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The Tipping Point: a contagion model of social epidemics

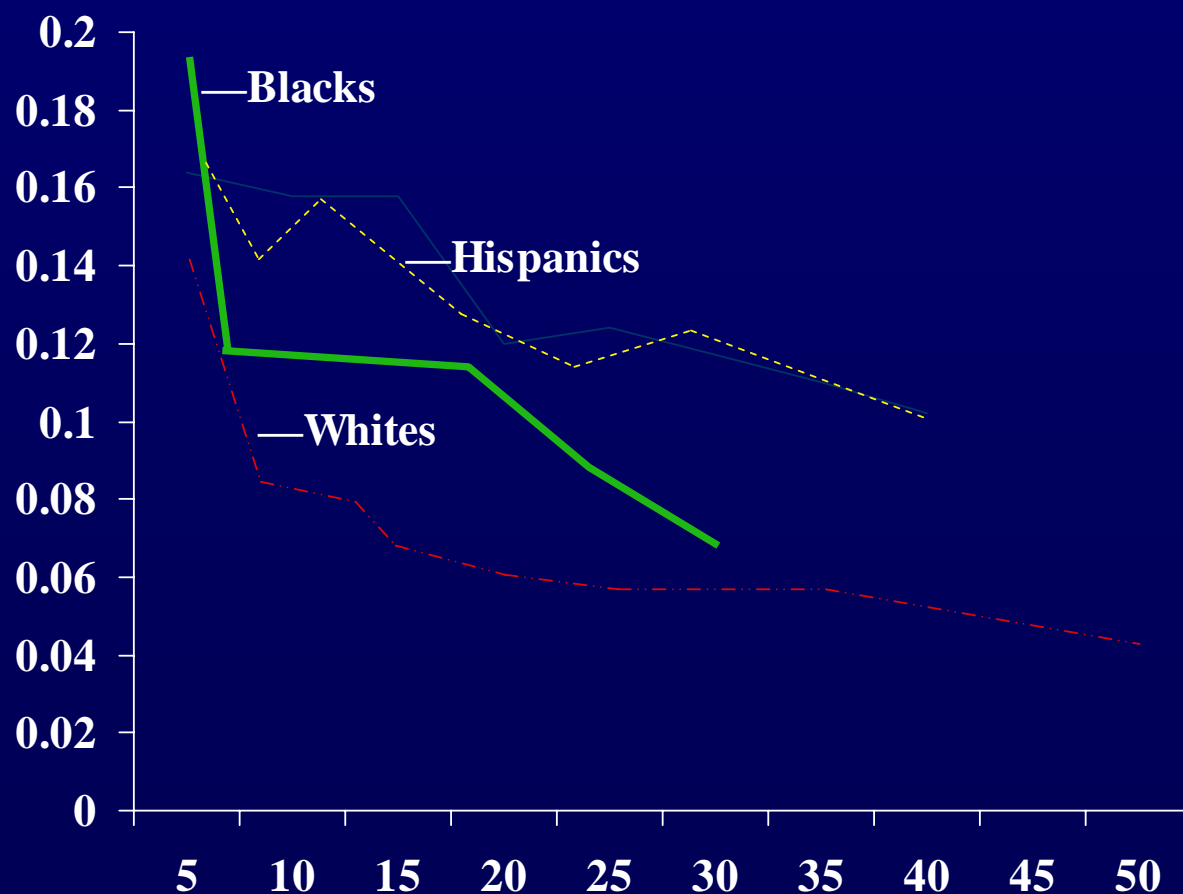
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Adolescent Health and Development

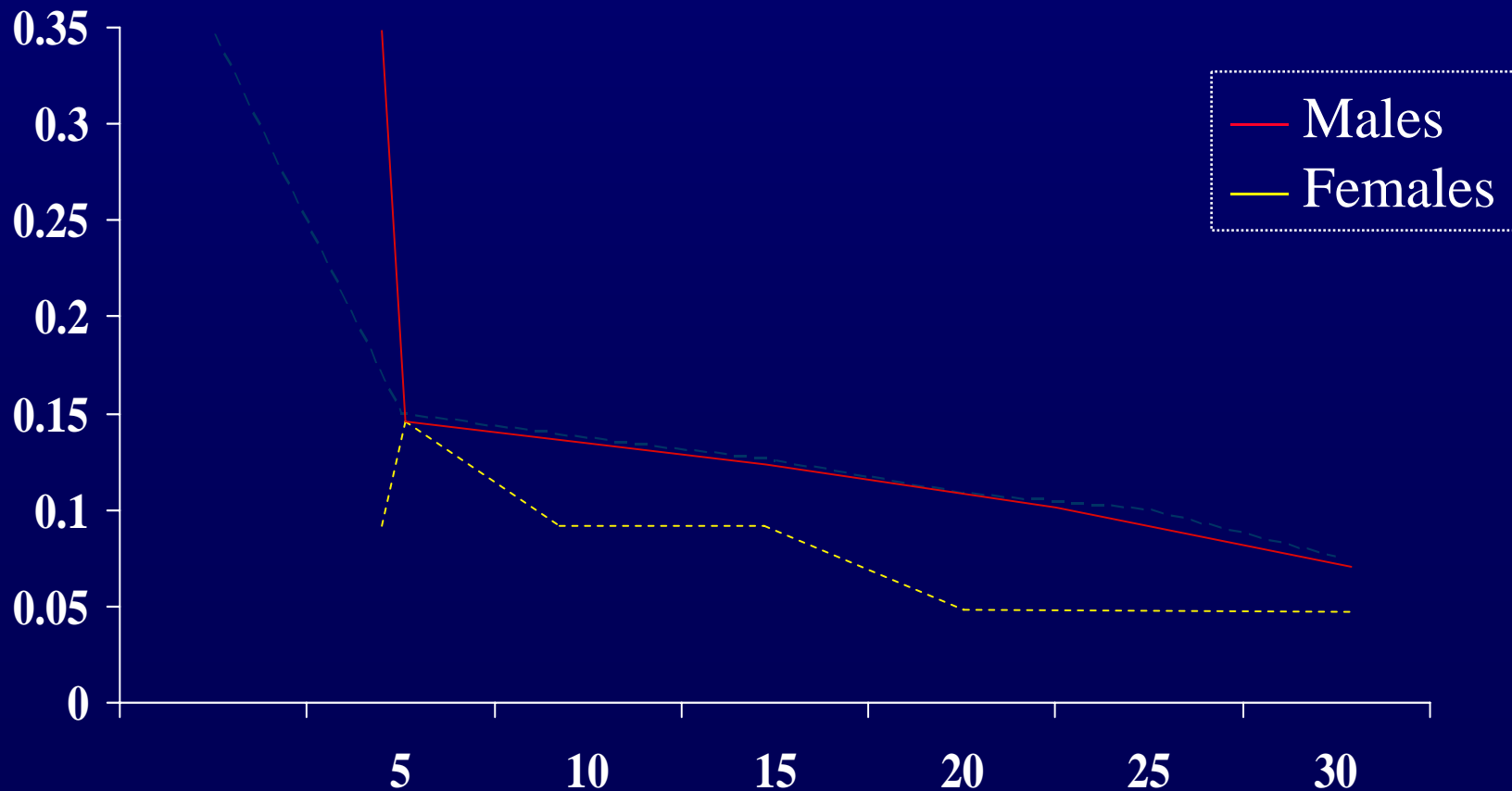
The Tipping Point's Underlying Assumptions:

- ◆ Social problems are contagious;
- ◆ They are spread through interpersonal influence;
- ◆ There is a non-linear relationship between the problem and the environment;
- ◆ Little changes can have big effects.

Probability of Dropping Out of School as a Function of Percentage of High-Status Workers in the Neighborhood, by Race or Ethnicity



Probability of Black Teenagers Dropping Out of School as a Function of Percentage of High-Status Workers in Big-City Neighborhoods, by Sex



Probability of Teenage Childbearing as a Function of Percentage of High-Status Workers in the Neighborhood, by Race and Location of Neighborhood



If social epidemics are driven by
people (peers) who are the people
that drive epidemics?

What is the nature of the contagion?

The Three Rules of the Tipping Point

- ◆ The Law of the Few
- ◆ The Stickiness Factor
- ◆ The Power of Context

The Law of the Few

- ◆ Connectors
- ◆ Mavens
- ◆ Salesmen

Connectors

- ◆ Connectors know a lot of people;
- ◆ Connectors know a lot of different people from a lot of different worlds;
- ◆ Connectors are “masters of the weak tie”;
- ◆ Six degrees of separation.

Mavens

- ◆ Mavens are connectors who have access to a lot of information;
- ◆ A Maven does not seek out people with whom to share information — a connector does;
- ◆ A Maven uses information to solve problems not to persuade — a salesman does.

Salesman

- ◆ A salesman is a persuader — they tip word-of-mouth epidemics (e.g., fads);
- ◆ Salesmen market optimism — an absolute conviction that anything is possible;
- ◆ Persuasion is covert not overt.

The Rhythm of Persuasion

- ◆ Emotions are contagious.

The Stickiness Factor

- ◆ The sticky message
 - ◆ Winston Tastes Good...
 - ◆ Where's the...
 - ◆ This Bud's...
 - ◆ LS...
- ◆ Seemingly trivial factors can make a message stick.

The Power of Context

- ◆ The Broken Windows Theory;
- ◆ Contexts alter our inner state;
- ◆ Fundamental Attribution Error.

The Good Samaritan Experiment

The Three Rules of the Tipping Point

- ◆ The Law of the Few
- ◆ The Stickiness Factor
- ◆ The Power of Context

Adolescent Social Epidemics

- ◆ Suicide
- ◆ Pregnancy
- ◆ Weapon-Related Violence
- ◆ Cigarette Smoking

The Policy Considerations and Implications

- ◆ The rise in the number of youth;
- ◆ The shifting demographics of children and youth;
- ◆ Most of the major causes of morbidity and mortality among youth have social and behavioral etiologies.