

Condom Use at Last Sex Among Unmarried Latino Men: An Event Level Analysis

Gladys E. Ibañez,^{1,4} Barbara Van Oss Marin,^{1,2} Cristina Villareal,³ and Cynthia A. Gomez²

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Information about a specific sexual event can shed light on factors that facilitate or impede condom use. Data were collected by a random digit-dialing telephone survey of unmarried Latino adults in 10 states with large Latino populations. In multivariate analyses, among heterosexually active unmarried Latino men ($n = 591$), those who reported having a condom available, engaging in a conversation about condoms, having a non-steady, casual partner or a one-time partner, were more likely to use condoms. Men were more likely to use condoms when no other birth control was used or pregnancy was not possible than other men. Findings were similar for both low and high acculturated men. Interventions that increase condom availability may be particularly useful for reducing HIV risk among Latino heterosexual men.

KEY WORDS: event analysis; condom use; latino; men; condom availability; language acculturation.

INTRODUCTION

The HIV/AIDS epidemic in the US has disproportionately affected racial/ethnic minority populations (CDC, 2002). Latinos, for example, represent 13% of the U.S. population (including residents of Puerto Rico), but account for 19% of the total number of new U.S. AIDS cases (CDC, 2002). Sexual risk behaviors are common in Latino men. About 60% of unmarried Latino men as well as 18% of married men reported multiple sexual partners in the past 12 months (Marin *et al.*, 1993a). In two studies with nationally representative samples, condom use in Latino men with multiple partners was low, ranging from 29% (Sabogal *et al.*, 1993) to 49% (Marin *et al.*, 1993a, 1993b).

Condom use is one way to reduce HIV/AIDS infection among Latino men. A better understanding

of the context in which condom use occurs or does not occur for Latino men may assist in development of interventions to increase their use. Toward this end, this study examines predictors of condom use at one specific sexual encounter for heterosexually-active, unmarried Latino men.

Traditionally, studies have focused on intrapersonal variables such as people's intentions, cognitive beliefs, perceptions, and self-efficacy as predictors of condom use (Ajzen, 1991; Bandura, 1992). However, event-specific variables, that is, factors present during the actual sexual experience, such as alcohol/drug use, having condoms available, and the type of relationship, may more accurately explain sexual behavior (Bryan *et al.*, 2002; Temple *et al.*, 1993).

A variety of event-level variables have been studied. Condom availability studies suggest that both men and women are less likely to use condoms if they are not readily available (Bryan *et al.*, 2002; Gold *et al.*, 1992). Among Latinos, men are more likely to have protected sex if they carry condoms or have them available (Marin *et al.*, 1993b; Sacco *et al.*, 1993). Latino men who performed condom preparatory behaviors felt that it was their expected role as the male partner and provided a sense of control over the relationship (Sacco *et al.*, 1993). Still, these studies were focused on overall condom use

¹Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for HIV, STD, and TB, Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention, Atlanta GA.

²Center for AIDS Prevention Studies, University of California, San Francisco, CA.

³Kaiser Oakland in the Behavioral Medicine Clinic, Oakland, CA.

⁴Correspondence should be directed to Gladys E. Ibañez, Nova Southeastern University, 3200 S. University Drive, Fort Lauderdale FL; e-mail: igladys@nova.edu.

and condom availability and not on a specific sexual event.

Other studies focused on condom discussion. That is, if condom use is discussed before sex, there is a greater chance condoms will be used (Abraham *et al.*, 1999; Bryan *et al.*, 2002). However, communication between men and women regarding issues of sexuality is discouraged and limited in Latino culture (Marin and Gomez, 1996). To the authors' knowledge, there are no event-specific studies that focus on condom discussion in Latino men.

Studies on general alcohol use find that Latinos are more likely to drink frequently and to consume larger quantities than do Whites or Blacks (Caetano and Kaskutas, 1995). Furthermore, Latino men who are younger, single, and heavier drinkers are more likely to engage in unsafe sexual behavior than White men (Caetano and Hines, 1995). When reporting on the most recent sexual encounter, some studies have found that drinking before sex is more likely to result in unprotected sex (Trocki and Leigh, 1991), while other studies have found that alcohol use actually leads to more condom use (Graves and Hines, 1997). These inconsistent and counter-intuitive findings may be due to situational cues that either impede or facilitate risk behaviors (MacDonald *et al.*, 2000). Unfortunately, more event-based research is needed to understand the association between alcohol and condom use for Latino men.

Men also report that their decision to use condoms is partner specific (Ford and Norris, 1995; Forrest *et al.*, 1993). Latino men, like other men, are more likely to use condoms with casual partners than regular partners, and they also perceive fewer barriers to condom use with casual partners (Marin *et al.*, 1993a, 1993b; San Doval *et al.*, 1995). One possible explanation for the relationship difference is the meaning placed on condoms by individuals. For Latino men, condom use might imply infidelity (Forrest *et al.*, 1993), or a lack of closeness or intimacy in primary relationships (Ford and Norris, 1995), whereas condoms may be viewed as an acceptable form of contraception within casual or new relationships.

The potential for pregnancy may be a strong motivation for condom use. Often, Latinos primarily view condoms as a form of contraception and secondarily as a method of preventing sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS (Yeakley and Gant, 1997). When sexually-active Latinos are satisfied with another form of contraception (e.g., the pill, IUD Yeakley and Gant, 1997), or there is a physical

reason that a pregnancy is unlikely, they will not see a need for condom use. Moreover, Latino men may not be concerned with pregnancy prevention if traditional gender roles, or masculinity, are partially defined as the ability to father children (Pivnick, 1993).

Finally, sexual behaviors may change as Latino men adapt to U.S. culture. The process of acculturation is described as a change in beliefs, attitudes, values, and behaviors that occur as a result of exposure to a different culture (Keefe and Padilla, 1989). Adherence to traditional gender roles may decrease as Latinos adapt to a culture with less rigid gender roles and more permissive attitudes (Sabogal *et al.*, 1993). No study has looked at acculturation as it impacts condom use at the most recent sexual event.

The present study poses the following research questions: what are the circumstances of the most recent sexual encounter of unmarried, heterosexually-active Latino men; what event-specific variables predict condom use at last sex for these Latino men; and is acculturation related to event-specific variables? It was hypothesized that Latino men who have condoms available, discuss condom use with their partner, have a new or casual partner at last sex, and report the need for condoms as a contraceptive will be more likely to report condom use.

METHOD

Participants

This study is based on data drawn from a nationally representative sample of unmarried Latino adults using a random-digit-dial telephone survey in the US. Telephone interviews were conducted between August and December of 1993. Altogether, 1,600 Latino unmarried adults were interviewed, 754 (47%) of whom were men. Of these men, 591 reported having had sexual intercourse with one or more women in the previous year; these men will be the focus of this paper. The men not included in this report either said they had no sex partners in the last 12 months ($n = 126$; 17%) or reported that their sex partner(s) were men ($n = 37$; 5%). We also asked about length of relationship and multiple partners. Length of the relationship with the most recent partner ranged from 1–7302 day (20 years). Of the men who reported that this was their first time having sex with this partner, 14% had multiple partners in the last 30 days.

The mean age of the 591 men in the sample was 26.5 (range 18–49 years, $SD = 7.5$). Forty-three

percent of the participants were born in the United States, 28% were from Mexico, 14% from Central America, 6% from South America, as well as 3% from Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic. Less than 2% were born in Spain or an unlisted country. Of those men born in the U.S., 66% were of Mexican descent, 14% Caribbean, 10% Spanish, 5% Central and South America, and 5% Other. Mean education level was 11.8 years ($SD = 3.4$). Forty-four percent of the men were interviewed in English and 56% were interviewed in Spanish.

Measures

The questionnaire was originally developed in Spanish, and subsequently a back translation and centering procedure was used to ensure that the English version and Spanish version were equivalent in meaning (Marin and Marin, 1991). The final version of the interview took an average of 30 min to complete.

Condom Use at Last Sexual Event

Men whose most recent sexual partner was a woman were asked about that most recent event: "Did you use a condom?" Responses were either "yes" (1) or "no" (0).

Condom Availability

Condom availability was measured by three items regarding participant's access to condoms prior to their last sexual event (e.g. "Were you carrying a condom with you that day?"; "Was your partner carrying condoms that day?"; and "Were there condoms in the place where you had sex?"). Responses were either "yes" (1) or "no" (0) for each item. If any item was answered "yes," then condom availability was scored 1. If all items were answered "no," then condom availability was 0.

Sexual Partnership Type

Four items measured the type of sexual partner during the most recent sexual event (e.g. "That sexual encounter with 'Mary,' was it the first time you had sex with her?"; "Did you expect to have sex with 'Mary' again?"; "Do you consider 'Mary' to be your steady partner?"; and "Do you and 'Mary' live in the same house?"). Responses were either

"yes" (1) or "no" (0) for each item. Sexual Partnership Type was measured as a categorical variable with four levels. For men who said that this event was the first time they had sex with this partner and that they did not expect to have sex again, Partnership Type was "one time only" (3). For men who expected to have sex with this partner again, but did not consider her steady, Partnership Type was "regular, not steady" (2). "Steady but not live-in" partners were scored (1), and "steady live-in" partners were coded (0).

Communication

Two items assessed communication (e.g. "Did you discuss using condoms before having sex?" and "Did you or your partner start the conversation?"). Communication was measured as a "yes" (1) response to the first item. If the answer was "no," then Communication was 0.

Alcohol Use

Two items measured whether the participant used alcohol prior to their last sexual event: "How many glasses of beer or wine had you had in the two hours before sex?", and "Were you under the influence of alcohol when you had sex that day?" If participant had more than zero drinks or answered yes to the second item, alcohol use was scored 1; otherwise, it was scored 0.

The Need for Condoms as Contraceptive

Five items were used to measure if condoms were needed for contraception: "That last time you had sex with 'Mary,' were you using a method of birth control such as the pill, diaphragm or IUD?"; "Was 'Mary' pregnant that last time you had sex?"; "Would you and 'Mary' have liked to have a pregnancy at that time?"; "Is there a reason why 'Mary' is unable to have children either due to an operation or some other cause?"; and "Is there a reason why you are unable to have children either due to an operation or some other cause?"). The need for condoms as contraceptive is measured as a two-level categorical variable: did not need condoms as contraceptive because they used another form of birth control or because of other reasons (e.g., they wanted pregnancy or were physically unable to get pregnant) (0); and did need condoms for contraception (1).

Two covariates, age and acculturation, were included in the multivariate analyses. *Level of Acculturation*. Four items measured participants' level of acculturation, using items that assessed their use of Spanish or English (e.g., "In general, what language do you read?" "What language do you generally speak?;" "In which language do you usually think?;" and "What language do you usually speak with your friends?"). Response format was "Spanish only" (1) to "English only" (5). The construct of acculturation was measured as a continuous variable with higher ratings indicating higher levels of acculturation. The measure has good reliability ($\alpha = .90$) and validity (Marin and Marin, 1991).

Procedure

The sampling technique employed by this study was designed by Mitofsky International and selected by Survey Sampling, Inc. The sample was designed for the purpose of selecting a sample of 1,600 Latinos who have the following characteristics: (1) Not married, (2) are between the ages of 18 to 49, (3) live in Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, New Mexico, New Jersey, New York or Texas, and (4) live in households with telephones. These states represent 89% and 83% of the Latino population in the U.S. in 1990 and 2000 respectively (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). The sampling technique entailed a two-stage, two-strata modified Waksberg approach (Waksberg, 1978), which allows a representative sample of respondents to be drawn from an infrequently occurring population. A more complete description of the sampling technique is available from the second author.

A telephone screener was initially employed when an adult answered the telephone in order to assess participant eligibility. The screener was designed to identify the ethnicity, age and marital status of household members. The ethnicity screener asked "Do you or any of the members of your household consider yourselves to be Hispanics or Latinos?" One eligible Latino respondent in the household was randomly selected for interview by the computer that assisted the interviewing process. Interviewers were bilingual adults, and all participants were interviewed in their language of choice. To assure that gender of interviewer did not bias our results, we assessed responses to the most sensitive sexual questions, comparing men interviewed by men to men interviewed

by women. No differences were found by gender of interviewer. Interviewers were experienced and received specific training in the questionnaire as well as training on how to handle the highly personal issues raised in this research.

If a participant met the criteria for inclusion in the study, they were given an explanation of the nature of the survey and were alerted to the sensitive topics in the interview. Participants were informed that all of their responses were completely confidential and that they had the freedom to not answer any questions or discontinue if they chose to do so. Participants were informed that the interview would take approximately 20 min of their time.

After ineligible telephone numbers (e.g. non-residential establishments) were eliminated, the ethnicity of adults in the household was determined for 79.5% of remaining telephone numbers. Ninety percent of the participants who met the criteria for the study provided complete interviews. Multiplying these two proportions, a response rate of 71.7% was obtained. This response rate compared favorably with other telephone surveys (Kalton, 1983). Only 2% of eligible Latinos refused to interview and 3% discontinued the interview prior to completion.

Data Analyses

Analyses were conducted first using unweighted data, then weighted data. Results were fairly similar for both types of analysis and all results reported here use data weighted by the sampling weight. Frequencies were conducted for all key variables and each item that comprised the variables. Cross tabulations and logistic regressions were performed to examine the univariate associations between condom use and event variables. Multiple regressions were conducted to examine the univariate associations between condom use and acculturation. Lastly, logistic regressions were conducted to examine the multivariate associations between condom use at last sex and event variables.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics for acculturation and event-specific questions asked of the 591 Latino men are presented in Table I, along with the variables

Table I. Descriptive Statistics for Key Variables (*n* = 591)

Key Variables	Mean (SD)	
	2.97 (1.25)	
	N (591)	Percentage (100%)
Condom use at last Sexual Event	333	56
Condom Availability	451	76
Respondent carried condoms	371	63
Partner carried condoms	88	15
Condoms at the place sex occurred	264	45
Condom Discussion	308	52
Respondent talked about condoms	308	52
Who started conversation:		
Partner	107	18
Respondent	200	34
Partner Type		
Steady, live in	90	15
Steady, not live in	317	54
Sex more than once, but not steady	127	22
One-time only	50	9
Respondent Alcohol Use	162	27
Had alcohol before sex	162	27
Under influence of alcohol that day	53	9
Needed condoms as contraceptive:	285	48
Did not need condoms as contraceptive due to reason :	279	47
Birth Control Used at Last Sex ^a	198	34
Partner Pregnant at Last Sex	14	2
Both partners want pregnancy	25	4
Reason partner can't get pregnant	38	7
Reason respondent can't get partner pregnant	8	1

^aData missing or unclear for 27 respondents.

used in later analyses. Logistic regression tests were conducted to determine the associations between the event-specific variables and condom use at last sex (see Table II). Latino men who reported having con-

doms readily available, discussing condom use with partner before the sexual event, and needing condoms for contraception were more likely to use condoms at last sex. Men who reported a steady, not live-in partner, a regular but not steady partner, or a new/casual partner were also more likely to use condoms than men who reported a steady, live-in partner.

Multiple regressions indicated that condom use at last sex did not differ between less and highly acculturated men. In fact, there was only one acculturation difference among men regarding event-specific variables. The exception was that less acculturated men were more likely to have discussed condoms at last sex than highly acculturated men. There were no significant acculturation differences in condom availability, partner type, alcohol/drug use, or need of condoms for contraception.

The multi-variate analyses examined the effect of age, acculturation, and event-specific variables on condom use at last sex. Logistic regressions were conducted with age, entered in Model 1, followed by acculturation in Model 2, and event-specific variables (condom availability, condom discussion, partner type, alcohol use, and need of condoms for contraception) entered in Model 3. In Model 1 of the regression, older Latino men were less likely to use condoms (See Table III). In Model 2, acculturation was not a significant predictor of condom use. Once event-specific variables were entered in Model 3, age was no longer a significant predictor. Of the event-specific variables, condom availability, condom discussion, partner type, and the need of condoms for contraception were all significant predictors of condom use at last sex. With all variables in the model,

Table II. Proportion and Odds Ratio of Condom Use Based on Event Variables

Variables	Proportion who Used a Condom	Odds Ratio	95% [CI]
Condom was available**	325 (of 451) 72%	41.27	[19.63, 86.79]
Condoms not available	8 (of 136) 6%		
Condoms were discussed**	229 (of 307) 75%	5.13	[3.60, 7.30]
Condoms not discussed	103 (of 283) 36%		
Sexual Partner Type:			
Steady, live in [reference group]	27 (of 90) 30%		
Steady, not live-in**	178 (of 317) 56%	3.04	[1.84, 5.02]
Sex more than once, not steady**	86 (of 128) 67%	4.84	[2.70, 8.67]
One-time only**	38 (of 51) 75%	7.09	[3.25, 15.48]
Respondent used alcohol	98 (of 162) 61%	1.26	[0.88, 1.83]
Respondent did not use alcohol	235 (of 429) 55%		
Needed condoms as contraception**	208 (of 285) 73%	4.32	[3.02, 6.16]
Did not need condoms as contraception	107 (of 278) 39%		

***p* < .01, **p* < .05, CI: Confidence Intervals.

Table III. Condom Use at Last Sex Regressed on Event Variables

Variables	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	B	OR	95% [CI]	B	OR	95% [CI]	B	OR	95% [CI]
Age	-0.03	0.97*	[0.95, 0.99]	-0.03	0.97*	[0.95, 0.99]	-0.01	1.00	[0.97, 1.03]
Acculturation				0.13	1.14	[0.99, 1.30]	0.18	1.20	[0.99, 1.46]
Condom Availability							3.61	36.86**	[15.00, 90.57]
Condom Discussion							1.43	4.18**	[2.58, 6.78]
Partner type:									
Steady, live-in [reference]									
Steady, not live-in							0.47	1.60	[0.81, 3.17]
Sex more than once, not steady							1.86	6.41**	[2.72, 15.14]
One time only							1.25	3.49*	[1.15, 10.58]
Alcohol Use							0.30	1.36	[0.79, 2.32]
Needed Condoms as Contraception							1.55	4.71**	[2.89, 7.66]

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$; B: Regression Coefficient; OR: Odds ratio; CI: Confidence Intervals.

condom availability had the strongest effect on condom use: Latino men were almost 37 times more likely to use condoms if they were available, and four times more likely to use condoms if they had discussed condom use with their partners.

Condom use also varied by partner type. The most recent partner was a steady, live-in partner, a steady, not live-in partner, a regular but not a steady partner, or a one-time partner. There was no difference in condom use between steady partners regardless of living situation. Using steady, live-in partners as the reference group, men who had their most recent sex with a regular but not steady partner were over 6 times more likely to use condoms, and men who had a one-time partner were almost 3.5 times more likely to use condoms than men with a steady, live-in partner.

Need for condoms as contraception was also a strong predictor of condom use. Men who needed condoms for contraception were compared to men who did not because another form of birth control was used or for other reasons. Men who needed condoms for contraception were over 4 times more likely to use condoms than those who did not. Alcohol or drug use was not related to condom use at last sex.

DISCUSSION

In weighted analyses of a representative sample of unmarried Latino men aged 18–49, a slight majority (56%) reported using condoms at their last heterosexual intercourse. Having a condom available, discussing condom use, having a new, casual or non live-in partner, and need of condoms for contraception individually and in combination were strongly

predictive of condom use at the last sexual event for these Latino men. Acculturation did not predict condom use in the multivariate analyses. Clearly, circumstances surrounding the sexual event itself should be critical focal points for future research and interventions promoting condom use for unmarried Latino men regardless of acculturation level.

In our sample, more than half of the men reported that they were carrying condoms at the time, while less than half stated that they had condoms at the place where sex occurred. Only a small percentage of female partners carried condoms. Those men with condoms available were 37 times more likely to use them. This size of effect is rarely seen in behavioral research; yet, other studies have found similar associations between condom availability and actual use. Sheeran and colleagues (1999), for example, found condom availability to have a large effect on condom use in their meta-analysis; and in another study, when condom availability and condom discussion were included in a psychosocial model, they accounted for 71% of the variance in condom use (Bryan *et al.*, 2002). Condom availability and discussion may be stronger predictors of condom use than attitudes or intentions (Sheeran *et al.*, 1999).

Condom promotion efforts should focus on Latino men who often are viewed as the responsible party for condom use (San Doval *et al.*, 1995), and on how to encourage men to carry condoms, since men with more or casual partners may not know where or when they will have sex. Preparatory behaviors such as carrying condoms may be critical for actual condom use for men, particularly Latino men who have reported "getting lost in the moment" and finding it difficult to stop to look for a condom despite their in-

tentions to use one (Gomez and Marin, 1996). To be successful, campaigns to promote carrying condoms must address the common belief among Latino men that they cannot control sexual urges and that sex should be passionate and irrational (Carrillo, 2002; Marin and Gomez, 1996).

Discussing condom use before sex was a strong predictor of condom use in the bivariate and multivariate analyses, which supports previous literature (Abraham *et al.*, 1999; Bryan *et al.*, 2002). A little more than half of the men stated that there was discussion about condoms, and most of those who had a discussion, reported that it was he who initiated it. Moreover, less acculturated men were more likely to talk about condoms than highly acculturated men. This finding is surprising given the traditional cultural value of "sexual silence" between men and women in the Latino culture (Marin and Gomez, 1996). It is unclear whether the discussion was dominated by the men or if there was a mutual decision regarding condom use, but it does reinforce the notion that Latino men are the sexual decision makers (Marin and Gomez, 1996) and a culturally appropriate target for prevention. For those men who reported not having a discussion at last sex, condom use might have been discussed prior to the last sexual encounter. Whether or not condom use was ever discussed is not known and should be considered a limitation of this study. In general, talking about condoms is beneficial in promoting condom use, but more information is needed to determine what aspects of condom discussion promote condom use, what the most effective content message is, and whether it makes a difference who initiates the conversation.

Men were more likely to use condoms if they needed them for contraception. That is, men were less likely to use condoms if another form of birth control was used, pregnancy was desired or not physically possible. Villareal (2003), using the same data as the present study, found that Latina women who felt a need for contraception also were more likely to use condoms. Here as elsewhere condoms were viewed primarily as a contraceptive method (Yeakley and Gant, 1997). Although condom use as a method for disease prevention was not examined, this finding may have implications for condom promotion campaigns. Future research should examine the efficacy of condom promotion campaigns targeting men that are geared toward messages of contraception versus messages of sexually transmitted disease, since men may be more open to messages of contraception.

Only a small proportion of the men reported alcohol use. Latino men who reported using alcohol during last sex were just as likely to use condoms as those who did not use alcohol. This finding supports other studies in which alcohol is unrelated to condom use when the two are measured at the level of the specific sexual event (Leigh and Stall, 1993). MacDonald and colleagues (2000) suggest an "alcohol myopia" theory, which states that alcohol use does not have a direct influence on behavior; but rather enhances situational cues that can either impede or facilitate condom use. Future research should examine event-specific variables that may serve as barriers or facilitators of condom use, and how alcohol use may moderate these associations.

This study has several limitations worth noting. Because it is a cross-sectional study, causality cannot be determined. However, the strong associations reported here suggest something important is happening. While the sexual behaviors data was self-reported, telephone surveys may encourage accuracy in respondents' answers compared to face-to-face interviews when questions were highly personal; i.e. topics of sexual behaviors (Marín and Marín, 1989). Event-level methods are limited by the accuracy in one's recall of specific past details (Cash, 1999). However, a recent event is easier for participants to remember, increasing the chance of accuracy, compared to generalizations about past events. Another limitation was the restriction on the age range (18–49). The association between event-specific variables and condom use may be different for men who are older than 49. Future research should replicate this study with older Latino men. Although not a limitation per se, the reader should be aware that men who reported having a steady, live-in partner may be very similar to married men. Finally, due to insufficient numbers, analyses could not be conducted for different Latino subgroups.

A major strength of the study lies in the sample design. The sampling approach provides nationally representative data on unmarried Latinos in the U.S. In fact, although this study was conducted in 1993 it is still one of the most recent available sexual surveys of a representative sample of Latino men (e.g., the National Survey of Family Growth has recently fielded Cycle 6 which includes a large sample of Latino men; Martinez *et al.*, 2004). The only other recent sexual survey of Latino men was conducted among 18–24 year olds (Sonenstein *et al.*, 1998). This is the only study of its kind to look at both event-specific vari-

ables and acculturation using a large probability sample of Latino men.

A recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) internal review of HIV prevention interventions targeting Latinos indicated that of 19 such interventions, only one targets heterosexual men, while six targeted heterosexual women (Herbst, personal communication, March, 2004). This difference is puzzling, given that men actually use condoms, and suggests an urgent need to focus on this understudied group. Most interventions have involved small group approaches, yet the current study indicates that promoting condom use among Latino men may be amenable to community-level social marketing interventions that make condoms attractive and available and help men overcome barriers to carrying condoms. Such campaigns, both in English and Spanish, will need to be developed with sensitivity to Latino culture and to the multiple circumstances of men's lives (different types of partners, needs to persuade a partner, need of condoms for contraception). Cohen (2003) reported that structural interventions focusing on condom availability such as condom social marketing programs and condom distribution programs have been effective on a global level. Future research should examine the feasibility and efficacy of condom availability programs (e.g., adding condom vending machines in public places, providing free condoms at social settings) in increasing condom use within predominantly Latino neighborhoods within the United States.

The present research suggests that in addition to intrapersonal factors such as intentions to use condoms or the belief that condom use is important, factors present at the sexual event, especially the easy availability of a condom, are important determinants of whether condoms are used or not. These contextual factors have been overlooked in most research, perhaps because they seem so obvious. Effective condom promotion programs should address the context in which sex occurs, particularly factors present at the time of the sexual encounter that might influence condom use. Whether Latino men decide to use a condom or not, their behavior will be determined not only by their intentions before sex began, but on how well they are prepared at the time to have safe sex.

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