

CPTA

Coalition to Promote Research

Organizations Committed to Promoting Public Health, Innovation
and Fundamental Knowledge Through Scientific Research

Why Support Research on Condom Use

Condoms are proven effective in STD and HIV prevention, and thus are part of many studies to promote health and HIV prevention. Issa Amendment No. 420 to H.R. 1 could undermine a whole range of health promotion studies.

Need For This Research

- One in two sexually active persons will contract an STD/STI by age 25.
- In 2006, heterosexual contact accounted for 33% of HIV/AIDS diagnoses among adults and adolescents in the USA (CDC, 2008). Men who have sex with women play a major role in HIV transmission to women who can also pass it on to offspring. In 2006, 80% of HIV/AIDS diagnoses among females in the USA were attributed to heterosexual transmission (CDC, 2008).
- At least 15% of all American women who are infertile can attribute it to problems caused by pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) resulting from an untreated STD. Consistent condom use reduces the risk of recurrent PID and related complications.
- The Institute of Medicine has estimated that “the annual direct and indirect costs of selected major STDs are approximately \$10 billion or if sexually transmitted HIV infections are included, \$17 billion.”
- Consistent and correct condom use provides substantial protection against the many STDs/STIs, including statistically significant risk reduction against HIV, Chlamydia, gonorrhea, herpes, and syphilis.
- According to NIH (2006), “there are serious shortcomings in this field because of inadequate knowledge concerning heterosexual men’s perspectives and behaviors.” Correct and consistent condom use remains the most effective way to reduce HIV/STI transmission during sex, but this method relies on men’s willingness and ability to use male condoms.
- According to the Department of Health and Human Services (2007), men are less likely to use healthcare services, and this is especially true for the use of preventive services. Young men are especially unlikely to receive health services such as counseling by a medical professional and testing for HIV and other STDs.
- Male condoms are currently the most effective available technology for preventing HIV transmission. Laboratory research has demonstrated that most latex and polyurethane condoms cannot be penetrated by particles the size of HIV; in contrast, lambskin condoms have pores large enough for HIV to pass through. Studies conducted in the United States and abroad have shown that latex condoms, when used consistently and correctly, can reduce the risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV, by 90 to 96%.
- For HIV-positive individuals, condom use during sexual intercourse is still an important preventative measure, both to avoid onward transmission and prevent further infection with other strains of HIV, which could increase the severity of their condition.

- Condoms are relatively inexpensive, are sold without a prescription, and generally have no side effects when used properly. Due to their effectiveness and the number of educational campaigns aimed at promoting their utilization, condoms as a means of HIV/AIDS prevention have risen in popularity in many parts of the world.
- Condoms have played an important role in decreasing prevalence of HIV/AIDS in high-risk populations, such as sex workers and their clients in Malawi, Kenya, Cameroon, Guatemala, and Thailand.
- Nevertheless, male condoms are not well accepted by some populations. Obstacles that impede the use of condoms include social and cultural stigma, religious beliefs, unequal power dynamics between sexual partners, lack of awareness of condoms' effectiveness, personal reluctance, quality of condoms, and availability.

Importance of Findings

- This research is geared toward identifying issues relevant to men's ability to protect themselves and their partners against HIV/STDs and unplanned pregnancies.
- Previous research has shown that "condom-associated erection problems" (CAEP) can lead to resistance to use condoms and/or not using condoms for the complete act of intercourse thereby reducing their effectiveness in preventing STI transmission and undesired pregnancy. This research particularly addresses this barrier to condom use among adult heterosexual men.
- This research is the first to obtain scientific, laboratory-based data on the processes that may be responsible for why men with CAEP fail to use condoms consistently and correctly.
- The knowledge gained from this research will provide a scientific, evidence-based basis for the development of innovative, more effective, and targeted intervention and education strategies for use among adult males which are tailored to the needs of individuals who have trouble using condoms effectively because of CAEP.
- Study results will provide information on how to best help adult males improve their condom use, and therefore, help to protect themselves and their female partners against STDs, HIV, and unplanned pregnancies.
- Strategies to combat the barriers to condom use include empowering, informing, and educating people to reframe their attitudes and behaviors regarding condoms; ensuring widespread condom distribution and use; promoting condom usage as responsible, acceptable, and health promoting; and providing easier access to condoms through price reductions or free distribution.

The Coalition to Protect Research (CPR) is a coalition of national organizations committed to promoting public health, innovation, and fundamental knowledge through scientific research. Our organizations represent hundreds of thousands of scientists, physicians, health care providers, and patients who support federal investments in basic and applied biomedical and behavioral research. If you would like additional information, please contact CPR co-chairs Angela Sharpe, alsharpe@cossa.org or 202-842-3525 with the Consortium of Social Science Associations or Karen Studwell, with the American Psychological Association, kstudwell@apa.org or 202-336-5585/