

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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Rural residents' opinion about condoms for HIV/STD prevention was overall supportive

The latex condom remains the single best method of preventing STDs for people who have sex. Conflicting messages about condom use from the media, parents, faith communities and educational institutions may lead to mixed public opinion about condom use, particularly among teenagers.

Public opinion can be a powerful determinate of public policy, especially for issues related to sexuality. However, limited research has focused on public opinion related to condoms.

This study assessed rural residents' opinions about male condoms and compared those to non-rural residents.

Methodology

Indiana adults completed a brief telephone survey of 19 condom-related items in October 2008. Items reflected opinion about condom availability, school education about correct condom use, persons who use condoms, and condom promotion and condom effectiveness.

Random digital dialing was used to contact 1,660 eligible people. 509 adults (115 rural, 394 urban) consented for the study. The

sampling error was about +/- 4 percentage points at the 5% level.

Outcomes of the Study

Mean age of the sample was 55 years and 66% were female. 94% identified as White with 5% identified as African American or Black. Major findings include:

- The majority of rural residents agreed strongly or somewhat agreed to most of the items.
- 80% of rural residents agreed that all teenagers need information on how to use condoms correctly.
- 78% of rural residents agree that Indiana public high schools should educate teenagers on how to use condoms to prevent STD.
- 93% of rural residents agree that only medically accurate information about condoms should be provided.
- 61% of rural residents agreed that classroom instruction should include condoms and 50% agreed that an object should be used to demonstrate correct condom use.
- 63% of rural residents disagreed that promoting condom use is the same as promoting sex and 81% disagreed that carrying a condom means the person has casual sex.
- 72% of rural residents agreed

that teenagers who use condoms are responsible.

- 90% of rural residents agreed that condoms are effective in preventing HIV/STD.
- Other than political affiliation (Democrats more supportive), few demographic variables had associations with opinions.
- Overall, there was little difference in public opinion about condoms between rural and non-rural residents.

Implications for Prevention

This study found that a large majority of rural residents (and non-rural residents) had positive opinions about condoms and condom education in Indiana public high schools.

These findings should be made available to school officials and community health personnel and should be considered when developing condom education in public high schools.

SOURCE:

Yarber, W. L., & Crosby, R. A. (2011). Rural and non-rural Indiana residents' opinion about condoms for HIV/STD prevention. *The Health Education Monograph*, 28(2), 46-53.

Unprotected anal intercourse was reported by women

This study examined the association between unprotected anal intercourse and STDs among heterosexual women. Women (N=436) were recruited from high-risk areas in New York City.

38% had unprotected anal intercourse in the past year. Unprotected anal intercourse was more likely among those who were aged 30 to 39 years, were homeless, were frequent drug or binge alcohol users, had an incarcerated sexual partner, had sexual partners with whom they exchanged sex for money or drugs, or had more than five sex partners in the past year.

Women who had unprotected anal intercourse were 2.6 times as likely as women who had only unprotected vaginal intercourse and 4.2 times as likely as women who had neither unprotected anal nor unprotected vaginal intercourse to report an STD diagnosis. No significant association between unprotected anal intercourse and HIV infection was found.

SOURCE: Jenness, S, M., et al. (2011). Unprotected anal intercourse and sexually transmitted diseases in high-risk heterosexual women. *American Journal of Public Health*, 101, 745-750.

HIV/AIDS was not prominent in daily lives of rural YMSM

Research concerning HIV risk among young men who have sex with men (YMSM), particularly in rural communities, is limited. This study utilized the theory of planned behavior to examine rural YMSM's views of HIV/AIDS prevention.

Five YMSM were recruited from rural counties in southern Indiana and interviewed in the fall 2010. Eligibility criteria included YMSM between ages 18 and 21 years.

HIV/AIDS was not prominent in the daily lives of the participants, rarely discussed among peers and never discussed with sex partners. Barriers to open dialogue included stigma and possible dissuading partners from having sex.

The young men were well aware of the effectiveness of condoms in HIV/STI prevention. Consistent condom use was the normative belief among their peers but was not always practiced. The Internet provided a non-judgmental and comfortable forum for obtaining sexual health information.

These stories demonstrate the need for a comprehensive HIV prevention effort for rural YMSM.

SOURCE: Marshall, A., et al. (2011). Rural young MSM's view of HIV prevention: A case study. *The Health Education Monograph*, 28(2), 39-45.

Virus shedding found in asymptomatic persons with HSV-2

HSV genital shedding was assessed among symptomatic and asymptomatic persons infected with HSV-2. The herpes virus was detected about 10 percent of the time in infected persons without symptoms of the infection. The quantity of virus shed subclinically was similar in persons with symptomatic and asymptomatic infection.

SOURCE: Tronstein, E. (2011). Genital shedding of herpes simplex virus among symptomatic and asymptomatic persons with HSV-2 infection. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 305, 1411-1449.

HIV diagnoses increased for MSM

56% of HIV diagnoses for 2009 were from male-to-male sexual contact, up from 50% in 2006. HIV diagnoses remained relatively stable from 2006-2009 from injection drug use, heterosexual contact, and male-to-male sexual contact and injection drug use.

SOURCE: CDC. (2011). HIV Surveillance- Epidemiology of HIV infection (Through 2009). www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/surveillance/resources/slides/general/index.htm.

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 Colorado, 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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