

# Correlates of Never Using Condoms for Oral Sex

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# Background

- Oral sex is a common practice and is increasing
- Oral sex is a potential route for STD transmission
- Condom use with oral sex is not common
- Research indicates multiple factors deter condom use with oral sex

# Objective

- Examine the differences in those who use condoms sporadically with oral sex in comparison to those who never use condoms for oral sex
- Examine the prevalence and correlates of never using condoms for oral sex:
  - Students on a college campus
  - STD clinic attendees

# Methods: Sample

- Convenience sample
  - College campus, southern U.S.
  - Publicly funded STD clinic
- Eligibility criteria:
  - no previous HSV-2 diagnosis
  - speak English
  - sexually active past 3 months
- Analysis limited
  - those without current symptoms of HSV-2
  - those reporting oral sex in last 3 months

# Methods: Data Collection

- Cross-sectional
- Self-administered questionnaire
  - sexual behavior measures
  - 5 item version of Herpes Related Quality of Life scale (Cronbach  $\alpha = .84$ )
- HSV-2 Rapid Test: Sure-View® HSV-2 by Fisher HealthCare (Houston, TX); 96% sensitive; 98% specific

# Methods: Data Analysis

- Assessed variables for normality; median split for non-normal variables
- SPSS 14.0,  $\chi^2$ , logistic regression
- Significance at  $\alpha = .05$

# Results: Sample Characteristics

	College campus: N=175 (49.6%)	STD Clinic: N=178 (50.4%)
Mean Age (sd)	21 years (3.1)	30 years (10.5)
African-American	9%	59%
Caucasian	88%	39%
Female	40%	43%
Male	60%	57%
Never used a condom for oral sex (past 3 months)	93%	71%

# Results: Sample Characteristics

- Mean age 25.4 years (standard deviation 8.9)
- 63.8% Caucasian, 33.3 African-American
- 58.1% male, 41.9% female
- 55.4% STD clinic, 44.6% college campus
- 13.3% positive HSV-2 serostatus
- 29.5% previous STD diagnosis
- 82.1% never used condoms for oral sex



# Results: Bivariate Associations:

## Potential Correlates and Never Using Condoms for Oral Sex

- $\leq 21$  years age  $P=.002$
- Caucasian race  $P=.0001$
- $>$  High school education  $P=.002$
- Recruited at college campus  $P=.0001$
- Negative HSV-2 serostatus  $P=.007$
- Frequency of penile-vaginal sex:  $P=.01$   
 $\geq 12$  times in 3 months
- Never using a condom penile-  
vaginal sex (past 3 months)  $P=.04$
- No previous STD diagnosis  $P=.005$

# Results: Multivariate Associations

- Recruited from college campus
  - Adjusted Odds Ratio [AOR] = 6.03
  - 95% Confidence Interval [CI] = 2.92-12.45
  - $P < .0001$
- Increased sexual frequency ( $12 \leq$  penile-vaginal sexual acts measured in past 3 months)
  - AOR = 1.91
  - 95% CI = 1.03-3.54
  - $P = 0.039$
- Never using condoms for penile-vaginal sex

# Discussion

- Greater frequency of penile-vaginal sex and never using condoms for penile-vaginal sex were associated with never using condoms for oral sex
  - Possibly characteristic of relationship as with penile-vaginal sex
  - Condoms possible barriers to sexual pleasure / orgasm

# Discussion

- Students in college may be at increased risk for never using condoms for oral sex.
  - May engage in sexual risk behaviors with less consequence; STDs less prevalent in their network
  - May be less exposed to sexual health promotion messages than those attending STD clinic
  - Other significant bivariate associations definitive of student sample

# Limitations

- Cross-sectional, convenience sample, sample bias
- Self-report of sensitive behaviors
- Did not assess oral sex as specifically “given” or “received”
- Did not assess participant knowledge of condom use with oral sex
- Unprotected oral sex questions specific to condom use

# Implications for Public Health

- Findings may be used to better guide educational efforts (ie college students in South)
- Condom use messages directed to penile-vaginal sex may include oral sex messages
- Prevention directed at oral condom use may consider specific sexual partnerships

# Conclusion

- Findings suggest that increased sexual frequency and never using condoms for penile-vaginal sex are characteristics of those who never use condoms for oral sex
- Additionally, students on college campuses may be at increased risk of never using condoms for oral sex

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