

## Primary Prevention

### Female Condom Intervention Trials (FEMIT)

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**Project Description:** The FEMIT study developed and evaluated a theoretically- and empirically-based intervention to increase use of the female condom among ethnically diverse women who are between the ages of 18 to 39 and who engage in multiple sexual partnerships. The aims are:

- To develop an intervention promoting the female condom and evaluate the efficacy of the intervention in increasing use of the female condom by comparison with a control condition of the same duration.
- To assess the impact of the intervention on female condom self-efficacy, sexual communication, gender role expectations, sexual comfort, initial female condom use experiences, attitudes toward the female condom, partner attitudes toward the female condom, partner objections to female condom use, and social support for the adoption of female condom use.
- To examine the mechanisms of change by which the intervention affects the study outcomes.

The intervention was evaluated in a randomized clinical trial design. Study participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: female condom skills training and women's general health promotion. Both conditions consist of four sessions. Subject recruitment took place in six Planned Parenthood clinics of the San Francisco Bay Area. Eligible subjects were interviewed at baseline, 3 months, and 6 months using a standard survey questionnaire. Attitudinal, psychosexual, and behavioral data were collected to evaluate the intervention.

**Interesting Findings:** Our qualitative study of 62 women attending a family planning clinic explored various communication styles they used to introduce and negotiate female condom use in their sexual relationships. We further examined how different introduction and negotiation styles were related to actual use of the device. The device was introduced using a direct, semidirect, indirect, or nonverbal communication approach. Use of the female condom was negotiated by avoiding sex, using humor, discussing the possibility of using the condom, or being argumentative with partners. The outcome of introducing and negotiating female condom use was often mediated by other factors including partner characteristics, relationship power dynamics, situational context, and use of additional discourse strategies (e.g., describing the female condom as a sexual toy or taking the opportunity to educate partners about the female condom). Less direct approaches appeared to be as effective in facilitating use of the female condom as more direct approaches. Female condom introduction and negotiation styles that continued to engage their partners by using additional discourse strategies led to more frequent use of the device. (Choi KH, Wojcicki J, Valencia-Garcia D. Introducing and negotiating the use of female condoms in sexual relationships: qualitative interviews with women attending a family planning clinic. *AIDS Behav.* 2004 Sep;8(3):251-61)

**Project End Date:** 2005