

A Network Intervention Is Feasible To Implement and Promote the Female Condom among Ethnically-Diverse U.S. Women

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Background: HIV among Women

- Globally, women account for almost half of 33 million people now living with HIV.
- In the United States, women represented 27% of the estimated 544,749 adults and adolescents living with HIV/AIDS at the end of 2007.



Background: Female Condom

- The female condom is the only female-controlled barrier method currently available to protect women from HIV.
- The original female condom, FC1, is made of polyurethane.
- FC2 is a new second generation female condom made of synthetic nitrile.
- FC2 has the same design and instructions for use as FC1.
- FC2 is cheaper to produce than FC1.



Background: Network-based Interventions

- Network-based interventions have been successful in modifying HIV-related risk behaviors.
- However, few HIV prevention approaches have targeted women's social networks to promote the female condom.



Research Objectives

- To design a condom promotion network intervention
- To test the feasibility of implementing and assessing this intervention with U.S. women and their social networks.



Methods: Recruitment

- We recruited, as Female Condom Advocates, 13 women (6 African American, 3 Asian, 1 Latina, 3 Caucasian) in San Francisco during October - November 2007 who were:
 - at least 18 years old
 - willing to promote female condoms to their social network members over three months, and
 - willing to recruit these members for assessment.
- These 13 Advocates were asked to recruit women within their social networks (up to 7 per Advocate).



Methods: Assessments

- Outcome evaluation: Female Condom Advocates' Recruits completed questionnaires at baseline and three months.
- Process evaluation: Female Condom Advocates completed three monthly check-in calls for their intervention implementation activities.

Methods: Female Condom Advocate Training

- Attended a three-hour individual training session on :
 - Female condoms
 - Effective communication skills
 - How to promote female condoms to social network members
- Instructed to promote female condoms over three months by:
 - Having an initial Female Condom Education (FCE) session in either an individual or group format
 - Having 3 subsequent monthly follow-up sessions
 - Distributing male and female condom supplies

Methods: Monetary Incentives

- Female Condom Advocates
 - \$10 for each Recruit (Max = \$70 for 7 Recruits)
 - \$50 for attending a 3-hour training session
 - \$50 for implementing an initial FCE session
 - \$10 for each follow-up conversation with Recruits (\$30 per Recruit; Max = \$210 for 7 Recruits)
- Female Condom Advocates' Recruits
 - \$30 for baseline assessments
 - \$50 for follow-up assessments

Results: Recruitment & Retention

- The 13 Female Condom Advocates recruited 59 eligible women from their social networks (4.5 per Advocate).
- Of 59 Recruits, 54 (92%) returned for follow-up assessments.

Results: Sample Characteristics

- Study participants were ethnically diverse.
- The mean age of participants were 28 years.
- They were mostly never married.
- A majority were college educated.

	%
Ethnicity	
African American	53
Asian American	19
Latina	6
White	22
Age (mean = 28)	
18 - 19	9
20 - 24	25
25 - 29	27
30 - 39	39
Marital Status	
Never married	92
Ever married	8
Education	
Less than high school	13
High school	34
Some college	24
College graduate	29

Results: Network Intervention Implementation (1)

- Female Condom Advocates held an initial Female Condom Education (FCE) session with 48 (81%) of the 59 Recruits.
 - an average of 66 minutes per FCE session
 - 29% individually and 71% in groups
- The Advocates reported having a total of 195 follow-up conversations with their Recruits
 - 56% of 59 Recruits in Month 1
 - 67% of 59 Recruits in Month 2
 - 83% of 59 Recruits in Month 3

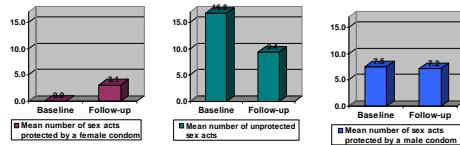
Results: Network Intervention Implementation (2)

- Almost all of the Female Condom Advocates (92%) reported being “very” or “extremely” confident with the level of training received during the Female Condom Advocate Training.
- A majority of the Advocates reported little (58%) or moderate (25%) difficulty in scheduling the FCE sessions with their Recruits; only two (17%) had a “very” or “extremely” difficult scheduling problem.
- No Advocates reported any difficulties in conducting the FCE sessions.

Results: Recruits’ Satisfaction with the Intervention

- Four out of five Recruits (80%) rated the FEC session as “extremely” or “very” useful.
- An overwhelming majority of Recruits (86%) rated their Advocate to be “extremely” or “very” effective in encouraging them to use the female condom.
- More than four out of five Recruits (83%) reported that they would be interested in working as a Female Condom Advocate if the opportunity presented itself in the future.

Results: Female and Male Condom Use and Unprotected Sex Acts



Conclusions

- Our pilot study found that:
 - Implementing the female condom education network intervention was feasible among women.
 - This network intervention increased female condom use.
 - It also reduced unprotected sex acts without lowering male condom use.
 - Female condoms supplemented (not replaced) male condom use, so that higher levels of protected sex were obtained.
- Future randomized clinical trials should evaluate the efficacy of this intervention with a larger sample of women who are at risk for HIV.