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Sexual Behavior of Youth and Sexuality Education in Contemporary Japan

A hybrid *u:japan* lecture by Yusuke Hayashi

Thursday
2025-10-16
18⁰⁰~19³⁰



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The content of school education in Japan is determined by the Courses of Study issued by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology. Sexuality education is not a distinct subject in Japan, but it is incorporated into various subjects, including science, home economics, and health and physical education. However, the Course of Study for physical education in middle schools in Japan includes a regulation known as the “restriction clause,” which states, “From the perspective that maturation begins during puberty that enables pregnancy and childbirth, the subject of fertilization and pregnancy shall be addressed, but the progression of pregnancy shall not be addressed.” This restriction prevents students from receiving scientifically accurate sexuality education, and even today, teaching about “sexual intercourse” is still suppressed in elementary and middle schools.

Our research group has been conducting nationwide surveys since 1974 to understand

the actual state of sexual behavior and attitudes among adolescents. This survey was initially commissioned by the Prime Minister’s Office at that time, due to concerns that sexual behavior was becoming increasingly disorganized as Japan experienced rapid economic growth and improved living standards. Since then, researchers have run surveys every six years, with the latest survey completed in 2023. To date, more than 100,000 people have participated, providing valuable insights into shifts in sexual behavior and attitudes across various generations.

In this presentation, we will examine trends in the sexual behavior of adolescents in Japan and issues in sexuality education through the analysis of nationwide survey data. Specifically, we will discuss recent changes in sexuality education in schools, which have been criticized as “passive,” and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the sexual behavior of adolescents.



Yusuke Hayashi is a professor in the Department of Sociology at Musashi University in Japan. He earned his Ph.D. from Tohoku University for his research on social inequality and the labor market in Japan. His recent work focuses on quantitative studies of young people’s sexual behavior in Japan, aiming to provide evidence to improve and develop sex education. The National Survey on Adolescent Sexual Behavior, which he and his colleagues have been conducting since 1974, is the only nationwide survey on sexuality in Japan. His interests include trends in adolescent sexual activity, the influence of family environment on sexual behavior, and awareness and actions related to sexually transmitted infection prevention. Additionally, he conducts research on the social environment affecting adolescents, including how sex education is implemented in schools and homes, as well as parents’ attitudes toward their children’s sex education.

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