

School-based relationship and sexuality education intervention engaging adolescent boys for the reductions of teenage pregnancy: the JACK cluster RCT

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Plain language summary

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Plain language summary

Adolescent pregnancy is often thought to be an issue for young women alone, but it is important to engage young men to tackle the problem and find solutions. The *If I Were Jack* intervention was especially designed to engage with boys as well as girls aged 14 years and to promote positive masculinity and gender equality to prevent adolescent pregnancy and promote positive sexual health. It uses tailored interactive films and resources, made with the help of students and teachers, to make it relevant to each of the four UK nations. This relationship and sexuality education intervention encourages adolescents to avoid unprotected sex by delaying sexual activity until they feel ready and to use reliable contraception once sexually active. It also promotes knowledge, attitudes (such as beliefs about gender and masculinities), skills and intentions for safe and pleasurable relationships. In this trial, we compared students in 33 schools randomly allocated to deliver the intervention with students in 33 schools that continued with their usual relationship and sexuality education practices. Four schools withdrew, two because of COVID-19 school closures. This left a total of 6556 students who completed questionnaires at the start of the study and 12–14 months later. Responses from all these students showed that *If I Were Jack* had a positive impact on knowledge, attitudes and intentions required for safe and pleasurable relationships, but did not have a significant effect on overall avoidance of unprotected sex. This was because the intervention had no effect on delaying sexual activity. However, we found that the intervention was effective in increasing the use of reliable contraception as students became sexually active, as well as for those who already were sexually active prior to receiving the intervention. We also found that *If I Were Jack* was likely to provide value for money by reducing unintended pregnancies and improving sexual health.

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