

Factors Influencing Condom Use among Male Vocational Students

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ABSTRACT

Objective To study the factors influencing condom use among male vocational students.

Design Survey research.

Setting Six vocational colleges in Bangkok.

Subjects One thousand and thirty-eight male vocational students were included between February 1-28, 1996.

Main outcome measures Factors influencing condom use.

Results Most of the male vocational students had routine sexual partners mainly with their student girlfriends, not prostitutes, and also had more than one sexual partner. However, most of them had ever had sexual experiences with prostitutes. With routine sexual partners, only 14.8% always used condoms but with prostitutes 89.5% always used condoms. Four significant factors influencing condom use are support from partners, occupation of partners, perception of susceptibility to sexually transmitted diseases and the cost of condoms. The first three factors had positive significant influences and the last one had negative influence.

Conclusion In order to increase condom use, sex education and counselling should emphasize particularly on safe sex in terms of STD and AIDS prevention and also unwanted pregnancy.

Key words : condom, vocational students

Nowadays the number of patients infected with HIV are much increasing. According to the surveillance report from the Division of Epidemiology up to March 31, 1996, there are 36,629 AIDS patients and 15,437 symptomatic HIV patients, up to March 31, 1996. The most important risk factor is sexual intercourse.⁽¹⁾ It is the important public health problem and effects to individual, society and whole nation. One of the way to reduce this problem is using the condom, but the rate of condom use is still so low comparing to the expected rate, especially in teenagers.⁽²⁾ From the survey, it was found that teenagers use the condom less than other age groups.⁽³⁾ Vocational students are a group of teenagers who have high rate of sexual intercourse and less use of condom. So they are risky to have sexually transmitted diseases especially AIDS. It is interesting to study the factors influencing condom use among male vocational students in order to find ways to increase condom use in this age group.

Materials and Methods

This study is a survey research. The study group comprises 1,038 male vocational students at Dusit Technical College, Minburee Technical College, Donmuang Technical College, Chetupon Commercial College, Bangna Commercial College and Bangkok Art and Craft College. The data was collected by using questionnaires. The answered questionnaires were separated into 2 groups. Firstly, 329 students (31.7%) have experience of sexual intercourse and secondly, 709 students have no experience of sexual intercourse. There were 310 completed questionnaires from students who have experience of sexual intercourse which were analyzed by percentage, Pearson's product moment correlation

coefficient and stepwise multiple regression using SPSS/PC+ software programme.

Results

One hundred and ninety-six (63.2%) of the studied samples who answered have routine partners in sexual intercourse, there was only 14.8% who always use condoms. While 297 students, who answered have non-routine partners, there was 52.5% who always use condoms (Table 1). Most of the routine partners of the studied samples were students (78.6%), only 2% were prostitutes (Table 2). Most of the students (97.7%) had ever had sexual intercourse with prostitutes, 89.5% of them always use condoms, only 4.6% occasionally used and 5.9% never used (Table 3).

Concerning factors influencing condom use among male vocational students using Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient, it was found that the significant factors promoting condom use were attitude to condom use, perception of susceptibility to STD and AIDS, availability of condoms, cost of condoms, occupation of partner, the condom use among closed friends, support from partners and advice from parents or teachers. However, the cost of condoms have significant reverse relationship with condom use.

The factors influencing condom use were analyzed by using stepwise multiple regression technique. The factors significantly influenced condom use were support from partners, occupation of partners, perception of susceptibility to STD and AIDS, and the cost of condoms respectively. These factors could significantly predict the condoms use correctly by 54.7%, while other factors have no influence in condom use.

Table 1. Condom use among male vocational students

	No	Percent
Condom use		
Students who have routine partners	196	63.2
Students who have non-routine partners	297	95.8
Condom use with routine partners		
Always	29	14.8
Occasionally	80	40.8
Never	87	44.4
Condom use with non-routine partners		
Always	156	52.5
Occasionally	90	30.3
Never	51	17.2

Table 2. Occupation of routine partners

Occupation	No	Percent
Student girlfriends	154	78.6
Officers	26	13.3
Government service	3	1.5
Prostitutes	4	2.0
Housewives	2	1.0
No answer	7	3.6
Total	196	100

Table 3. Sexual experience with prostitutes and condom use with prostitutes

	No	Percent
Sexual experience with prostitutes		
Never have sexual experience	7	2.3
Ever have sexual experience	303	97.7
Condom use with prostitutes		
Always	271	89.5
Occasionally	14	4.6
Never	18	5.9

Discussion

The survey showed that most of the male vocational students have more than one sexual partner. This takes the risk of having sexually transmitted diseases. Most of them had routine partners which were mainly the student girlfriends. Prostitutes were in the minority group. However, most of them had ever had sexual experience with prostitutes and 89.5% always use the condoms. But with routine partners only 14.8% always used condoms. This could be summarized that they preferred to use condom with prostitutes and non-routine partners but not preferred to use with their routine partners because of their perception of the risk of STD and AIDS.^(4,5) Nevertheless, the rate of condom use with prostitutes have not reached 100%. Concerning factors influencing condom use, there were four factors influencing the use of condoms. There were support from partners, occupation of partners, perception of susceptibility to STD and AIDS and the cost of condoms. This findings correspond well with other studies.⁽⁶⁻⁹⁾

Since the support from partners was the most influencing factor for condom use and students preferred to have sexual relationship with their student girlfriends, the knowledge about condoms should be given to female students especially for prevention of STD and AIDS.

Sex education for vocational students should be emphasized for the risks of STD and AIDS. An important point is that only once without condom, has the chance of acquiring the disease.

Since the cost of condoms is one of the important factors influencing condom use and the students rarely have income, the cost of condoms should be free or inexpensive and automatic condom vending machine should be considered in order to increase the availability and accessibility of condoms. In order to increase condom use, sex education and counselling should be emphasized especially on safe sex in terms of STD and AIDS prevention and also unwanted pregnancy.

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