

Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health
Volume 35, Number 3, May/June 2003

Heterosexually Active Men's Beliefs About Methods for Preventing Sexually Transmitted Diseases

By Mary Rogers Gillmore, Sorrel Stielstra, Bu Huang, Sharon A. Baker, Blair Beadnell and Diane M. Morrison

CONTEXT: Most research on heterosexual transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) has focused on women. However, heterosexual transmission of STDs cannot be prevented without a better understanding of men's, as well as women's, sexual beliefs and behaviors.

METHODS: Heterosexually active men's beliefs about four methods of STD prevention—abstinence, mutual monogamy, use of male condoms and use of female condoms—were elicited through open-ended interviews. A survey based on these responses was administered to a random sample of 486 heterosexually active men, and scores were calculated to examine their beliefs about each behavior. Additional analyses explored how these beliefs were related to men's characteristics and to their actual behavior.

RESULTS: The men held both positive and negative beliefs about the outcomes of using each method and thought that their partners, close friends, health care providers, family members and, to some extent, friends at church had opinions about whether they should use each method. Multiple regression analyses showed that the men's beliefs were related to their marital status and, to some extent, their race or ethnicity and education. Beliefs about the outcomes of practicing abstinence, practicing mutual monogamy and using male condoms with steady partners were significantly related to these behaviors; beliefs about whether they had support for practicing monogamy or using male condoms with steady partners were significant predictors of doing so.

CONCLUSIONS: Encouraging safer-sex practices among heterosexually active men will require addressing their beliefs and perceived norms about alternative methods of preventing STDs.

Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health, 2003, 35(3):121-129

» [table of contents](#)

» [search the PSRH archive](#)

» [guidelines for authors](#)

Mary Rogers Gillmore is professor, Sorrel Stielstra is research assistant, Bu Huang is research assistant professor, Sharon A. Baker and Blair Beadnell are research scientists, and Diane M. Morrison is professor, all at the School of Social Work, University of Washington, Seattle.

DOI:10.1363/3512103

[Full text in PDF](#)

[Full-featured version available to subscribers](#)

Personal subscribers should contact Wiley customer service with any questions related to their online access. Phone: 1 (800) 835-6770 or E-mail: cs-journals@wiley.com.