Parents significantly overestimated the importance of their feelings to their children about whether or not their child had sex. The children's perceptions of how important their parents felt about sex were lower than parents' estimates. This suggests a disparity in understanding and communication between parents and children regarding sensitive topics like sex.

Parents' and children's comfort levels with discussing drugs also varied significantly. Parents generally reported higher comfort levels than their children. This could indicate a gap in trust and openness between generations, with parents feeling more comfortable about discussing drugs with their children than the children felt comfortable with their parents.

Similarly, the importance that parents placed on their feelings about drugs was greater than what their children perceived. This points to a potential conflict or misunderstanding in how parents and children prioritize their feelings and attitudes about drug use.

Communication of attitudes between parents and children showed mixed results. While parents' and children's attitudes towards other topics like AIDS, reaction to family members using drugs, and sexual experience varied, there were also situations where both parents and children reported a high level of comfort and agreement.

The study highlights the importance of understanding and addressing the unique dynamics of parent-child communication, particularly around sensitive topics. It underscores the need for efforts to bridge these gaps, improve understanding, and encourage open dialogue to enhance educational outcomes and prevent risky behaviors.

**Discussion**

This study reports on some knowledge and attitudinal differences toward HIV infection between young adolescents and their parents living in high-risk communities in the Midwest. Members of this younger generation (12–13-year-olds) have not been studied in depth with regard to these issues and have not been included as part of the national Youth Risk Behavior Survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Similar to findings from an earlier study utilizing data from separate surveys of adolescents and adults,17 adults in our study had higher levels of AIDS-related knowledge than their children prior to the children’s participation in an education program.

However, after participating in the intervention, adolescents knew more than their parents about HIV infection on two scales and had a similar level of knowledge on five scales. It is not surprising that there were no significant posttest differences between the students and parents on five of these indices. Since parents’