

### Sexually assertive men less likely to have unsafe sex

Heterosexually active men can play a major role in increasing condom use rates during sexual encounters. But, this potential cannot be realized if men are not assertive with their sexual partners regarding condom use.

This project examined condom-specific assertiveness (SA) in three samples of heterosexually active college men and at-risk community men. SA was measured by a 6-item scale and condom stage of change was assessed by a 4-item scale (precontemplators, contemplators, in preparation, in action).

Across all three samples, those with higher SA were significantly more likely to be further along the condom stages of change, and significantly less likely to have engaged in unprotected sexual behavior.

The study results suggest that condom-specific sexual assertiveness is a meaningful construct for men and increasing SA in men may result in subsequent increases in safer sexual behaviors.

SOURCE: Noar, S. M., et al. (2002). Sexual assertiveness in heterosexually active men: A test of three samples. *AIDS Education and Prevention* 14, 330-342.

### College men believe that alcohol use would impair condom use

The relationship between alcohol drinking and sexual activity exists in popular culture and research. For example, drinking is related to sex including increased incidences of sex and greater numbers of partners. Drinking may also contribute to risky sexual behavior.

The study examined alcohol expectancies for condom use in mediating the alcohol and risky sex relationships in college students.

Among those currently sexually active, alcohol was directly related to future intention to use a condom in drinking situations for men, but not for women. In the men, alcohol expectancies for condom use mediated the relationship between drinking and condom intention. Beliefs in men that alcohol negatively impacts one's ability to use condoms were associated with more drinking and lower intentions to use a condom. These expectancies may help explain how alcohol affects risky sex in men.

Alcohol use decreases the likelihood of condom use in college-aged men, thus increasing STD/HIV risk.

SOURCE: LaBrie, J. W., et al. (2002). Expectancies specific to condom use mediate the alcohol and sexual risk relationship. *Journal of Sex Research*, 39, 145-152.

### HIV+ teens adhering to medical regimens lacked stigma fear

This study of 6 HIV-positive adolescents found that those who adhered well to their treatment regimen were more independent, more responsible for their regimens, more knowledgeable, and did not feel family pressure. Also, they were more emotionally ready for the regimen and more free from fears of social stigmatization and social isolation.

SOURCE: Pugatch, D, et. al. (2002). HIV medication adherence in adolescents: A qualitative study. *Journal of HIV/AIDS Prevention and Education for Adolescents and Children*, 5, 9-29.

### HIV therapy may increase risk of CHD

Current evidence suggests that HIV infection and HAART regimens have the potential to increase the risk of atherosclerosis and coronary heart disease. Cardiovascular risk assessment should be incorporated into routine HIV care, and initial regimens should be individualized accordingly.

SOURCE: Currier, J. S. (2002). Cardiovascular risk associated with HIV therapy. *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes*, 31(S1), S16-S23.

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

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# RAP\* Time



## RURAL CENTER *for* AIDS/STD PREVENTION

A JOINT PROJECT OF  
INDIANA UNIVERSITY, PURDUE UNIVERSITY,  
and TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

\*Rural AIDS/STD prevention. rap (rap) v. Slang To talk freely and openly. Vol. 6, No. 10, October 4, 2002

## Migrant Mexican women's commitment to illusion of fidelity hinders HIV prevention

Migration has become an important risk factor for AIDS in rural Mexico. Recent research has found that an increasing proportion of AIDS cases in Mexico are related to Mexican men contracting HIV in the United States and then returning home and infecting their wives. Cross-cultural variation in people's concepts and emotions related to sexuality and partner choice impacts women's risk of migration-related HIV and STD infections.

AIDS risk denial and notions about marital intimacy increase risk. These factors may vary between younger and older women.

This study explored the social context of the migration-related HIV epidemic in Western Mexico.

### Methodology

The data came from a comparative ethnographic study of gender, sexuality, and reproductive health among Mexicans from a migrant-exporting community in rural western Mexico. The primary method of data collection was life history interviews, conducted with 13 women in Atlanta and 13 in Mexican communities.

The life history informants in Atlanta were recruited from

research contacts from El Fuerte and Degollado. The life history informants in the Mexican field sites were the sisters or sister-in-laws of the informants in Atlanta. The data were from transcribed interviews and field notes.

### Outcomes of the Study

Major findings include:

- Younger and older women understood that an association may exist between men's temporary labor migration to the U.S. and their own HIV risk. But, most claimed that their own husband was exclusive with them.
- Women did not translate husband risky behavior in the U.S. with a personal HIV risk.
- Almost all recounted having heard about other women who had contracted STD/HIV from their husband after he returned from the north.
- Almost all had heard about condoms for STD/HIV prevention, but many did not favor them. Some talked about how condoms are a barrier to intimacy and that if a man was going to use a condom he should do it with his other partners.
- The older women valued a pretense of ignorance about a

man's extramarital relationships. That is, his sexual behavior was largely his own concern.

- Younger women saw men's sexual behavior as inseparable from marital intimacy. Since sex is the language of love, many believed that he is exclusive while away as a way of being sure of their husband's love.
- Younger women prided themselves on communication about sexuality whereas older women considered open sex discussions as indicating lack of respect.

### Implications for Prevention

Migrant Mexican women's commitment to an illusion of fidelity hinders HIV prevention initiatives targeted toward them. Changing meanings of marital sex may be a barrier to convincing young couples to use condoms for HIV prevention. Prevention programs must target men if marital HIV transmission is to be interrupted.

SOURCE: Hirsch, J.S., et al. (2002). The social constructions of sexuality: Marital infidelity and sexually transmitted diseases-HIV risk in a Mexican migrant community. *American Journal of Public Health*, 92, 1127-1237.