



ANALYSIS OF ATTITUDES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO LOW USE OF FEMALE CONDOMS
AS PREVENTIVE MEASURE FOR SPREAD OF HIV/AIDS IN ISOKA DISTRICT.

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The female condom offers an important source of protection against both sexually transmitted diseases (STIs), Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and pregnancy. It was introduced on the market in 1992 by the Chicago based female health company. The female condom has however been hailed as a method that contributes to women's empowerment because it places a degree of power in the hands of the women to control their sexual health and well-being and thus can be used to reduce HIV/AIDS transmission.

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to analyze attitudes that contribute to low use of female condom as a preventive measure for the spread of HIV/AIDS in Isoka District of Muchinga province in Zambia.

Results: This study reveals that 65% of the respondents feel female condoms make noise when used during sexual intercourse while 25% disagree to this statement. 88% of the respondents feel using a female condom during sexual intercourse is not comfortable while 12% disagreed to this feeling. Furthermore, 53% of the respondents did not know whether female condoms have unpleasant scent while 8% agreed as 39% disagreed. The study further reveals that 72% of the respondents feel female condoms are associated with prostitutes while 18%

disagreed and the remaining 10% did not know.

Conclusion: In conclusion, it may be said that low use of female condoms is in part due to some attitudes that young women have towards female condoms such as association with prostitutes, condoms making noise, breaking the trust that their partners have for them and the unpleasant scent that the female condoms produce. Future research should aim at mind set change among the young women so that the use of female condoms can improve and further contribute to reduction in the contraction of HIV/AIDS among young women in the District. Additionally, manufacturers of female condoms may look into redesigning the commodity so that the noise they make during use is reduced. The public health specialists and maternal child experts should

make sure that the advantages of female condoms in preventing HIV/AIDS are talked about as they interact with women during family and child health week and whenever they have chance to interact with the women at health facility level.

Key words: Female condom, transmission, attitudes, awareness, protection,

I.INTRODUCTION

The need for further research on the attitude towards female condom uses among women in Isoka is suggested by research finding indicating a discrepancy between knowledge of transmission of HIV/AIDS, new infections and deaths arising from HIV/AIDS and their actual actions to protect themselves by using female condoms. Though they have basic knowledge about HIV they still frequently engage themselves in risky sexual behaviors and female condom use is not a habit to most of them. There are different reasons for not using female condoms to protect themselves such as embarrassment about requesting for female condom, lack of negotiation with partners, fear of rejection by partner, interference with sexual pleasure, lack of assertiveness, low perceived need for female condom use and involvement in a committed relationship. But should these reasons be sacrificed for the devastating effect of HIV/AIDS where we see new infections and people die every day from AIDS related illnesses? This study investigates the effects that attitude has towards female condom use in Isoka District.

Globally 28.2 million people were accessing antiretroviral therapy as of 30 June 2021 while 37.7 million people were living with HIV in 2020, with about 1.5 million people acquiring new infections with HIV[1]. Surprisingly 53% of all people living with HIV were women and girls and about 84% of all the people living with HIV/AIDS knew their HIV status of the 2020.

According to [1], AIDS related deaths have been reduced by 64% since the peak in 2004 and by 47% since 2010, However in 2020, around 680,000 people died from AIDs related illnesses worldwide compared to 1.9 million people in 2004 and 1.3 million people in 2010. Infections by HIV is one of the most serious sexual health problems. The world health organizations reported a total of 36,700,000 people infected with HIV in the world and 2.1 million of these people became infected in 2015[2]. The use female condoms could try to help in reducing further the number of deaths and new infections if used correctly by the women.

In Nigeria a study by [3] revealed that despite good knowledge of the existence of female condoms and the advantage they offer, their acceptability and use among the young people remained poor, where as a study done in Cameroon by[4] reports that though 75.7% of the students were aware of the female condoms, 34.5% failed to use them during sexual intercourse and 69% were not in favor of the use of female condoms to their decreasing pleasure. Another study revealed that 64.1% of the female students believed that female condoms decreased sexual satisfaction and 52% believed that due to religious beliefs they would feel guilt using female condoms [5]

In 2017, 630,000 of the 1.1 million adults aged 15 and above living with HIV in Zambia were women [6]. HIV prevalence among young women was more than double that of young men for instance 5.7% of young women were living with HIV in 2017, compared to 2.5% of young men. The discrepancy exists due to a variety of complex and overlapping factors. Zambian society and culture are extremely patriarchal, limiting the power of women in relationships. Women experience gender-based violence and are often not in control of their sexual and reproductive health. Young women are more likely to have an older partner who may be living with HIV already, they are also likely to experience their sexual intercourse at a young age. Education attainment is also higher among young men than young women, which means men are more likely to be exposed to HIV/AIDS education than women [7]. Female condoms if used correctly reduce the rate of transmission by 99%.

II.MATERIALS AND METHODS

The design of the study was quantitative. The research was conducted in Isoka district of Muchinga province in Zambia. The study population included all female adults. Sample size was calculated using Yamane formula and was found to be 49. The respondents were sampled using probability simple random sampling. Data were collected using questionnaires that were given to each of the respondents recruited. The questionnaires contained statements on the attitudes with responses on a scale of three or two expressing range of attitudes including agree, disagree and I do not know. Data from the field was verified for completeness and consistence and analyzed using descriptive statistics of excel. Ethical approval was sought, purpose of the study was explained to respondents and informed consent were sought.

III.RESULTS

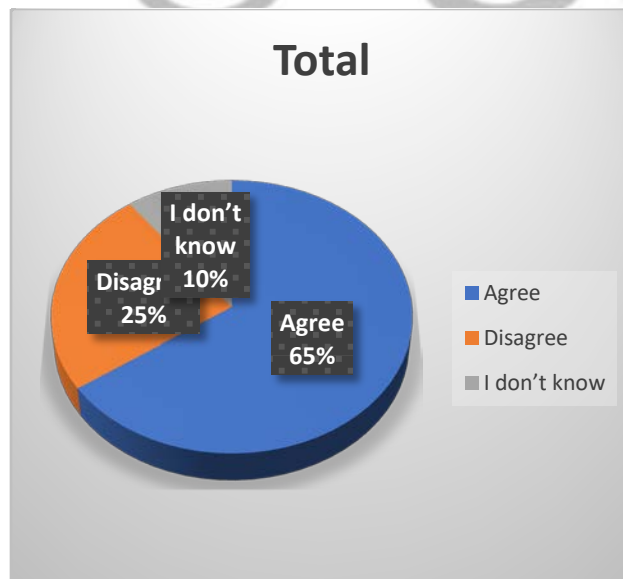


Figure 3. 1: Female condoms make noise when used during sexual intercourse.

Source: Field data,2021

65% of the respondents agreed while 25% disagreed.10% did not know if female condoms make noise when used during sexual intercourse.

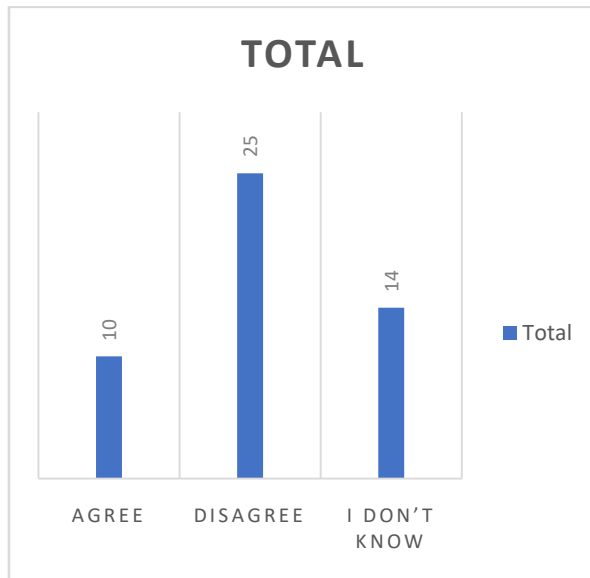


Figure 3.2: A female condom is difficult to insert or use.

Source: Field data,2021

51% of the respondents Disagreed while 20% agreed that female condoms are difficult to insert or use.29% did not know.

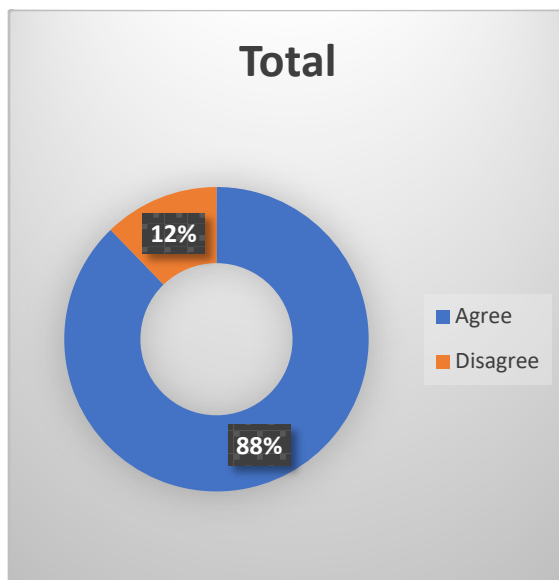


Figure 3. 3. Using a female condom during sexual intercourse is not comfortable

Source: Field data,2021

88% of the respondents agreed that that using a female condom during sexual intercourse is not comfortable while 12% disagreed.

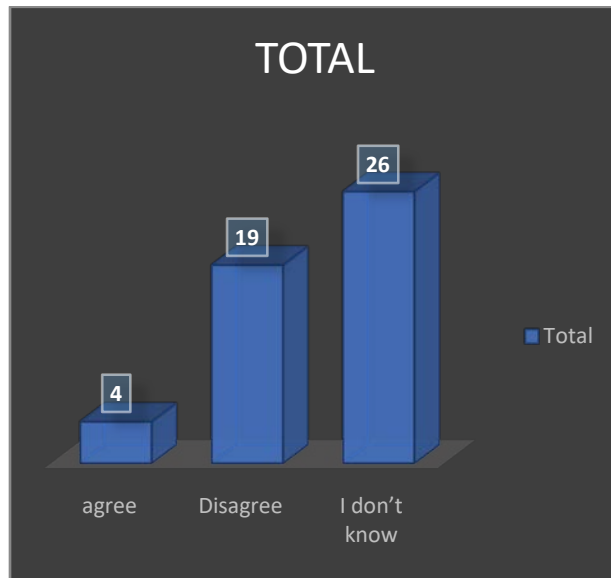


Figure 3.4. The female condom has unpleasant scent

Source: Field data ,2021

39% of the respondents disagreed to the statement that female condoms have unpleasant scent while 8% agreed.53% did not know.

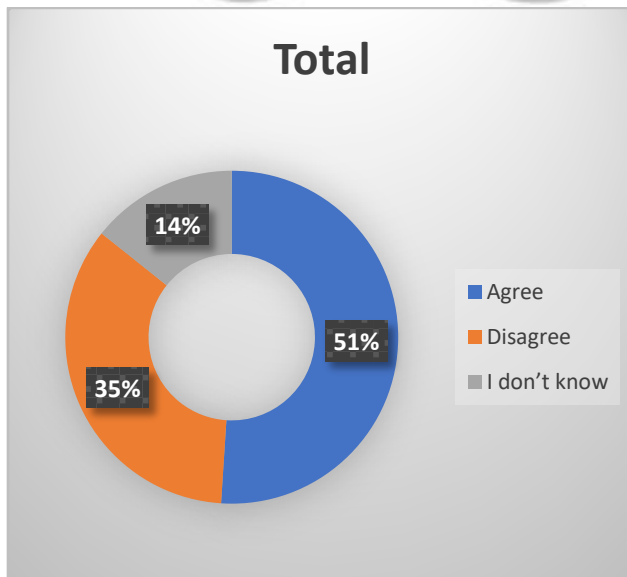


Figure 3.5. Using female condoms during sexual intercourse implies lack of trust for your partner

Source: Field data ,2021

51% of the respondents agreed while 35% disagreed to the statement that using female condoms during sexual intercourse implies lack of trust for your partner.14% did not know.

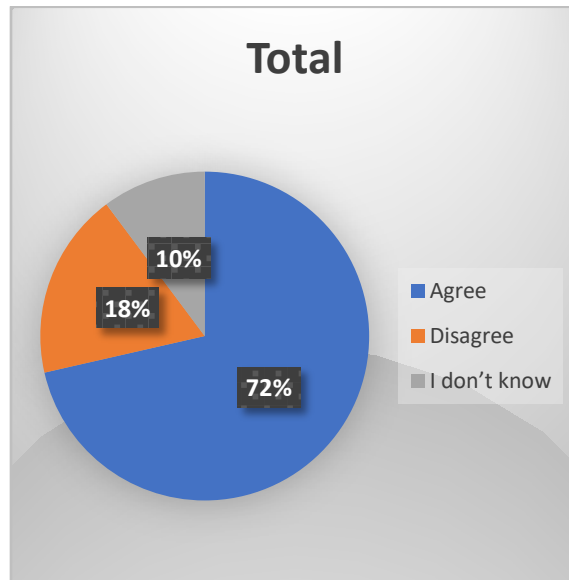


Figure 3.6. Female condoms are associated with prostitutes.

Source: Field data,2021

72% of the respondents agreed that female condoms are associated with prostitutes while 18% disagreed.10% did not know.

IV.DISCUSSION

Female condoms have been in use for a long time as both birth control method and preventive measure for the spread of HIV/AIDS in what is called sheath method. When used correctly female condoms can help in reducing the transmission of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STIs).

The aim of this study was to analyze attitudes that contribute to low use of female condoms as a preventive measure for the spread of HIV/AIDS and other STIs in Isoka district of Muchinga province in Zambia.

When respondents were asked to express their feelings about female condoms making noise when used during sexual intercourse,65% agreed while 25% disagreed and 10% did not know if female condoms make noise during sexual intercourse. Of interest is the 65% that feel female condoms make noise. This noise could be the reason for low use or utilisation of this commodity in health facilities.

Moreover, this study finds that 51% of the respondents disagree with the statement that female condoms are difficult to use or insert while 20% agreed and 29% did not know whether female condoms are difficult to insert or not. This means female condoms are easy to use but it is just

the attitude by the users that make it seem as if they are difficult to use. This attitude however should not be taken as the cause for low utilisation of female condoms from health facilities within Isoka district. The results of this study are in line with research by [3] which reveals that despite good knowledge and advantage female condoms offer, their acceptability and use among young people remained poor.

When asked about comfortability of female condoms 88% agreed that female condoms are not comfortable while 12% disagreed. This may be due to female condoms decreasing sexual pleasure just like the study by [4] that revealed that 75.7% of respondents were aware about female condoms but 34.5% failed to use them and 69% were not in favor because of decreasing sexual pleasure. The scent of the female condoms was another attitude that was thought to contribute to low use of female condoms by young women though 39% of the respondents disagreed while 8% agreed and 53% did not know. If 53% did not know it can be concluded easily that they never used the female condoms.

Furthermore, when asked about the use of female condoms implying lack of trust for the partner, this study reveals that 51% agreed while 35% disagreed and 14% did not know. This means most of them do not use female condoms for fear of losing trust for their partners. This attitude plunges them into contracting HIV/AIDS.

Additionally, 72% of the respondents agreed while 18% disagreed and 10% did not know about the feeling that female condoms are associated with prostitutes. This finding reveals that some people fail to use female condoms thinking their partners will associate them to prostitutes.

V.CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it may be said that low use of female condoms is in part due to some attitudes that young women have towards female condoms such as association with prostitutes, condoms making noise, breaking the trust that their partners have for them and

the unpleasant scent that the female condoms produce. Future research should aim at mind set change among the young women so that the use of female condoms can improve and further contribute to reduction in the contraction of HIV/AIDS among young women in the District. Additionally, manufacturers of female condoms may look into redesigning the commodity so that the noise they make during use is reduced. The public health specialists and maternal child experts should make sure that the advantages of female condoms in preventing HIV/AIDS are talked about as they interact with women during family and child health week and whenever they have chance to interact with the women at health facility level.

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