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YOUNG LESBIANS' PEER SEX EDUCATION ON YOUTUBE

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Introduction and Objective: The video sharing platform YouTube is the third most popular website after Google and Facebook. User-generated YouTube videos cover a broad spectrum of topics including sexual health. One example is the YouTube channel “The Nosy Rosie” (TNR), maintained by a team of young LGBTs from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. TNR has been providing peer sex education primarily by and for the lesbian youth since 2010. Within five years, more than 600 videos were published collecting over 1.67 million views. Which aspects of young lesbians' sexual health are addressed by TNR? Which video topics are most popular among the viewers? Does TNR sexually empower lesbian girls and young women?

Methods: All TNR videos published in 2012, 2013, and 2014 were sampled (N = 366) and – together with the audience's reactions (views, likes, comments) – subjected to quantitative content analysis. The codebook was developed both deductively from the literature and inductively from the material. A pretest (n = 60) revealed high inter-coder-reliability of all 43 categories (mean Cohen's kappa coefficient = .77; mean intra-class correlation = .93).

Results: The majority of the TNR videos (83%) deal with LGBT issues like sexual and gender identity, LGBT rights, romantic and sexual relationships, and sexual behavior (e.g. sexual debut, safer sex). Additionally, general health topics are addressed in 41% of the videos (e.g. exercising, diet). A third main topic covered by 50% of the videos is YouTube itself (e.g. further development of the channel). The audience was most interested in videos addressing sexual and gender identity (e.g. coming-out) and especially liked lesbian couples as authentic role models in front of the camera. Both, videos and video comments indicate sexual empowerment.

Conclusions: YouTube has become a promising new channel of peer sex education for sexual minorities like lesbian girls and women, which deserves further scientific investigation.

Keywords: peer sex education, sexual empowerment, sexual minorities