

# RAP\* Time



## RURAL CENTER *for* AIDS/STD PREVENTION

A JOINT PROJECT OF  
INDIANA UNIVERSITY & PURDUE UNIVERSITY

\*Rural AIDS/STD prevention. rap (rap) v. Slang. To talk freely and openly.

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## One in Four College Students from Rural University Engaged in HIV Risk Behavior

About half of all new HIV infections in the United States are estimated to occur among young people under 25. The majority of these persons are infected sexually. Many young adults continue to engage in activities that increase the risk of HIV infection. The risk behavior includes high rates of sexual activity, multiple partners, and low rates of condom use.

This study examined the relationship between HIV risk behavior and psychosocial constructs and demographic features of young adults.

### Methodology

The participants were 374 undergraduate students, ages 18 to 29, from a rural, medium-sized southern university. Participants were anonymously assessed using measures that included the AIDS Coping and Change Survey, the AIDS Psychological Scale, and the AIDS Knowledge and Attitude Survey.

Descriptive statistics were calculated for levels of HIV risk behavior (failure to use condoms combined with casual or anonymous sexual partners), HIV/

AIDS knowledge, alcohol and drug use, sexual history and other demographic features.

### Outcomes of the Study

Of the sample, 66% were female, with 72% white and 23% African American. More than 79% of the students reported current sexual activity.

Major findings include:

- About 25% reported having engaged in behaviors that place them at a high risk for HIV exposure, including the use of alcohol or drugs while engaging in sex, failure to use condoms, and a high rate of sexual contact with casual or anonymous partners.
- Twenty-six percent mixed alcohol or drugs with sex, 21% would not use a condom with a new partner, 30% reported using condoms "once in a while" or "never" and 59% reported previous infidelity.
- Students tended to use condoms less as both their sexual experience increased and as their number of partners increased.
- Knowledge of how HIV is transmitted and how transmission is prevented was high, but had no association with risk

behavior.

- Students who engaged in HIV risk behavior knew the potential danger involved but remained resistant to sex safe education.
- Younger students had fewer casual partners, and practiced more preventive behaviors as compared to the older students.
- Students who engaged in HIV risk behavior proclaimed a lack of self-efficacy with preventive behaviors.

### Implications for Prevention

For most of the sample, safe sex interventions have been effective. Conversely, for about 25% of the students, interventions were not effective. Education focusing on psychological variables such as defenses and distortions might be more effective for this group. These interventions exist in schools, drug and alcohol programs, and STD clinics.

SOURCE: Cerwonka, E. R., et al. (2000). Psychological factors as predictors of unsafe sexual practices among young adults. *AIDS Education and Prevention*, 12, 141-153.

## Past STD Infection Best Predictor of Future Infection

The incidence of STDs among young people remains high. This study assessed adolescent self-reports of acquired chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, and trichomoniasis within 1 year after a baseline interview.

Data of the National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health was used. A cohort of 4593 sexually experienced teens were followed for one year.

About 3.1% of males and nearly 4.7% of females reported having had at least one STD after the baseline interview. For both genders, self-reported STD infection before baseline interview was the best predictor of self-reported STD infection 1 year later.

Females were more likely to report an STD after baseline if they were minority race (other than Asian) and perceived that their mother did not disapprove of their having sex. No such variables predicted STD diagnosis after baseline for the males.

SOURCE: Crosby, R., et al. (2000). Longitudinal prediction of sexually transmitted diseases among adolescents: Results from a national survey. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 18, 312-317.

## Teens Still Prefer Male Condoms to Female Condoms

Research has shown generally high acceptance of the female condom among adult populations. Little is known about adolescents' use patterns and acceptability toward the female condom.

A peer-led intervention concerning the female condom use was conducted with 65 high-risk adolescents at an emergency homeless shelter. The intervention consisted of 15- to 30-minute small group sessions discussing the female condom construction, purpose of the rings, prevention efficacy, and how to use.

Sixty-three percent had used male condoms as their primary contraceptive method. Ninety-five percent had heard of the female condom (half received "good" messages and 24% received "bad" messages), but only 15% had ever used one.

After the intervention, 73% said they still prefer the male condom to the female condom. The major barriers were not having female condoms available and/or females feeling uncomfortable inserting them.

SOURCE: Haignere, C. S., et al. (2000). High-risk adolescents and female condoms: Knowledge, attitudes, and use patterns. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 26, 392-398.

## Asian Drug Users Engaged in HIV Risk Behaviors

A sample of 92 Asian drug users in San Francisco not in drug treatment was studied. Compared to Chinese and Vietnamese, Filipino drug users had engaged in riskier behaviors: injection drug use, having sex while on drugs, having sex with IDUs. Among IDUs, half cited trust as a reason for having shared needles.

SOURCE: Nemoto, T., et al. (2000). HIV risk behaviors among Asian drug users in San Francisco. *AIDS Education and Prevention*, 12, 126-140.

## Limited Alcohol Policies Lowers Gonorrhea

The relation between alcohol policy and gonorrhea rates was established by analyzing a state's gonorrhea rate during the year before and after a change in state policy. Findings indicate that more restrictive state alcohol policies are associated with lower gonorrhea rates among certain age groups.

SOURCE: CDC. (2000). Alcohol policy and sexually transmitted disease rates -- United States, 1981-1995. *MMWR*, 49, 346-349.



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