

RAP* Time



RURAL CENTER *for* AIDS/STD PREVENTION

A JOINT PROJECT OF
INDIANA UNIVERSITY, UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY,
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*Rural AIDS/STD prevention. rap (rap) v. *Slang*. To talk freely and openly

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Loss of pleasure reported as the major problem with male latex condom use

Use of male latex condoms remains a major strategy in the prevention of STI including HIV. Recent data suggests that sexually active persons are using condoms at least sporadically and that condom use errors and problems compromise condom efficacy.

A primary source of condom use errors and problems may be the lack of acceptable “fit and feel”. The prevalence of fit and feel complaints has been extensively documented, yet little is known about the specific issues surrounding people’s reports of poor fit and feel. Further, most research in the area has solely focused on men.

Understanding specific concerns associated with condom fit and feel may aid in improving condom use. Thus, the purpose of this study was to compare condom fit and feel problems between women and men and to identify demographic correlates of fit and feel problems.

Methodology

Individuals were recruited from an electronic mailing list for a large, Internet-based sexual enhancement product company.

Condom use assessments of fit and feel were limited to the last

time a condom was used for vaginal or anal intercourse within the past 3 months. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used.

Outcomes of the Study

The sample was limited to self-identified heterosexual men ($n = 771$) and women ($n = 178$).

Major findings include:

- 38% of participants reported at least one condom fit and feel problem.
- Nearly one in 10 reported condom fit was a problem but there was no difference by gender.
- Nearly one-third reported they had a problem with how condoms felt during sex but there was no difference by gender.
- About one in five reported that their partner had a problem with how condoms felt during sex. Women more likely than men reported that their partner experienced discomfort.
- Qualitative responses revealed five themes with condom fit or feel problems: decreased sensation, lack of naturalness, condom size complaints, decreased pleasure, and pain and discomfort.
- Decreased sensation was pre-

dominant theme accounting for 54% of the responses. Most reported markedly decreased sensation.

- Lack of naturalness was a concern for 16%. Comments included unable to feel partner, not liking the rubbery feel, and loss of natural feeling associated with sex

Implications for Prevention

This study found that nearly 40% experienced at least one condom use fit and feel problem the last time a condom was used with no difference between females and males.

Specific perceptions surrounding condom fit and feel issues were largely based on loss of pleasure. Sex-positive intervention approaches that facilitate pleasurable sex for condom-using men and women may be useful in preventing STI/HIV and unintended pregnancy.

SOURCE:

Crosby, R. A., et al. 2013). Understanding problems with condom fit and feel: An important opportunity for improving clinic-based safer sex programs. *Journal of Primary Prevention*, 34, 109-115.

Homeless youth HIV risk behavior related to social networks

This study examined the relationship between homeless youths' HIV risk behaviors with strangers and risk and protective characteristics of their social networks.

249 youth aged 14-21 years were interviewed over 15 months in three Midwestern cities in United States using a systemic sampling strategy.

Homeless youth with a greater average number of network members who engaged in more drug risk behaviors and who pressured them into precarious behaviors at least once were more likely to have participated in a greater number of HIV risk behaviors with strangers compared to homeless youth without such network characteristics.

19-21 year olds, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered youth and those who have run away from home more frequently, participated in more HIV risk behaviors with strangers than 14-18 year olds, heterosexual youth, and those who have run away less often.

SOURCE: Tyler, K. A. (2013). Homeless youths' HIV risk behaviors with strangers: Investigating the importance of social networks. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 42 62, 1583-1591.

HIV self-testing can be done accurately by most self-testers

Prior research suggests that neighborhood conditions impact health behaviors, and thus health outcomes.

This study aimed to assess the relationship between neighborhood conditions and HIV management and engagement in high-risk behaviors. Participants were 762 individuals from the St. Louis metropolitan area during routine out-patient HIV clinic visits. Most participants were male and African American.

Individuals residing in neighborhoods with higher poverty rates were more likely to have lower CD4 cell counts and be current smokers. In neighborhoods with higher rates of unemployment, individuals were less likely to have a current antiretroviral prescription. In more racially segregated neighborhoods, individuals reported more depressive symptoms.

The study concluded that neighborhood characteristics contribute to disparities in HIV care. Interventions that address neighborhood conditions as barriers to HIV management may result in improved health outcomes.

SOURCE: Krause, J., et al. (2013). Acceptability of HIV self-testing: A systematic literature review. *BMC Public Health*, 13, 735.

Anal cancer risk increased from HIV and HPV infection

Data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey found that HSV-1 infection resulted in lower spatial reasoning and reading scores among 12-16 year olds, impaired coding speed in 20-59 year olds and immediate memory impairments in older participants. CMV was associated with coding speed impairment and learning and recall in middle-age participants.

SOURCE: Tarter, K, D., et al. (2013). Persistent viral pathogens and cognitive impairment across the life course in the Third National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. *Journal of Infectious Diseases*. doi: 10.1093/infdis/jit616.

76% of persons living with HIV are men

In 2010, an estimated 1.1 million people aged 13 years or older were living with HIV. Most (76%) were male, and 69% of males were gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men. Males were 80% of the estimated new HIV infections (47,500) in 2010.

SOURCE: CDC. (2014). CDC Fact Sheet: HIV among men in the United States Atlanta, GA.

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, University of Arizona, and University of Kentucky. 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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