

Social pressure drives teens to sext despite personal attitude

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(HealthDay)—Preventive efforts to reduce sexting among adolescents need to address what significant others in teenagers' lives think about them engaging in sexting, according to a study published in *Behaviour & Information Technology*.

Michel Walrave, Ph.D., from the University of Antwerp in Belgium, and colleagues surveyed 498 adolescents aged 15 to 18 years to determine the predictive value of personal attitudes, subjective norm (SN), and perceived behavioral control using the theory of planned behavior.

The researchers found that SN was the most important predictor of sexting, followed by adolescents' attitudes towards sexting. There was a

weak, but significant, association between perceived behavioral control and [teenagers'](#) sexting intentions. Friends and romantic partners represented the most important sources of social pressure within SN. Only positive behavioral outcomes affected adolescents' sexting intentions. The belief that sexting occurs relatively more often among those whom adolescents feel they can trust entirely is the most important control belief affecting adolescents' intention to sext.

"According to our study, the importance of perceived social pressure outweighs the relative importance of [adolescents'](#) attitude and perceived control in predicting the involvement of this age group in [sexting](#)," the authors write.

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