The potential challenges to the use of condoms by the students at Moi University

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Abstract: The objective of the study was to identify the potential challenges to the use of condoms by the students at Moi University. Its importance is seen in the fact that it will be of great significance to all the stakeholders involved in the curb of HIV/AIDS by providing first hand information. The researcher employed case study research design. The target population of this study comprised of 100 students and a sample size of 30 students who were selected via the simple random technique. The data collection instrument used in the study was the questionnaire and the data collected was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively with the use of SPSS version 12. The findings of the study concluded that, the major challenge associated with condom usage was the unwillingness of the respondents partners in using a condom and the youth at this stage were easily influenced by their friends. The study recommended that, the University to avail condoms constantly and always at the University in order to encourage condom usage considering the fact that most of the students is sexually active.

Keywords: Level, Condoms usage

I. Introduction

The worldwide increase in the prevalence of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) has created a multifaceted public-health problem, affecting individual lives and the ability of families and communities to cope with the devastating social, cultural, economic and health consequences. Condom use is a critical element in a comprehensive, effective and sustainable approach to HIV prevention and treatment. Prevention is the mainstay of the response to AIDS. Condoms are an integral and essential part of comprehensive prevention and care programs, and their promotion must be accelerated based on scientific grounds. In 2007, an estimated 2.7 million people became newly infected with HIV. About 45% of them were young people from 15 to 28 years old, with young girls at greater risk of infection than boys (Vincenzi, 2003).

In Kenya the perception of the youths towards the condoms concept and the usage levels are both poor. In their study of Kenya University students, Lule (2001) found that the students appear to have negative attitude towards condom in general and do not see condom as a viable tool in fighting HIV/AIDS pandemic. The implications of the above on the spread of HIV/AIDS cannot be understated.

Youth are a pivotal group for the growth of the nation. Their training is to equip them to take up roles as the skilled workforce of the country as well as to be the intellectual drivers of development. As with other groups of young persons, the consequences of STIs and HIV infection are grave, both for the individuals as well as the society at large. This is because treatment and rehabilitation programs of STIs and HIV infection require commitment of funds that may otherwise be directed at other national development programs especially, in the developing countries, there is reduced quality of life for survivors, reduced reproductive capabilities and a decline in national productivity.

II. Literature Review

A. Challenges to condom usage

Condom criticism and challenges are not limited to external parties; sometimes the very people who use them have problems with them as well. An entirely subjective but still potentially notable criticism sometimes levelled at the male condom by partners, especially heterosexual partners, who are actually engaging in sexual activity while using them, has in recent history consisted of an aggregate of the following general ideas, or some combination thereof: Condoms are too heavy, i.e., their material significantly decreases sensation both in the penis and in the ability of the vagina's walls to properly feel the penis, because of the material barrier. In general, this complaint has been responded to by condom manufacturers via the production of thin and even
Some men genuinely cannot properly maintain an erection while a condom is on, even if they always are able to do so during sexual play without a condom. There are those who claim that men who experience this problem simply need to train themselves to maintain erections while attempting intercourse with a condom such as by masturbating while wearing a condom, and other strategies, but some of these men counter that they are physically unable to do so regardless of how much they try (Jinadu, 2003). Some men can properly maintain an erection but cannot ejaculate with a condom on. This has the potential of defeating the purpose of using the condom in the first place, considering its main purpose during sexual intercourse is to prevent passage of semen into the vagina, and taking the condom off just before ejaculating essentially invalidates that purpose. A potential 'opposite' strategy, i.e. stimulating the penis to near-orgasm without a condom and then hurriedly applying the condom at the last possible moment before ejaculation, is typically either logistically impossible or prone to some other type of failure.

Sociologically, the desire not to use condoms is sometimes culturally seen among post-feminist condom-accepting cultures as occurring almost exclusively in men rather than women; as involving 'male' perspectives; and as being essentially a personal aversion to condom use among males, while their female partners always or almost-always want to use condoms, at least by comparison. However, this view fails to take into account the reality that some women, on their own and from their own views, do not want to use condoms. Common justifications among such women include the idea that sexual intercourse without a condom is more intimate; that sex without a condom is uninterrupted whereas sex with a condom takes work and ruins the mood; and perhaps more importantly, that sex with a condom either feels significantly less pleasurable or even actively irritates their vaginal walls and leaves the vagina sore and/or irritated whereas condom less sex does not (Foreman, 2009).

More generally, some scientific researchers have expressed objective concern over certain ingredients sometimes added to condoms, notably talc and nitrosamines. Dry dusting powders are applied to latex condoms before packaging to prevent the condom from sticking to itself when rolled up. Previously, talc was used by most manufacturers, but cornstarch is currently the most popular dusting powder. Talc is known to be toxic if it enters the abdominal cavity (i.e. via the vagina. Cornstarch is generally believed to be safe; however some researchers have raised concerns over its use as well. Nitrosamines, which are potentially carcinogenic in humans, are believed to be present in a substance used to improve elasticity in latex condoms. A 2001 review stated that humans regularly receive 1,000 to 10,000 time’s greater nitrosamine exposure from food and tobacco than from condom use and concluded that the risk of cancer from condom use is very low. However, a 2004 study in Germany detected nitrosamines in 29 out of 32 condom brands tested, and concluded that exposure from condoms might exceed the exposure from food by 1.5- to 3-fold. In addition, the large-scale use of disposable condoms has resulted in concerns over their environmental impact via littering and in landfills, where they can eventually wind up in wildlife environments if not incinerated or otherwise permanently disposed of first. Polyurethane condoms in particular, given they are a form of plastic, are not biodegradable, and latex condoms take a very long time to break down. Experts, such as AVERT, recommend condoms be disposed of in a garbage receptacle, as flushing them down the toilet (which some people do) may cause plumbing blockages and other problems.

The plastic and foil wrappers condoms are packaged in are also not biodegradable. However, the benefits condoms offer are widely considered to offset their small landfill mass. Frequent condom or wrapper disposal in public areas such as a parks have been seen as a persistent litter problem (Catania, 2000). Condoms may interfere with the process of paternal tolerance, by which exposure of a woman's immune system to semen during unprotected sex may decrease the risk of pregnancy complications in subsequent pregnancies. The use of latex condoms by people with an allergy to latex can cause allergic symptoms such as skin irritation. In people with severe latex allergies, using a latex condom can potentially be life-threatening. Repeated use of latex condoms can also cause some people to develop an allergy to latex. In much of the Western world, the introduction of the pill in the 1960s was associated with a decline in condom use. In Japan, oral contraceptives were not approved for use until September 1999, and even then access was more restricted than in other industrialized nations. Perhaps because of this restricted access to hormonal contraception, Japan has the highest rate of condom usage in the world: in 2008, 80% of contraceptive users relied on condoms (Greenspan, 2000).

Cultural attitudes toward gender roles, contraception, and sexual activity vary greatly around the world, and range from extremely conservative to extremely liberal. But in places where condoms are misunderstood, mischaracterized, demonized, or looked upon with overall cultural disapproval, the prevalence of condom use is directly affected. In less-developed countries and among less-educated populations, misperceptions about how disease transmission and conception work negatively affect the use of condoms; additionally, in cultures with more traditional gender roles, women may feel uncomfortable demanding that their partners use condoms. As an example, Latino immigrants in the United States often face cultural barriers to condom use.
A study on female HIV prevention published in the Journal of Sex Health Research asserts that Latino women often lack the attitudes needed to negotiate safe sex due to traditional gender-role norms in the Latino community, and may be afraid to bring up the subject of condom use with their partners. Women who participated in the study often reported that because of the general machismo subtly encouraged in Latino culture, their male partners would be angry or possibly violent at the woman's suggestion that they use condoms. A similar phenomenon has been noted in a survey of low-income American black women; the women in this study also reported a fear of violence at the suggestion to their male partners that condoms be used (Avert, 2006).

In the African continent, condom promotion in some areas has been impeded by anti-condom campaigns by some Muslim and Catholic clerics. Among the Maasai in Tanzania, condom use is hampered by an aversion to wasting sperm, which is given sociocultural importance beyond reproduction. Sperm is believed to be an elixir to women and to have beneficial health effects. Maasai women believe that, after conceiving a child, they must have sexual intercourse repeatedly so that the additional sperm aids the child's development. Frequent condom use is also considered by some Maasai to cause impotence. Some women in Africa believe that condoms are for prostitutes and that respectable women should not use them. A few clerics even promote the idea that condoms are deliberately laced with HIV (Aluede, 2005).

### III. Methodology

Mugenda and Mugenda, (2003) defines research as an elaborate and explain the research topic; clear the area of research to other; limits and boundaries to a research; Tells the whole scenario of the research; Tells the modes and consequences; and Ensues time and resources are properly utilized. The study used a case study research design. Using the descriptive survey research design the study established the level of awareness and usage of condoms as prevention to HIV and aids among the youths with specific focus on Moi University. The case study research design is chosen because it allows the study to collect in depth data from the respondents using research instruments such as questionnaires which gave a detailed account of the state of the level of awareness and usage of condoms as prevention to HIV and AIDS.

The research used a sample size of 30% from the population as recommended by Oso and Onen (2005) who recommends at list 30% of the target population to be used for purposes of the research.

### A. Table 1: Sample size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Target population</th>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Sample size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100*0.3</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Author, 2011)

### IV. Results and Discussion

#### A. Challenges on condom usage

The researcher sought to establish the challenges faced by the respondents on condom usage with an aim of establishing the various problems facing the use of condoms. The findings were tabulated as indicated in the table below for interpretation purposes.

#### B. Table 2 Possible challenges in the use of condoms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge to condom usage</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partners are not willing to use condom</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>56.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condoms are not available in schools</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many people do not understand the need for use of students</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University does not undertake enough sensitization campaigns</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condoms are sold expensively in school</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myths and believes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The research findings indicated that majority of the respondents were of the opinion that the major challenge associated with condom usage was the unwillingness of the respondents partners in using a condom as
supported by 56.67% of the respondents. Other challenges as indicated by the respondents were the failure by the university to sensitize through condom campaigns as supported by 20% of the respondents and the failure by most of the people to understand the need by 13.33%.

V. Conclusions and Recommendations

On the potential challenges to the use of condoms to prevent HIV by the students, the research findings indicated that majority of the respondents were of the opinion that the major challenge associated with condom usage was the unwillingness of the respondents partners in using a condom. Other challenges as indicated by the respondents were the failure by the university to sensitize through condom campaigns and the failure by most of the people to understand the need. Thus the youth at this stage of their life do not make sound decision on life facts but tend to be influenced by friends and other members in their socialization circles thus most of them end up not using condoms.

Based on the research findings the researcher recommends that the University should avail condoms constantly in order to encourage condom usage considering the fact that most of the students are sexually active.

References