The recognition rate of the upper limit age (female)

The lower limit timetables (Table1)

Compared to 2008, participants reported increased lower limit ages of sexual behaviors in 2015.

Table1 The lower limit age of sexual behaviors

		2008		2015		t value
		M	SD	M	SD	
male	Date	11.9	3.3	13.9	2.5	-4.77 ***
	Steady	12.6	3.0	13.8	2.4	-3.45 ***
	Sex	15.1	2.5	16.3	2.3	-4.74 ***
female	Date	11.9	2.0	13.5	2.2	-4.68 ***
	Steady	12.7	2.3	13.5	1.7	-2.84 **
	Sex	15.4	2.5	16.6	2.8	-3.51 ***

The upper limit timetables (Table2)

The upper limit ages have not changed from 2008 to 2015 for each gender.

Table2 The upper limit age of sexual behaviors

		2008		2015		t value
		M	SD	M	SD	
male	Date	21.4	8.1	21.3	5.6	0.07
	Steady	22.5	8.3	23.4	16.5	-0.56
	Sex	23.5	8.1	23.9	5.3	-0.41
female	Date	22.0	4.3	22.2	5.2	-0.32
	Steady	23.1	4.9	23.3	5.2	-0.22
	Sex	25.0	4.5	25.0	5.8	-0.08

Conclusion

The recognition rate of the age norms had decreased in 2015 compared to 2008. This result suggests that changes in age norms and timetables influenced the decline in the actual experience rate of sexual behaviors among Japanese adolescent.