

# RAP\* Time



## RURAL CENTER *for* AIDS/STD PREVENTION

A JOINT PROJECT OF  
INDIANA UNIVERSITY, UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO,  
AND UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

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

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## Adolescent women had higher incidence of self-reported STIs than adolescent men

Gender and age influence the chances of acquisition of sexually transmitted infections through effects on biological susceptibility, sexual behavior, and choice of partner. They also impact the likelihood that health care will be sought and the ease with which infection will be recognized. These factors should be considered in the interpretation of STI infection rates by gender and age. Surveillance data from New Zealand and Britain show higher rates for most STI among women aged 15 to 19, compared to men, but the reverse at older ages.

This study examined how the incidence of self-reported STIs varies by gender and age and to elucidate factors that influence this variation.

### Methodology

Participants were from a longitudinal study of a cohort born in Dunedin, New Zealand in 1972/1973. They were quizzed about STIs and sexual behavior at age, 21, 26, and 32 years (1993-2005).

STI incidence rates were compared from first coitus to age 21, from age 21 to 26, and from age 26 to 32 in a birth cohort. Participants who reported ever having

had heterosexual intercourse or same sex behavior were asked if they had ever had one or more STIs.

### Outcomes of the Study

Of the 1037 members of the original cohort, 92% or more of the survivors completed the computer questionnaire at each age. Major findings include:

- At age 21, 416 men and 417 women completed the STI questions: 36 (9%) of men reported 38 infections; 73 of women (18%) reported 89 infections.
- At age 26, 460 men and 463 women completed the STI questions: 63 (14%) of men reported 71 infections; 63 (14%) of women reported 70 infections.
- At age 32, 472 men and 465 women completed the STI questions: 43 (9%) of men reported 56 infections; 37 (9%) of women reported 40 infections.
- The commonest infections reported by men and women in all periods were chlamydial infection, genital warts, and genital herpes.
- STI risk increased with numbers of partners, for both genders and most age periods.
- Men in the age period 21 to 26

years had a significant higher incidence of all STIs compared with the younger period.

- For women, incidence rates decreased over time.
- In ages up to 21 years, incidence rates for all STIs were more than twice as high for women compared with men.

### Implications for Prevention

This study found that from data collected at 3 ages in a birth cohort, adolescent women have significantly higher incidence rates of self-reported STIs than adolescent males. After adolescence, incidence rates increased for men ages 21 to 26 and then fell, whereas for women, rates fell throughout. STI incidence increased with number of sexual partners.

Specific STI prevention educational efforts should be directed toward adolescence women as the period before age 21 is a time of special risk for STIs for women.

### SOURCE:

Paul, C., et al. (2009). Longitudinal study of self-reported sexually transmitted infection incidence by gender and age up to age thirty-two years. *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*, 36, 63-69.

## Premarital abstinence pledges found ineffective

A sexual abstinence pledge or "virginity" pledge is an oral or written promise to refrain from sexual activity, usually until marriage. This study compared the sexual activity of adolescent virginity pledgers with matched nonpledgers.

Subjects were from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, a nationally representative sample of middle and high school students.

Five years after the pledge, 82% of pledgers denied ever pledging. Pledgers and matched nonpledgers did not differ in premarital sex, STIs, and anal and oral sex variables. Pledgers and nonpledgers but did not differ in lifetime sexual partners and age of first sex. Fewer pledgers than matched nonpledgers used birth control and condoms in past year.

Virginity pledges may not affect sexual behavior but may decrease precautions during sex. Hence, birth control information should be provided to all adolescents, especially virginity pledgers.

SOURCE: Rosenblum, J. E. (2009). Patient teenagers? A comparison of the sexual behavior of virginity pledges and matched nonpledgers. *Pediatrics*, 123, e110-e120.

## Many condom "turn offs" experienced by men and women

Although correct and consistent male condom use is highly effective in reducing the risk of STI transmission and acquisition, condoms are often eschewed based on personal, or couple, dissatisfaction with their use.

This study compared the prevalence of multiple types of condom-associated "turn offs" in men and women. From a web-based questionnaire, data were analyzed from 464 men and women who reported that condoms turned them off the last time they were used.

Gender differences were not observed for 9 out of 15 turn offs. The most common turn offs related to loss of pleasure: more than 3/4s of men and nearly 40% of women reported decrease sexual sensation. Putting on condoms and bad smell were frequent turn offs. Turn offs pertaining to arousal and orgasm were also common.

Findings suggest that numerous physical and psychological condom turn offs may be experienced by men and women when using male condoms.

SOURCE: Crosby, R., et al. (2008). Condom "turn offs" among adults: An exploratory study. *International Journal of STD & AIDS*, 19, 590-594.

## CDC reports that overall rates of STIs increased

New 2007 data indicate that reportable STDs show syphilis, chlamydia, and gonorrhea are unacceptably high. In 2007, chlamydia rates reached their highest level ever with 1.1 million, up 7.5 from 2006. More than 350,000 cases of gonorrhea were reported (unchanged from 2006). 11,466 syphilis cases were reported in 2007, up 15% from 2006.

SOURCE: CDC. (2009). Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance, 2007: National Overview. [www.cdc.gov/std/stats07/natoverview.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/std/stats07/natoverview.htm).

## 37% of adults report ever tested for HIV

In 2007, 36.6% of adults 18 years or older reported ever being tested for HIV. For men and women, the highest percent of those tested were adults aged 25-34 years and 35-44 years, with the lowest among adults aged 65 years or older.

SOURCE: CDC. (2009). QuickStats percentage of adults ≥18 years who had ever been tested for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), by age group and sex -- National Health Interview Survey, United States, 2007. *MMWR*, 58(3), 62.

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

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