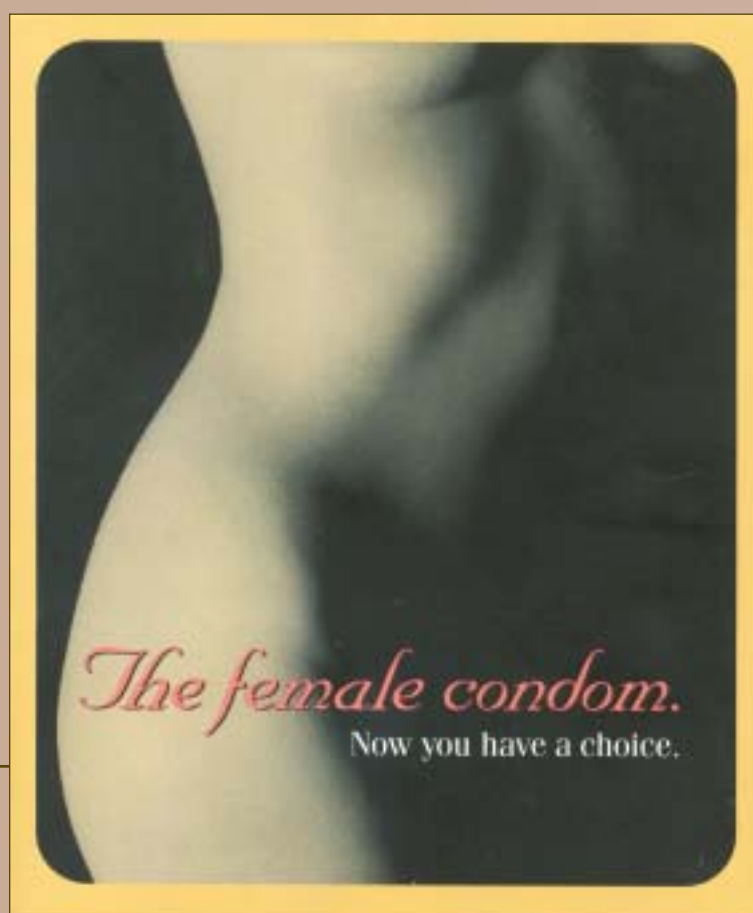


Female Condom Pilot Project

Background

- The female condom is an effective safer sex method for women who have difficulty using the male condom consistently.



- There have been a few rigorous studies on female condom use in U.S. cities (see references below).
- No previous studies have been conducted in Canada.

Objectives

- To evaluate the effect of a pilot intervention on male and female condom use among women at risk for STD/HIV and unplanned pregnancy in Toronto.
- To identify factors associated with female condom use among intervention participants.

Intervention

- Trained service providers delivered education and counselling in individual and group settings to 175 women at risk for unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted infection (STI).
- Intervention sessions provided:
 - information on safer sex in general
 - information on the use of the female condom
 - counselling to support women in their safer sex choices

Data Collection

Participants completed questionnaires at three points in time.

Pre-intervention



Participants

- 109 women completed all three questionnaires and had not previously used the female condom.
- Age 18 – 45; 69% age 25 and older.
- Most had low socio-economic status.
- A majority had a history of unplanned pregnancy or sexually transmitted infection.

For Further Information

The following article can be viewed at The Sex Information and Education Council of Canada www.sieccan.org:

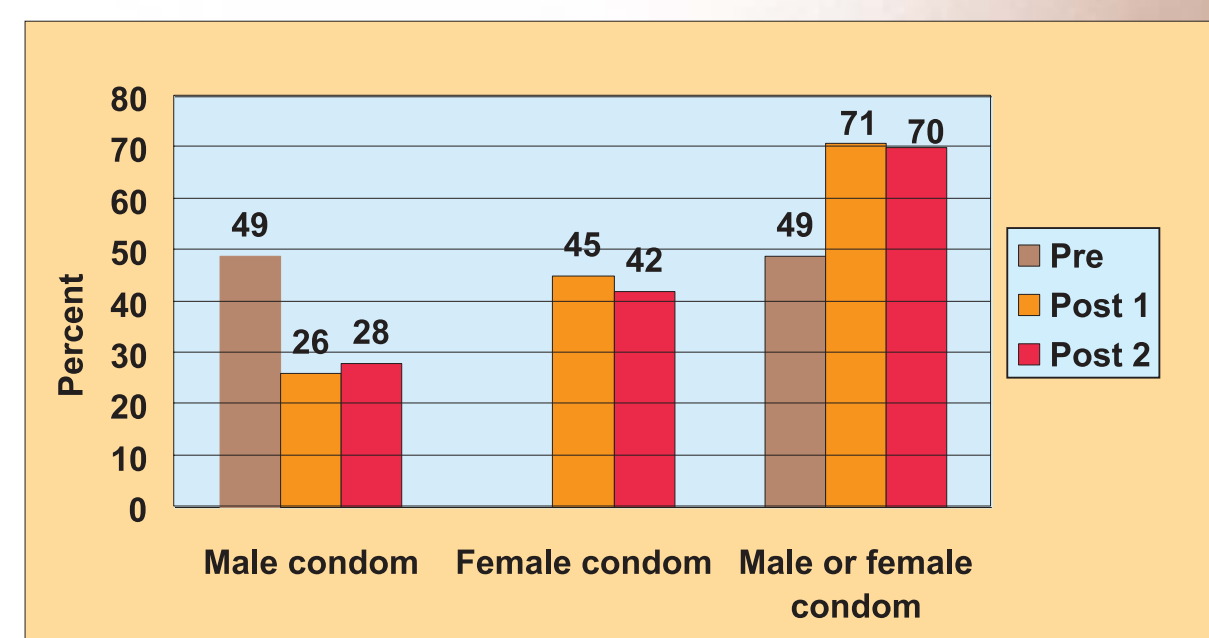
Hardwick, D. (2002). The effectiveness of a female condom intervention on women's use of condoms, *The Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality*, 11(2): 63–76.

Results

Condom Use

Percentage of vaginal intercourse acts protected with:

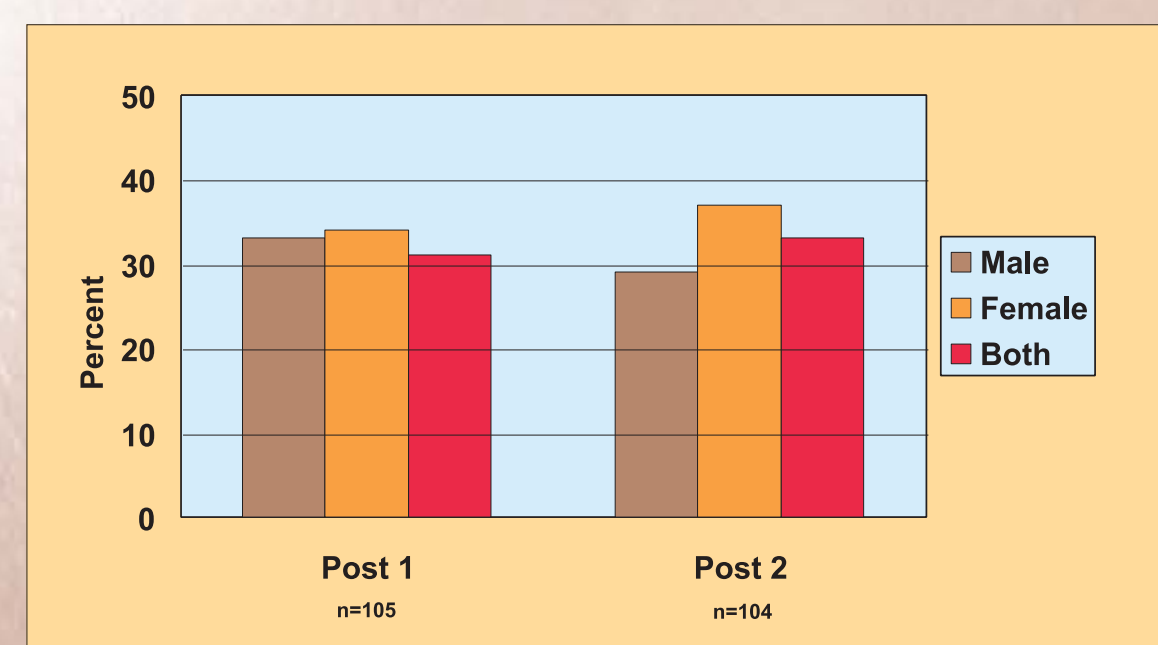
- male condom,
- a female condom, and
- male or female condom



Participants used either a male or a female condom over 20% more often after receiving the intervention.

Condom Preference

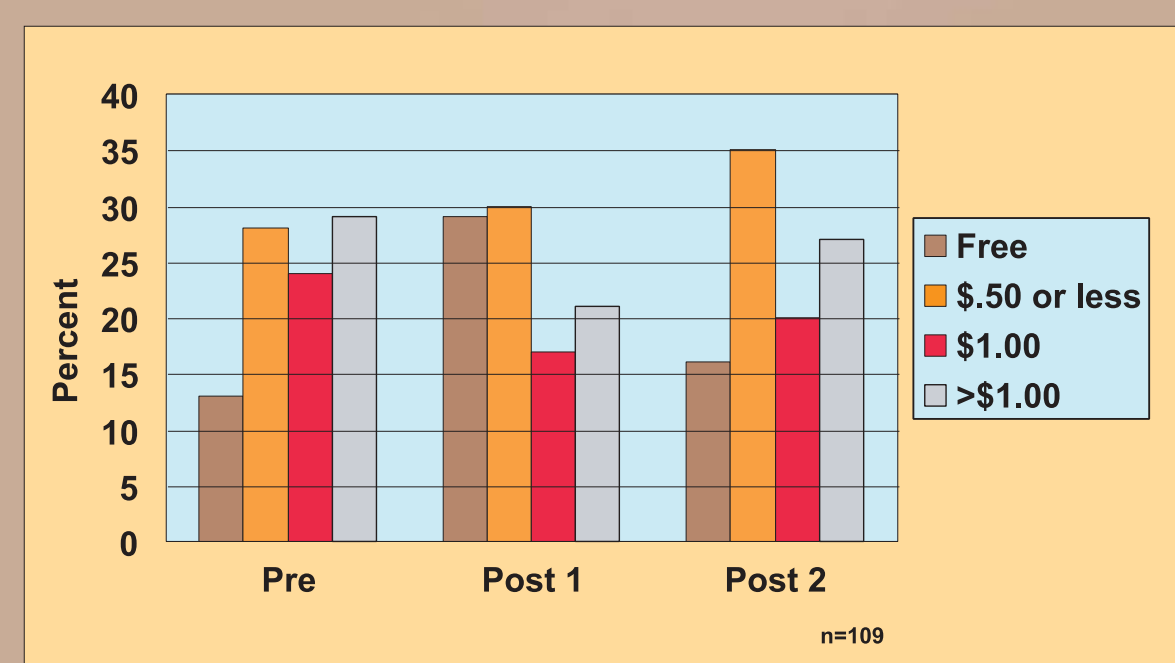
Preference for female or male condom



By the end of the study, 70% of participants preferred to use either the female condom only, or to have access to both the male and the female condom.

Willingness to Pay

Amount willing to pay for the female condom



Despite the acceptability of the female condom, only 27% of the participants were willing to pay more than \$1.00 Cdn for the female condom, which retailed locally for about \$4.00 Cdn at the time of the study.

Conclusions

A pilot project offering education and counselling and free male and female condoms and lubricant found:

- Female condom is not only acceptable, but preferable for a significant percentage of women who tried it.
- Offering the female condom increases safer sex practice.
- Current high retail cost of the female condom is a barrier to its use among women at high risk in Toronto.

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