

# RAP\* Time



## RURAL CENTER *for* AIDS/STD PREVENTION

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

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

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## Few WSW report taking safety precautions during various sexual behaviors

Research studies have shown that between 5% and 17% of United States women have engaged in sexual behavior with other women. Little is known about the sexual behavior and risks of women who have sex with women (WSW).

Research is needed to understand the sexual health needs WSW. The transmission of several STIs between women, such as trichomoniasis, genital herpes, human papillomavirus, HIV and bacterial vaginosis, have been clinically documented.

This study investigated the sexual repertoires of WSW and the safer sex methods they used to reduce the likelihood of STI transmission and acquisition.

### Methodology

An online survey targeted towards women with desire, attraction or previous sexual behavior with women was distributed globally.

Women (N=3116) who engaged in at least one sexual behavior with a women in the past year and were currently living in the USA, United Kingdom, Canada or Australia were included. Sexual behaviors, such as genital rubbing, vaginal fingering, cunnilingus, vibrator use, dildo, anal beads and

toys, and sexual safety methods were assessed.

### Outcomes of the Study

Mean age was 29 years and most identified as a lesbian, and were well educated and White.

Major findings include:

- Most reported genital rubbing (99.8%), vaginal fingering (99.2%), vaginal fisting (56.7%), cunnilingus (98.9%), and genital scissoring (90.8%).
- Most indicated they had used a vibrator (74.1%), non-vibrating strap-on (56.5%), or non-vibrating dildo (55.6%) at least once with a female partner in lifetime.
- Participants indicated that they had used a non-vibrating double dildo (22.8%), butt plug (10.5%), or anal beads (6.6%) in their lifetime.
- Most participants reported having shared a vibrator (58.2%) and/or dildo (59.3%) with a female sexual partner in their lifetime.
- Almost 3/4s reported cleaning the vibrator and dildo before the event and over 80% reported that they cleaned the toy after the event. A minority reported that they used a condom on the toy at any time during the event.
- Fewer women not in a relation-

ship (11.9%) used a condom on shared vibrator than those in a relationship (17.3%).

- More non-relationship women (33.8%) reported using a condom on a dildo than relationship women (18.9%).
- Younger women reported fewer behaviors that included vaginal/anal insertion than older participants.
- Participants in long-term relationships reported wider diversity of behaviors.

### Implications for Prevention

Over three-quarters of the study women reported a history of genital rubbing, vaginal fingering, genital scissoring and cunnilingus with the past year. Barrier use was reported by less than 25%.

The study highlights the need for the development of more contextually appropriate sexual health guidelines for WSW.

### SOURCE:

Schick, V. L., et. al. (2012). Sexual behavior and risk reduction strategies among a multinational sample of women who have sex with women. *Sexually Transmitted Infections*, doi: 10.1136/sextrans-2011-050404.

### One in five teens did not engage in any sexual behavior

This investigation documented the prevalence and relative timing of oral-genital, vaginal, and anal intercourse during adolescence and examined whether these timetables varied by several sociodemographic factors.

Data were from almost 14,000 Wave IV respondents of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health to generate prevalence estimates for adolescents who reached age 18 years by 2001.

One in five adolescents did not engage in any of these sexual behaviors by age 18 years. More than two-thirds reported vaginal or oral-genital sexual activity, but only about one-half did both.

A third initiated 2 or more behaviors within a 1-year period. In longer timetables, vaginal intercourse was more often initiated first.

The diversity in sexual initiation patterns have implications for sexual health education.

SOURCE: Halpern, C., T., et al. (2012). Sexual timetables for oral-genital, vaginal, and anal intercourse: Sociodemographic comparisons in a nationally representative sample of adolescents. *American Journal of Public Health*, 102, 1221-1228.

### One-third of FSWs reported condom breakage in last month

Few studies have examined condom breakage in a comprehensive way. The purpose of this study was to obtain a better understanding of the relative importance of personal factors, male partner factors and situational factors in determining condom breakage in a population of female sex workers (FSWs).

A cross-sectional study included a face-to-face interview and condom application test with 291 randomly selected FSWs in Bangalore, south India, in early 2011.

Ninety-seven percent reported using a condom at last sex. 34% reported a condom breakage in the last month. The only significant predictors of condom breakage included being a paying client, the condom being too small for the penis or too big for the penis and rough sex.

Although condom use among FSWs in Bangalore is very high, condom breakage is still a not uncommon event and puts women and their clients at unnecessary risk for infection. The findings highlight the importance of proper fitting condoms.

SOURCE: Bradley, J., et al. (2012). Why do condoms break? A study of female sex workers in Bangalore, south India. *Sexually Transmitted Infections*, 88, 163-170.

### Male circumcision reduced odds of HPV prevalence

This study assessed the association between male circumcision (MC) and genital HPV infection indicators, including genital warts. MC was found to be associated with a statistically significant reduced odds of genital HPV prevalence. This association was seen as well for genital high-risk HPV prevalence in two randomized control trials. MC could be considered as a one-time preventative intervention to reduce HPV-related diseases.

SOURCE: Albero, G., et al. (2012). Male circumcision and genital human papillomavirus: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*, 39, 104-113.

### AI/AN disproportionately impacted by STI

American Indians and Alaska Natives are one of the smallest racial groups in the U.S., comprising between 0.9%-1.5% of total U.S. population, but are disproportionately impacted by STI. In 2009, reported rates of chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis were 1.2 to 4.3 times higher than comparable rates for whites.

SOURCE: CDC. (2012). Indian Health Surveillance Report-- Sexually Transmitted Diseases 2009, Atlanta, GA: USDHHS

**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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