



*Condom use can be promoted through various ways within a health communication context, including mass media, entertainment-education, interpersonal communication and school-based interventions. This brief highlights key studies demonstrating the impact of health communication on condom use in low- and middle-income countries.*

## Mass Media

A number of mass media interventions have focused on condom use and promotion. From PSAs to drama programs, various researchers have found that exposure to these interventions are positively associated with condom use in a number of contexts.

- Several global reviews (which included approximately 15 studies from Africa, Asia, and Latin America) found positive associations between exposure to mass media messages promoting condom use and condom use.<sup>1,2</sup>
- The greater exposure to mass media programming on condom use, the greater likelihood of condom use, according to studies conducted in South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe.<sup>3-5</sup>
- Fifteen articles that addressed the influence of TV, posters, radio, newspapers movies and festivals, found that exposure to these mediums leads to an increased likelihood of condom use.<sup>6-20</sup>
- Twelve interventions examined for a systematic review of mass media campaigns reported on condom use and of those, five saw significant differences between intervention and control groups, and three found significant increases in whether condoms had ever been used.<sup>9</sup>
- In Brazil, the Carnival Campaign, a national communication campaign aimed at changing social norms around young women being comfortable with purchasing and carrying condoms, found success through TV and billboard messages.<sup>9</sup>
- Results from the *100% Jeune* social marketing campaign in Cameroon showed effectiveness at increasing consistent condom use with a causal partner among both males (45 percent to 70 percent) and females (29 percent to 70 percent).<sup>21</sup>
- In South Africa, awareness of HIV communication programs had a positive, dose-response relationship with self-reported condom use at first sex.<sup>22</sup>



## Entertainment Education (EE)

Entertainment Education is a health communication approach that incorporates education subtly, but effectively, into entertainment to foster positive behavior change. Mass media is typically the vehicle used to disseminate health messages.

- An evaluation of an EE radio soap opera that focused on HIV transmission in Ethiopia found that more than 90 percent of listeners intended to use condoms.<sup>23</sup>
- Exposure to a weekly television soap opera (*SIDA dans la Cité*) in Cote d'Ivoire that promoted condom use was associated with increased condom use.<sup>24</sup>
- The more South Africans were exposed to the popular *Soul City* TV and radio program, the more likely they were to request their partner to use a condom.<sup>25</sup>

## Interpersonal Communication

Health communication interventions that focus on interpersonal communication about condom use generally include the provision of communication skills to discuss sexual behavior-related topics with a partner, family or friends.

- Increased condom use was strongly associated with interpersonal communication about condom use in Zambia.<sup>26</sup>
- A meta-analysis found that interpersonal communication within the context of couples voluntary counseling and testing was positively associated with condom use.<sup>27</sup>
- A positive example from Cameroon demonstrated that adolescents who had an encounter with a peer educator were significantly more likely to be current condom users.<sup>28</sup>
- *Stepping Stones*, an HIV prevention program in South Africa, resulted in increased condom use with participants advising friends to use condoms.<sup>29</sup>

## School-based Interventions

Health communication interventions can also be embedded within schools. These interventions historically utilize curricula that include skills building, such as interpersonal skills training and condom demonstrations.

- Students participating in an in-school HIV drama education program had higher rates of condom use compared to non-participating students in South Africa.<sup>30</sup>

- In South Africa, students who were exposed to a life skills curriculum that included sex-related topics had higher rates of condom use than students who were not exposed.<sup>31</sup>
- A global meta-analysis found that curricula that teach students how to use condoms were associated with higher levels of condom use compared to curricula that do not include information on how to use condoms.<sup>32</sup>
- In Liberia, a group randomized control trial compared an adapted eight-module HIV prevention to a general health curriculum in elementary and middle schools. Results found that the frequency of condom use was found to be significantly higher in the intervention group compared to the control after nine months, but not at the three month follow-up.<sup>33</sup>

From mass media to school-based interventions, health communication programs have had a positive impact on condom use itself, as well as on variables that lead to behavior change, including knowledge, attitudes and intentions to use condoms.

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