

**CENTRO DE ORIENTACION E INVESTIGACION INTEGRAL  
(COIN)**

**Excerpts from:**

**FINAL REPORT ON**

**THE USE OF CONDOMS  
IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AND HAITI  
1990**

**Arzobispo Merino No. 505  
Telephone 687-0558, Fax 562-6893  
Apartado Postal 22124, Santo Domingo, D.R.**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Dominican Republic is one of several countries which began their programs for the promotion, furtherance and distribution of condoms for the prevention of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) and AIDS as early as 1986.

The promotional strategy employed focused on a number of different population groups and used a number of different methodologies, including:

- a) Wide-scale promotion and furtherance, through such mass media as television, radio, the press, billboard advertising and the distribution of printed material,
- b) Free distribution of condoms among groups practicing high-risk behaviors, such as women prostitutes, homosexuals, prisoners, and the resident sugar plantation population.
- c) In the area of legal action, a health ordinance requiring hotels and motels to place condoms in their rooms, irrespective of any request by the customer, was implemented.
- d) KAP usage and methodology research on the proper use of condoms was carried out among a number of different population groups.

Changes in the policy and direction of the AIDS program in 1990 have limited both the number and coverage of condom promotion and furtherance actions carried out among the general population as well as among groups exhibiting high-risk behavior.

In the interest of analyzing the trends reflected in the information compiled as well as determining user patterns and profiles, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), through its Intervention Development and Support (IDS) component, commissioned this study in the Dominican Republic and Haiti. The study included observational surveys of hotels and motels in which a number of different brands of condoms, with differing dates of manufacture, had previously been placed, along with printed materials explaining the proper use of condoms.

Once the customer vacated the room, a survey team would enter to ascertain what use had been made of the condoms. The major findings were as follows:

- 1) The prevalence of condom usage is decreasing in Santo Domingo.
- 2) Usage prevalence rates in the business establishments surveyed in Haiti are high.
- 3) Educational materials do not significantly influence condom usage.
- 4) Condom breakage rates varied in accordance with the date of manufacture and the availability of information.

The principal recommendations submitted are as follows:

- a) Maintain a monitoring system with respect to condom usage.
- b) Strengthen condom promotion and furtherance.
- c) Exercise control over the brands and dates of the condoms placed in the various business establishments.

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**OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the research activity were as follows:

- 1) To determine the prevalence of condom usage among the customers of hotels and motels in the cities of Santo Domingo and Port-au-Prince.
- 2) To develop a profile of condoms users.
- 3) To ascertain trends in condom usage.
- 4) To compare the prevalence rates observed with the prevalence rate actually reported by the male population.
- 5) To determine the effects of the presence of printed materials explaining the proper use of condoms on usage prevalence rates.
- 6) To compare the breakage rates of two different brands of condoms.

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### METHODOLOGY

The study population consisted of the customers of five hotels and five motels in the city of Santo Domingo and those of one hotel and five motels in the city of Port-au-Prince. The identity of the users was completely unknown both to the business owners as well as to the individuals carrying out the study.

The selection of sites in Santo Domingo was made with an eye toward securing business establishments charging different prices per room, as well as businesses located in a number of different geographic locations.

In Port-au-Prince, where a different set of political conditions prevailed, the facilities offered by the owners of the businesses took precedence over the above-mentioned criteria.

The owners or managers of the establishments were sent a letter, followed by in-person visits, with a view to ensuring an optimum degree of cooperation.

One week prior to the observation activity, the various brands of condoms were distributed to the businesses selected, and on the day preceding the activity, printed materials (instructional literature and/or stickers) on proper condom use were randomly distributed.

The proprietors were instructed to place the condoms next to the soap and towel in each room, in accordance with the health ordinance, irrespective of any had request.

#### Preparation of the Instrument

In order to record the information observed, a data collection instrument was developed, along with instructions regarding its use; the instrument was tested and implemented without modification. In addition, a third document was prepared which contained instructions relating to the encoding process. The same instrument was used in Port-au-Prince, although the instructional material was translated into Creole (see the instrument contained in the annex).

#### Selection and Training of Surveyors

A two-member team, consisting of one health inspector and one health professional (educator or social worker), was assigned to each of the business establishments. The make-up of the teams was modified for each individual working day. All team members received training in the use of the data gathering instrument, although every effort was made to ensure that the health inspector would be in charge of carrying out the inventory of the condoms and that he and the health professional would reach an agreement with regard to the data observed. Likewise, the health professional was to transcribe the information onto the form.

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The coordinator of the Port-au-Prince team participated in the information gathering activities in Santo Domingo, while Dominican observers also participated on each team in Haiti. All were requested to keep as low a profile as possible in the establishments being surveyed.

#### PRE-TEST

In order to standardize the completion and validation of the instrument, a pre-test was carried out in which the surveyors received training, as a team, in the actual hotels and motels.

#### Information Gathering

The information gathering activity in Santo Domingo was to be carried out over a four-day period, although as a result of logistical problems, one business was surveyed on the fifth day.

Each selected establishment was visited and surveyed twice over a period beginning at 4:00 p.m. and ending at 12:00 midnight. Once the rooms were vacated and the customer had left, the control team would enter the room before the cleaning staff and carry out a detailed inspection in order to ascertain what had happened to the condoms which had previously been placed in the room.

If two rooms were vacated at the same time, the team would split up, and if in one of the rooms there were opened condom packets, both surveyors were required to reach a consensus.

The information was gathered during the latter part of August in Santo Domingo and in mid-October in Port-au-Prince. In Haiti, it was possible to visit the establishments only once, as the work could be performed only between 2:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. and, in certain of the establishments, the administrators had imposed limitations.

No printed matter was distributed to the rooms in Haiti and the brand name of the condoms previously placed in the rooms was always the same.

Prior to beginning the data collection process, the surveyors were required to visit the empty rooms and ensure that the two condoms of the specified brands were being placed in the rooms. They were also to ensure that the printed materials explaining the proper use of condoms were actually being distributed and placed in the business establishments previously selected and replace such printed materials when missing or damaged.

#### Information Verification

On days when observation activities were carried out, one supervisor and one coordinator would visit the surveyors in the establishments and verify the information being collected.

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During the data encoding process, the interviewers were consulted any particular information required clarification.

**Data Encoding and Processing**

The information collected was encoded and electronically processed using the Epi-Info system on an IBM computer.

**Selected Variables**

All of the questions on the survey instrument were cross-tabulated against a profile consisting of the following variables:

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CONDOMS:	Used
	Not used
	Broken
	Taken
	Left behind

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**Table 1 INDEPENDENT VARIABLES**

A total of 21 variables were researched; they are shown in Table 2:

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01. Country
02. Business establishment
03. Type of condoms
04. Time of observation
05. Day of observation
06. Social category
07. Presence of instructional materials
08. Presence of sticker
09. Length of stay
10. Consumption of alcoholic beverages
11. Indications of smoking materials
12. Number of condoms or wrappers
13. Presence of other (non-study) condoms
14. How far open condom was unrolled
15. Open condoms which were broken
16. Open condoms which were used
17. Open condoms which were not used
18. Condoms taken
19. Condoms left behind intact
20. Presence of semen .
21. Knot at the (open) end of condom

**Table 2**      **VARIABLES STUDIED**

The variables were extracted from the data collection instrument and encoded in accordance with the model described in the following tables.

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<u>No.</u>	<u>Variable</u>	<u>Definition</u>	<u>Dimension</u>
01	Country	As determined by the location of the business establishment.	1. Dominican Republic 2. Haiti
02	Business establishment	Rates per room for a stay of less than 24 hours with or without a garage for an automobile.	1. Hotel 2. Motel 3. Hotel/Motel
03	Type of condoms placed	As determined by the presence or absence of additives	1. Brand A 89 with Nonoxynol 2. Brand A 85 without Nonoxynol 3. Brand A 87 4. (Indeterminate)
04	Time of observation	Local time at which observation is made following vacating of the room by the customers.	1. Prior to 6:00 p.m. 2. 6:00-8:00 p.m. 3. 8:01-10:00 p.m. 4. 10:01 p.m.-12:00 midnight
05	Day of observation	As determined by the day of the week.	1. Monday through Thursday 2. Friday 3. Saturday 4. Sunday
06	Social category	Price of the room to the customer for the first 4 hours. In Dominican pesos, with air conditioning or fan.	(Categories I, II, III, IV)
07	Instructional materials	Presence in the room of instructional pamphlet on proper condom use.	1. Yes 2. No
08	Sticker	Presence on the walls of the room of a self-adhesive instructional sticker on proper condom use.	1. Yes 2. No

Table 3 DEFINITION OF VARIABLES (Parte 1)

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<u>No.</u>	<u>Variable</u>	<u>Definition</u>	<u>Dimension</u>
09	Length of stay	Time transpired from the time the customer entered the room until the time the room was vacated.	1. Less than 1 hour 2. 1-2 hours 3. 3 hours 4. 4 hours 5. 5 or more hours
10	Alcoholic beverages	Presence of bottles or other alcoholic beverage containers.	1. Yes 1A. Type 1B. Amount 2. No
11	Smoking materials	Evidence or remains of cigarettes, tobacco or marihuana.	1. Yes 2. No
12	Condoms found	Number of opened condoms found in the room.	1. 1 2. 2 3. 3 or more
13	Other condoms	Wrapper or condom different from that previously placed in the room.	1. Number 2. Brand
14	How far condom was unrolled	Degree to which the condom was unrolled.	1. 25% 2. 50% 3. 75% 4. 100%
15	Broken	Broken condom in the room.	1. Yes 2. No
16	Used	- Not broken. - Unrolled with or without semen. - Presence of wrapper with no trace of the condom.	1. Yes 2. No

Table 4 DEFINITION OF VARIABLES (Parte 2)

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<u>No.</u>	<u>Variable</u>	<u>Definition</u>	<u>Dimension</u>
17	Not used	- Not broken . - Not used. - Not completely unrolled, without semen. - Filled with air or any other substance.	1. Yes 2. No
18	Taken	- Not broken, not used - One or more condoms and wrappers missing.	1. Yes 2. No
19	Left behind	Two (2) or more condoms left intact, and with none of the previous.	1. Yes 2. No
20	Semen	Presence of semen.	1. Yes 2. No
21	Knot	Condoms with a knot tied at the (open) end.	1. Yes 2. No

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Table 5 DEFINITION OF VARIABLES (Parte 3)

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**SAMPLING FOR THE RESEARCH**

**PROFILE OF THE SAMPLE**

The total number of surveys carried out for this study was 949, of which 831 (87.5%) were performed in the city of Santo Domingo and 118 (12.5%) in Port-au-Prince.

Ten business establishments were selected to be surveyed in Santo Domingo. In Port-au-Prince, for logistical reasons it was possible to survey only six business and only three of these were surveyed twice. Among the reasons for the difficulties encountered were the last minute refusal of the owner or administrator to cooperate with the research activity, inaccessibility of the roads as a result of rain, etc.

Inasmuch as the sample in Haiti was smaller than that originally planned, the analysis is based almost entirely on the Santo Domingo sample.

The total number of rooms available among all business establishments selected to be surveyed in Santo Domingo was 385, distributed as follow: 202 in hotels and 183 in motels.

Stickers had been placed in 275 of the rooms surveyed and instructional pamphlets on proper condom use were placed in 343, in both cases prior to occupation of the room by the customers.

In 5 of the 10 establishments, two condoms with Nonoxynol 89 were placed in each of the rooms, for a total of 42.6% of the rooms surveyed. In the other five businesses, brand A condoms with manufacturing dates of 87 and 85 were placed in the rooms.

## CONCLUSIONS

### USAGE PREVALENCE

- The prevalence of condom usage was 12.0% for the customers of the hotels and motels of Santo Domingo and 41.5% in Port-au-Prince.
- 60.2 % of the condoms placed in the rooms were left intact.
- Motel customers are more frequent users of condoms.

### USER PROFILE

- Customers using the facilities on Monday show a lower rate of prevalence, and those who vacate the room prior to 7:00 p.m. show a higher incidence of condom breakage.
- 60% consumed some type of alcoholic beverage.
- 31% smoked tobacco or other products.
- Usage prevalence varied among business establishments from 4.4% to 27.8%.
- The customers of hotels of the lowest category had a lower rate of usage prevalence than the customers of the higher social categories.
- Men in Santo Domingo report a higher percentage of [use of] condoms than that actually observed in the hotels and motels.
- One out of every three users of condoms uses more than one.

### PRINTED MATERIALS

- 21.9% of the stickers were removed by the customers during the period of the survey.
  - One out of every four customers take the instructional pamphlets away with them.
  - The printed materials in the rooms did not significantly influence condom usage, although they did affect the percentage of condom breakage.
  - In those business establishments not provided with any information, the percentage of usage is lower.
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**CONDOMS**

- The average rate of breakage was 8.6% of the total number of open condoms.
- The rates of breakage may possibly decrease to a level of 3%.
- One of every three users of condoms disposed of the condom all together, leaving only the wrapper.
- A very low percentage of users tie a knot in the condom before throwing it away.
- In those rooms having no printed information, the breakage rate was higher, and this breakage rate increased when, in addition, the customers consumed alcoholic beverages.
- Condom breakage is more frequent among customers of the lower social categories.
- Customers prefer to use the brand of condom found in the room. Only 8.6% take their own condoms.
- The probability of using a condom once it has been opened is greater if it has Nonoxynol and if it bears a more recent manufacturing date.
- One of every five customers take the condoms away with them.
- Breakage rates are ten times higher among condoms manufactured in 1985 than those manufactured in 1989.

**TRENDS**

- The prevalence of condom usage in Santo Domingo is decreasing:  
From 18.0% found in 1988 and 1989  
to 12.0% found in 1990.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

### FIRST

Establish a system of epidemiological surveillance, using the methodology employed in these studies, which will allow trends in condom usage to be monitored and provide a means of carrying out an indirect evaluation of the condom promotion and furtherance campaigns aimed at the general public.

### SECOND

Strengthen the condom promotion and furtherance campaign among the general population in the Dominican Republic.

### THIRD

Enforce and monitor the health ordinance which requires establishments to place condoms in rooms irrespective of any request by the customer.

### FOURTH

- Withdraw those condoms having a manufacturing date exceeding 3 years both from the market as well as from business establishments.

### FIFTH

- Use this methodology for the evaluation of other educational materials as well to ensure quality control with respect to condoms currently available in the market.

### SIXTH

- Introduce a laboratory analysis component for used condoms in order to determine: a) anal sex, b) presence of blood, c) presence of sexually transmitted diseases.