



A PONO CHOICES RESEARCH STUDY OVERVIEW

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IMPAQ International, LLC

The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Center on Disability Studies (CDS) received funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Adolescent Health to develop and implement a culturally responsive middle-school sexual health curriculum in Hawai'i, and to conduct a rigorous evaluation of its effectiveness. CDS partnered with ALU LIKE, Inc. and Planned Parenthood to develop the curriculum. IMPAQ International served as the program's independent external evaluator.

WHY WAS PONO CHOICES DEVELOPED?



Hawai'i youth had the **lowest rate of condom usage** in the U.S. in 2011.¹



Hawai'i had the **10th highest teen pregnancy rate** in the U.S. in 2010.²



Hawai'i had the **12th highest chlamydia rate** in the U.S. in 2010.³

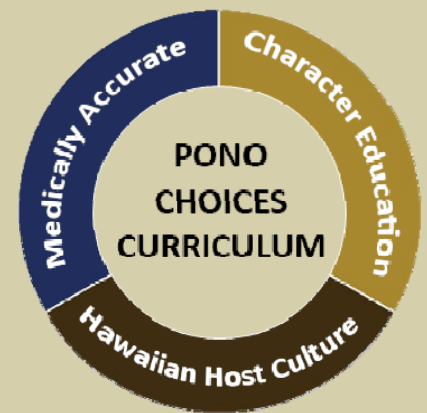


Minorities are at disproportionately higher risk of teen births and STIs.⁴

THE PONO CHOICES CURRICULUM

The curriculum introduces students to Hawaiian cultural terms, practices, and concepts that stress positive character development, including making "pono" or "right" choices. Before Pono Choices, no state-approved curricula explicitly incorporated the unique values and perspectives of the Hawaiian host culture into sexual health instruction.

Pono Choices is designed to be implemented in educational and community settings where youth congregate, targeting middle school youth ages 11 through 13.



STUDY SAMPLE



34 schools

1,783 students



HOW WAS PONO CHOICES EVALUATED?

IMPAQ International conducted a randomized controlled trial evaluation. Participating schools were randomly selected to be either in the Pono Choices program or to be a control school that continued their regular sexual health curriculum. Students completed surveys before and after completing their sexual health curriculum.

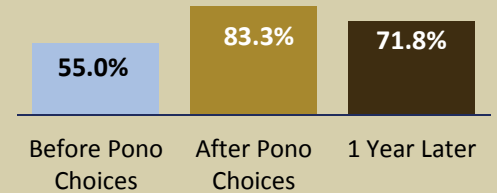
WHAT WERE STUDENT OUTCOMES?

Overall, the results from comparing before and after surveys for students participating in the Pono Choices program suggest that the program achieved its intended effects on students' knowledge, attitudes, skills, and intentions. Program participants increased their knowledge, improved their attitudes towards healthy sexual behaviors, increased their skills, and showed an increased intent to abstain from sex or engage in safe sex after participating in the program.

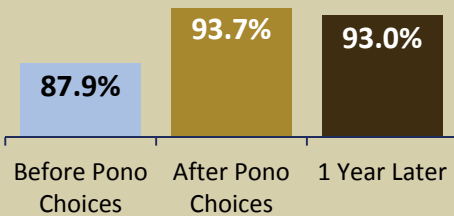
KNOWLEDGE OF SEXUAL HEALTH

Students showed significant gains in knowledge across 10 knowledge items after participating in the Pono Choices program. Although there was a small decrease in the knowledge gained in the program over time, for eight of the 10 items, student's knowledge, one year later, remained significantly higher than it was before participating in the program.

Percent of Students Answering Correctly



Percent of Students Rating Items as Important or Very Important



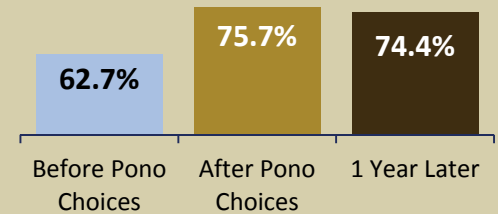
ATTITUDES TOWARD HEALTHY BEHAVIORS

Students showed significant gains in attitudes regarding the importance of 10 sexual behaviors after participating in the Pono Choices curriculum. Although there was a small decrease in these attitude gains, students' attitudes one year later remained significantly better than before participating in the program.

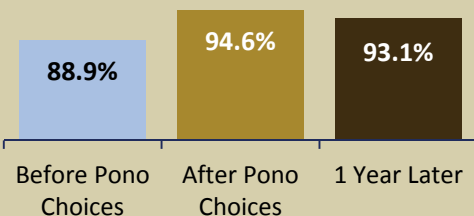
SKILLS IN MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS & CHOICES

Students showed significant gains in skills across five items regarding managing relationships and choices after participating in the Pono Choices program. Although there was a small decrease in these gains in skills, students' skills one year later were still significantly better than before participating in the program.

Percent of Students Rating Items as Easy or Very Easy



Intent to Use a Condom in Next 12 Months if Having Sex

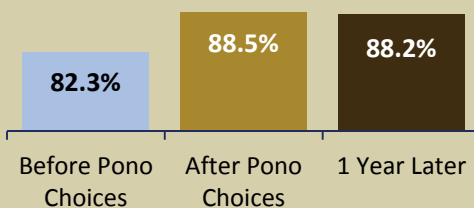


INTENTIONS ABOUT FUTURE SEXUAL ACTIVITY

After completing the Pono Choices program, a significantly higher percent of students reported they intend to use a condom and/or other birth control methods than before receiving the sexual health instruction.

The percent of students intending to use a condom, should they have sexual intercourse in the next year, increased from 88.9% before participating in Pono Choices to 94.6% after the completing the program, and while slightly lower at 93.1%, the gains remained one year later.

Intent to Use Other Birth Control in Next 12 Months if Having Sex

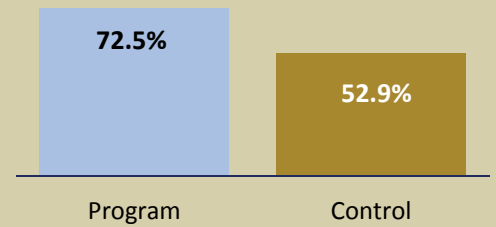


The percent of students intending to use hormonal birth control methods, should they have sexual intercourse in the next year, increased from 82.3% before participating in the curriculum to 88.5% after completion, and while slightly lower at 88.2%, the gains remained one year later.

PROGRAM VS. CONTROL RESULTS

Students who participated in Pono Choices had significantly higher scores on nine of the 10 knowledge questions one year after baseline than the control group. Only one question, related to which STI is viral, showed no significant difference between Pono Choices students and control group students. The chart to the right shows the percentage of knowledge items answered correctly at 1-year follow-up.

Knowledge Items Answered Correctly at 1-Year Follow-up



WHAT HAPPENED AFTER TWO YEARS?

Due to restrictions on data collection, it was not possible to collect 2-year follow-up data for two of the three study cohorts. The sample of students for whom 2-year follow-up data are available includes only 557 students, or 31% of the total sample. Thus, the 2-year findings are not representative of the study as a whole.

While the second year sample was only about one-third the size of the first year sample, the findings at two years were very similar to the one-year results. This suggests that Pono Choices' effect on students' knowledge of pregnancy and STI prevention persisted for at least two years after the initial implementation of Pono Choices.

KEY FINDINGS



The results of comparing before and after surveys for students participating in the Pono Choices program suggest that the program achieved its intended effects on students' knowledge, attitudes, skills, and intentions.



Overall, the gains in knowledge, attitudes, skills, and intentions of students decreased over time, but program students still had a significantly higher level of knowledge at one-year follow-up than before participating in the program.



Pono Choices had a much stronger effect on students' knowledge of sexual health than existing curricula being used in control group schools.



Pono Choices was equally effective as existing curricula in improving students' attitudes, skills, and intentions.



Students who participated in Pono Choices were no more or less likely than the control group to be sexually active or engaging in high-risk sexual behavior one year after baseline.



For the smaller sample of students for whom 2-year surveys were collected, the impact findings were very similar to the 1-year results. Gains in knowledge persisted for two years after baseline.

REFERENCES

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