

Risky Sexual Behavior:
Interactive Effects of Fear of Abuse & STD
Knowledge Among African American
Adolescent Girls

Jerris L. Raiford, PhD
Ralph J. DiClemente, PhD
Gina M. Wingood, ScD, MPH
Laura F. Salazar, PhD

Background & Significance

- Numerous health-compromising behaviors in adolescence
- Specific focus on the interrelationship between:
 - Risky Sexual Behavior
 - Adolescent Dating Violence

Background & Significance

- Since the beginning of the AIDS epidemic
 - >40,000 young people in the U.S. have been diagnosed with AIDS
 - Approx. 10,129 have died
- 2001-2004 HIV/AIDS diagnoses:
 - Approx. 18,849 were under the age of 25, of which 12,064 (64%) were black
- African American women
 - 23 times more likely to be diagnosed with HIV than white women
 - 10 times more likely than Hispanic women

Background & Significance

- Prevention programs
 - Knowledge (e.g., STDs)
 - Skills (e.g., condom use)
 - Abilities (e.g., self-efficacy)
- Self-efficacy a proven predictor in reducing risky sexual behavior
- Contextual Barriers to change
 - Gender-based violence

Study Purpose

**Fear of Abuse
due to
Condom Negotiation**

**STD
Knowledge**



**Risky
Sexual Behavior**

Methods

■ Recruitment

- March 2002-August 2004
- 3 clinics in the southeast

■ Sample (n = 715)

- African American
- female
- Adolescents (15 to 21 years of age)
- Sexually active in the past 60 days
- 82% response rate

Measures (ACASI)

- Independent Variable:
 - STD Knowledge
- Dependent Variable:
 - Condom use past 60 days
 - Condom use at last sex
 - STD sex prior to Tx
 - Unprotected STD sex prior to Tx
- Moderator Variable:
 - Fear of abuse/adverse consequences due to condom negotiation (Fear)

Results:

Descriptive

■ **Risky Sexual Behavior:**

- Inconsistent condom use past 60 days (75%)
- Unprotected sex at last sex (61%)
- STD symptoms (n=155, 18%)
 - 83% reported STD sex prior to Tx
 - 76% reported unprotected STD sex prior to Tx

■ **Adolescent Dating Violence (ADV):**

- Lifetime (48%)
- Recent (15%)

Results

Table 1. Interactive effect on condom use, past 60 days

Predictor Variable	AOR	95% CI	B	SE	p
Step 1: Age	1.55	0.97-2.48	0.44	0.24	<i>ns</i>
Step 2: STD Knowledge	1.32	0.83-2.11	0.28	0.24	<i>ns</i>
Step 3: Fear of Consequences	0.99	0.33-3.00	-0.01	0.57	<i>ns</i>
Step 4: Interaction term	5.52	1.11-27.47	1.71	0.82	.04

ns indicates a nonsignificant effect.

CI indicates 95% confidence intervals

Results

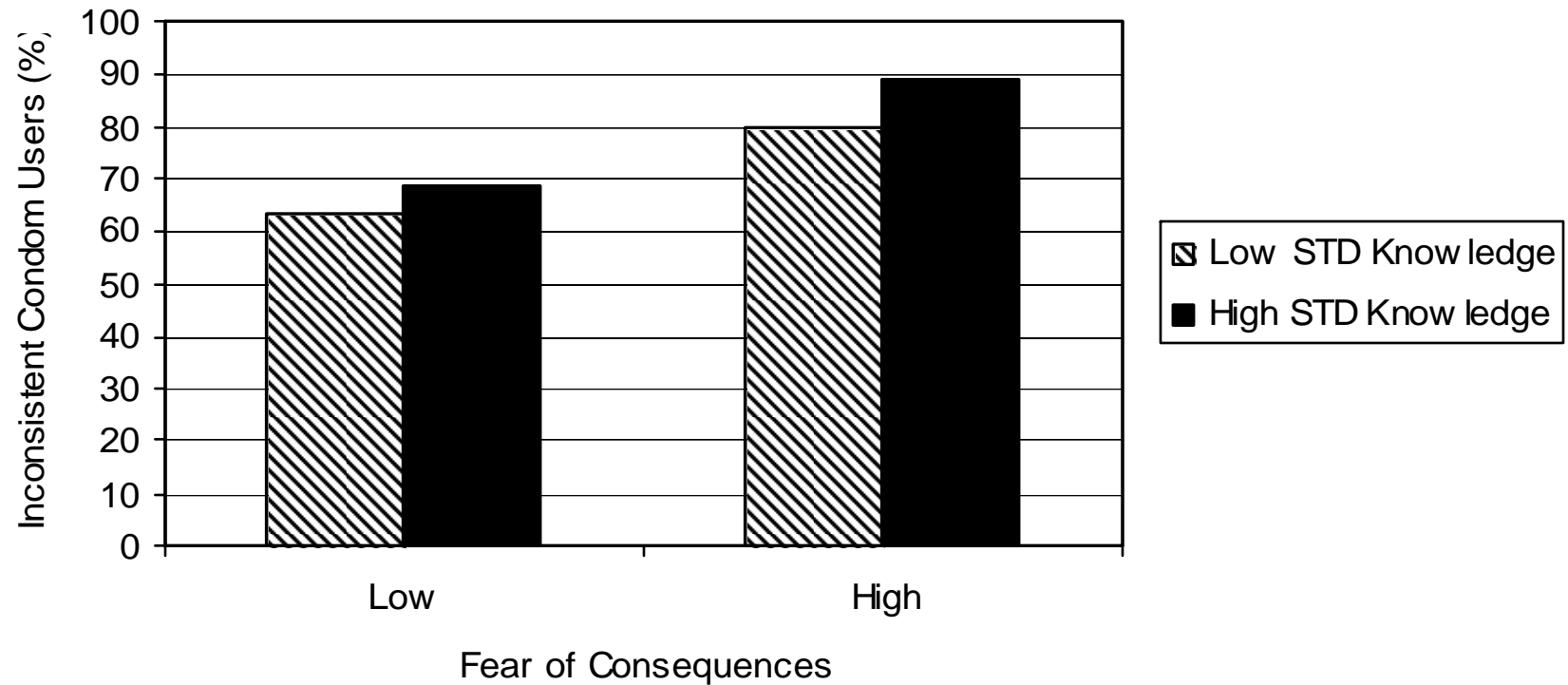


Figure 1. Post-hoc of interactive effect on condom use, past 60 days

Results

Table 2. Interactive effect on condom use with main partner, last sex

Predictor Variable	AOR	95% CI	B	SE	p
Step 1: Age	1.23	0.80-1.91	0.20	0.23	<i>ns</i>
Step 2: STD Knowledge	1.02	0.66-1.59	0.02	0.23	<i>ns</i>
Step 3: Fear of Consequences	0.91	0.32-2.59	-0.09	0.53	<i>ns</i>
Step 4: Interaction term	8.80	1.84-41.98	2.17	0.80	.01

ns indicates a nonsignificant effect.

CI indicates 95% confidence intervals

Results

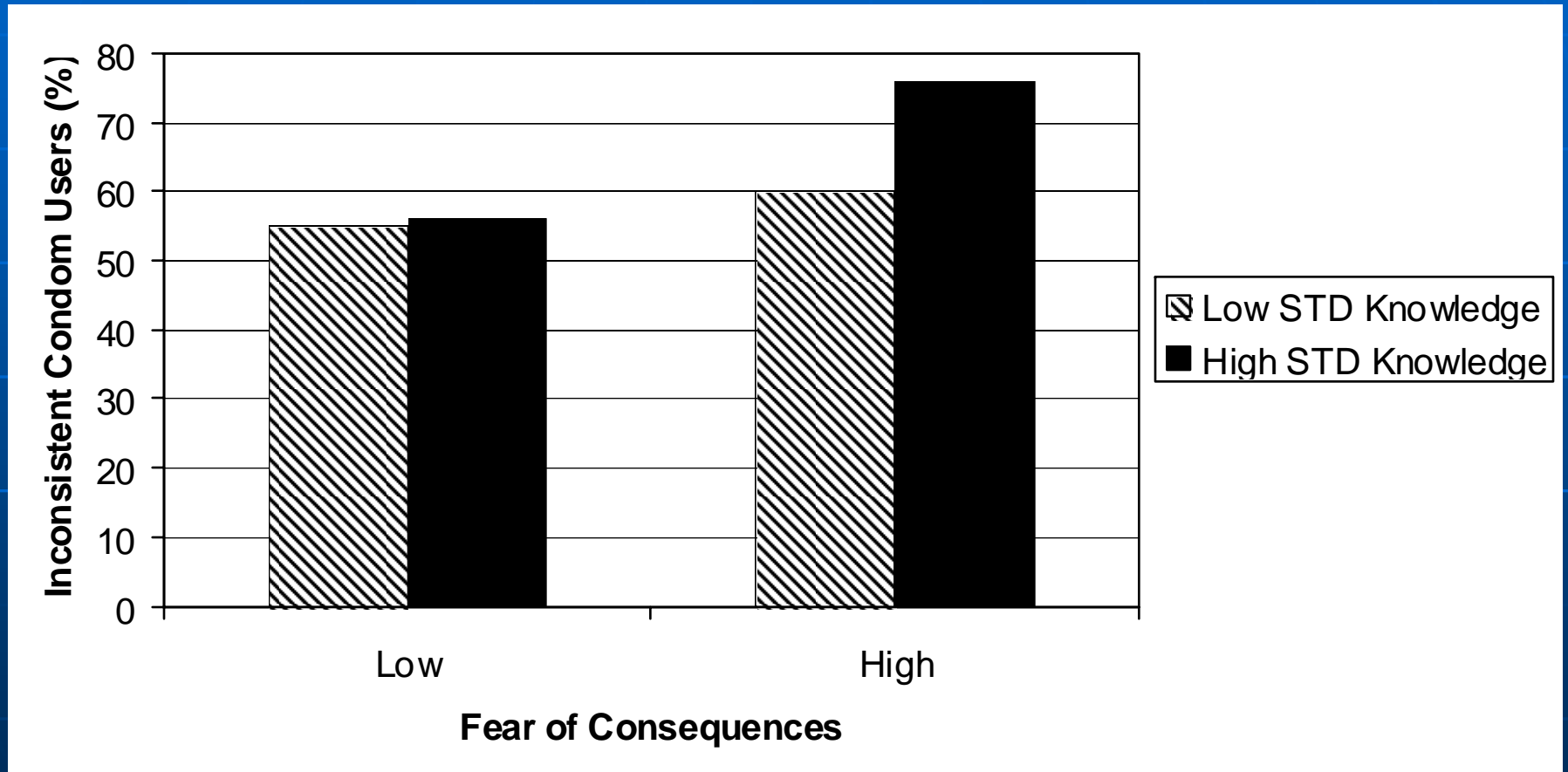


Figure 2. Post-hoc of interactive effect on condom use with main partner, last sex

Results

- STD sex
 - No interaction effect
 - Main effect: girls with *higher* STD knowledge were sig. *less* likely ($AOR=6.8$, $p=.02$) to engage in sex while experiencing STD symptoms prior to Tx than girls with *lower* knowledge
- Unprotected STD sex
 - No interaction effect
 - Main effect: girls with *higher* STD knowledge were sig. *less* likely ($AOR=4.6$, $p=.05$) to engage in unprotected sex while experiencing STD symptoms prior to Tx than girls with *lower* knowledge

Discussion

- When assessing condom usage at last sex & past 60 days, STD knowledge was *positively* related to ICU under conditions of high fear
 - Possible explanation: more knowledge about the means to STD transmission may cause girls to use this knowledge to assess their partner's risk and conclude they are at higher risk of abuse than of contracting an STD
- When assessing STD sex, STD knowledge was *negatively* related to ICU
 - Possible Explanation: STD knowledge is protective in instances where girls believe that the behavior is risky (STD sex)

Implications

- **Knowledge can be counterproductive in the presence of fear**
 - Necessary to always go beyond increasing knowledge
 - Future research should ask girls if they know their partner's risk level (e.g., STD status, other sex partners) & it's effect on their decision to have unprotected sex
- **Partner abuse is a risk factor for HIV infection**
 - Considering that 75% reported some abuse history & fear of condom negotiation places girls at risk of HIV, prevention programs need to include a substantial focus on ADV and it's effect on girl's sexual health