**BACKGROUND**

Strategies to reduce teenage pregnancy and parenthood may lead to stigma and negative social evaluations of teenaged parents, exacerbating health and social challenges. Serious games show promise for helping young people understand complex systems and explore nuanced, sensitive issues. This study considers whether a game can reduce teenage pregnancy and parenting stigma among non-pregnant or parenting youth while supporting the importance of family planning.

**PURPOSE**

*Baby Town* is role-playing, theory-based board game co-designed with young people to promote learning about the daily challenges of teenage parenthood using a non-stigmatizing approach.

**METHODS**

Game Design and Description: *Baby Town* is a role-playing board game co-designed by young people, game designers, and researchers during a six-week summer program. In *Baby Town*, players go to school, work, and other community sites to build friendships, maintain their grade point average, and earn money in pursuit of future goals. If players become parents in the game, the challenge increases as they must also meet their baby’s needs. However, they can also gain points by completing goals beneficial to the baby. *Baby Town* incorporates narrative empathy and Social Cognitive Theory to illustrate the impact of teenage parenthood on a person’s own daily life and long-term goals. The *Baby Town* intervention included two hours of game play and three hours of interactive learning activities in a teacher-developed curriculum.

**RESULTS**

Forty-three young people (median age 15) from the Chicago area participated in the program; sessions were led by teachers. Fifty-one percent of participants was female, with all participants identifying as cisgender. Participants were predominantly Black and/or Latinx.

**RESULTS (cont.)**

Findings suggest high usability, with a score of 72.7/100 on the System Usability Scale, which indicates good usability. For feasibility and acceptability (see Table 1), when asked to disagree or agree with statements about the game along a 5-point Likert scale, the majority of youth (88.4%) did not find the game hard to play. Additionally, the majority (95.3%) of youth liked completing goals in the game and reported that *Baby Town* is a good way to learn about the challenges associated with being a teenage parent. Ninety-three percent would like to use the game in the classroom, and 86.0% would recommend the game to other young people to play. Most youth (90.7%) rated the game as “very good” or “excellent.”

**REFERENCES**