Sexuality Values in Singapore: Church and Society

Ng Jingyang
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More young people in Singapore get sexual infections

Adolescents are aware of protection, but many forgo using condoms.

More teenage boys paying for sex: Study

About 2 in 5 polled after visiting STI clinic had used prostitutes; concern over spread of infection

Abuse, porn 'can push youth to early sex'

Young women who have been sexually abused are a lot more likely to become sexually active. For young men, their strongest trigger is pornography.

Teenagers starting to have sex at a younger age, say social workers
Whole Life Inventory
What is the *Whole Life Inventory*?

The *Whole Life Inventory* is a survey instrument for churches to assess and understand the health and needs of their congregation in the **5 Pillars** — Faith, Identity, Relationships, Sexuality and Values.
Whole Life Inventory

From March to November 2016, we surveyed 7,209 people, including:

- 10 churches
- 731 youths (age 13 to 19)
- 3,023 young adults (age 20 to 35)
- 3,079 adults (age 36 to 59)
Sexual Issues
Whole Life Inventory

Pornography Use

Men
- Youth: 18% 1-5 times, 8% 6-10 times, 14% At least once per month, 21% At least once per week
- Young Adults: 20% 1-5 times, 11% 6-10 times, 23% At least once per month, 27% At least once per week
- Adults: 30% 1-5 times, 9% 6-10 times, 13% At least once per month, 9% At least once per week

Women
- Youth: 14% 1-5 times, 6% 6-10 times, 8% At least once per month, 3% At least once per week
- Young Adults: 21% 1-5 times, 5% 6-10 times, 5% At least once per month, 2% At least once per week
- Adults: 13% 1-5 times, 2% 6-10 times, 1% At least once per month, 1% At least once per week

Percentage for each category:
- Men: 61% 1-5 times, 80% 6-10 times, 62% At least once per month
- Women: 30% 1-5 times, 33% 6-10 times, 17% At least once per month
**Sex Outside of Marriage**

**Men**
- **Youths**: 3% (1-5 times), 2% (6-10 times), 6% (At least once per month), 6% (At least once per week)
- **Young Adults**: 9% (1-5 times), 4% (6-10 times), 3% (At least once per month), 17% (At least once per week)
- **Adults**: 5% (1-5 times), 3% (6-10 times), 2% (At least once per month), 7% (At least once per week)

**Women**
- **Youths**: 2% (1-5 times), 2% (6-10 times), 4% (At least once per month), 4% (At least once per week)
- **Young Adults**: 6% (1-5 times), 3% (6-10 times), 3% (At least once per month), 13% (At least once per week)
- **Adults**: 2% (1-5 times), 3% (6-10 times), 3% (At least once per month), 3% (At least once per week)

*Bars without labels denote values of 1% or less*
Sexual Attitudes
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree or Strongly Agree (%)</th>
<th>Youths</th>
<th>Young adults</th>
<th>Adults</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using pornography goes against my beliefs and values</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is acceptable to have sex before marriage as long as it’s a committed relationship*</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would go overseas alone, with my boyfriend/girlfriend alone as a couple, even if we could face sexual temptations with each other</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Disagree or strongly disagree
### Sexual Attitudes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual relations with someone other than marriage partner</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living with a partner before marriage</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual relations before marriage</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### LGBT Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree or Strongly Agree (%)</th>
<th>Youths</th>
<th>Young adults</th>
<th>Adults</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goes against God’s design:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Same-sex sexual relations</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Same-sex marriage</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supports Section 377A</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supports legalisation of same-sex marriage in Singapore*</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Disagree or strongly disagree
### LGBT Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singaporeans who say:</th>
<th>Is always or almost always wrong (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual relations between two adults of the same sex</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay marriage</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoption by a gay couple</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

79% said that parents have the primary responsibility for teaching children about sex and sexuality.

- 24% Internet or social media
- 18% School teachers
- 15% Parents
- 14% Friends
- 9% Church pastors or leaders
- 9% Personal experience
- 5% Non-Internet media
- 5% No one
Other Studies in Singapore
# Sexual Attitudes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who are comfortable with having sexual intercourse:</th>
<th>Actual</th>
<th>Perceived</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• On first date</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• At casual dating stage</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• At serious dating stage</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Had sexual intercourse in the past 6 months      | 24      | 45        |

A Singapore study found that:

• After a counselling intervention, 41% of sexually active young men exercised abstinence for at least 6 months, compared to 21% in the control group.

• Among the young women, however, 22% exercised abstinence, compared to 15% in the control group.

Abstinence

• Possible reason: More **young men** stopped engaging in sex with **sex workers** and **casual partners**.

• Conversely, almost all the **young women** indicated having sex with **boyfriends**.

• The **emotional attachment** and **relationship** makes it more difficult for young women to refuse sex, which they might see as a way to express love.

Closing Thoughts
Closing Thoughts

• **Youths and young adults** especially struggle with sexual issues such as pornography and premarital sex.

• Although Christians and people in Singapore know biblical values, they struggle to **live it out**.

• What’s important is to have **people around**—friends, parents, teachers—who **encourage** and **support** them to live out biblical sexuality.