

RAP* Time



RURAL CENTER *for* AIDS/STD PREVENTION

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*Rural AIDS/STD prevention. rap (rap) v. *Slang*. To talk freely and openly. Vol. 5, No. 10, October 5, 2001

Sterilized women may be at greater risk for STDs than hormonal-contraceptive users

Female voluntary sterilization through tubal ligation has become increasingly used by women of reproductive age in the United States. Although surgical sterilization is an excellent protection against pregnancy, sexually active women who do not consistently use a barrier method are at risk for STDs.

Sterilized Hispanic women have been found to use condoms less frequently than women of other ethnic backgrounds. This study determined the extent of past and future condom use with a primary partner among Hispanic women and identified predictors of consistent condom use among these women.

Methodology

All sexually active Hispanic women who had undergone sterilization or who were using oral contraceptives or depot medroxyprogesterone acetate were potential study participants. The sample included 224 sterilized women and 104 hormonal-contraceptive users. The participating clinic was a low-income primary care facility in Houston. Participants com-

pleted a self-administered questionnaire, available in English and Spanish.

Outcomes of the Study

Sterilized women were significantly older, had a higher number of pregnancies and births, and were more likely to be satisfied with their current method of contraception than the nonsterilized women. The groups were similar in various HIV-related risk characteristics. Major findings include:

- Sterilized women were less likely than hormonal-contraceptive users to have always used condoms, were more likely to have not used condoms in 3 months preceding the study, and less likely to have planned condom use.
- Overall, sterilized women had a lower perception of risk of STD than did hormonal-contraceptive users, which may explain their lower levels of condom use.
- Sterilized and nonsterilized women whose partners had a positive perception of condoms were much more likely to use them than were those whose partners had a negative opinion

about condoms.

- Sterilized women were more likely to have used condoms for dual protection.
- Concealing the use of a contraceptive from a male partner was not uncommon.
- Lesser ability to use condoms in long-term relationships was related to inconsistent use.

Implications for Prevention

For this sample, sterilized women may have greater STD risk than hormonal-contraceptive users. The women's perception of risk and male partners' influences predicted whether the women protected themselves from both STD and pregnancy.

Improving Hispanic women's assertiveness and negotiation skills and including males in educational programs may be valuable HIV/STD prevention strategies. Education should also broaden women's awareness of their own disease-risk status.

SOURCE: Sangi-Haghpeykar, H., et al. (2001). Condom use among sterilized and nonsterilized Hispanic women. *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*, 28, 546-551.

HIV-positive gay men using unproven barrier methods

Little research about HIV-seropositive men's awareness and use of untested barrier methods during anal intercourse has been reported. A sample of 240 HIV-seropositive men completed a self-administered survey concerning nonoxynol-9, female condoms, and the simultaneous use of two male condoms (double bagging).

Most participants (79.6%) knew of N-9 use for HIV prevention during anal intercourse. Of these, 14.6% had used N-9 instead of condoms. Few (5.4%) had used female condoms; 53.8% of whom rated the device more pleasurable than male condoms.

35.2% had practiced double bagging; of these, 45.1% rated the practice less pleasurable than using a single condom.

The results indicate an urgent need to education HIV-seropositive men about potential risks of N-9 and to test the effectiveness of other barrier methods.

SOURCE: Wolitski, R. J., et al. (2001). Awareness and use of untested barrier methods by HIV-seropositive gay and bisexual men. *AIDS Education and Prevention*, 13, 291-301.

Many adolescents obtain their condoms at retail stores

Condom use is an important element of HIV prevention for sexually active adolescents. Condoms must be available to adolescents engaging in sexual intercourse for adolescents to use them.

A random digit-dialed telephone survey of 259 14-19-year-old adolescents in Monroe County, New York was conducted. Retail establishments were surveyed to assess condom availability and assessability.

Most adolescents reported obtaining, or planning to obtain, condoms in stores rather than from free health care settings. Adolescents who used condoms more often reported having obtained them without cost than having purchased them.

Condoms were available at 101 (83%) of 122 stores identified.

Many adolescents obtained condoms are retail stores, although accessibility varied by store type. Increasing condom visibility in private grocery stores may increase the accessibility of condoms to adolescents in areas of highest STD rates.

SOURCE: Klein, J., et al. (2001). Where do adolescents get their condoms? *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 29, 186-193.

Many HIV-tested women did not get follow-up Pap test

A national sample of women (N=43,490) receiving treatment for HIV and who reported an abnormal Pap test were surveyed about follow-up testing. Although Pap test rates and referral for abnormal findings were high, many women with initially abnormal Pap test results did not actually receive follow-up Pap test or colposcopy.

SOURCE: Stein, M.D., et al. (2001). Screening for cervical cancer in HIV-infected women receiving care in the United States. *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes*, 27, 463-466.

Drug-resistant HIV to be a minor problem

A mathematical model was used to understand the evolution of drug-resistant HIV in San Francisco. The results indicated that transmission of resistant strains is, and will remain, a relatively minor public health problem.

SOURCE: Blower, S. M., et al. (2001). Predicting the unpredictable: Transmission of drug-resistant HIV. *Nature Medicine*, 9, 1016-1020.

RAP Time is a monthly AIDS/STD prevention bulletin published by the Rural Center for AIDS/STD Prevention (RCAP) at Indiana University, Bloomington. RCAP is a joint project of Indiana University, Purdue University and Texas A&M University. The major focus of RCAP is the promotion of HIV/STD prevention in rural America, with the goal of reducing HIV/STD incidence.

The opinions expressed here do not necessarily represent those of the cooperating universities.

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